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TEN CENTS

Indonesia prepares takeover

Hands off East Timor!

On 11 August an attempted coup by the Timor Democratic Union (UDT) began a conflict in the Portuguese colony of East Timor which has developed into full-scale civil war. The small colonial army rapidly disintegrated and the bulk of its Timorese troops sided with the UDT's rival, the more radical Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (FRETILIN), allowing the latter to counterattack, driving the UDT from most of Dili, the capital and only real city, and prompting the exodus of much of the colony's elite and the flight of the remaining Portuguese forces to an offshore island. Meanwhile the Indonesian generals have begun preparations for a military intervention.

The UDT, based on the conservative upper layers of the indigenous administrative and propertied elite, has not acted as the direct agent of either Suharto or the Portuguese, nor of some Indonesian/CIA/Joint Intelligence Organisation/DLP/multinational oil companies plot raved about by the CPA (*Tribune*, 19 August 1975), though no doubt most of these reactionary forces were meddling in the colony.

The actual concrete demands of the UDT on 11 August included a purge of "communist" members in the colonial administration and in FRETILIN itself, and the retention of the rightist Pires as governor. The UDT's coup was an attempt to suppress anyone even mildly in favour of popular or pro-working-class reforms or immediate independence, and a defence of bourgeois property rights against even the partial reforms advocated by FRETILIN. In the subsequent fighting, FRETILIN has become a temporary pole for the oppressed (primarily among Dili's urban poor) against the propertied interests. For these reasons the workers movement must defend FRETILIN and bloc militarily with its forces. *Defeat the reactionary UDT offensive!*

FRETILIN deserves absolutely no political support. A petty-bourgeois populist formation, it has in the past been willing to participate in plans for a tri-partite transitional government of Portugal, the UDT and FRETILIN. It formed a common front with the UDT earlier this year, has repudiated any support for anti-junta movements in Indonesia, begged the Australian capitalist state to intervene on its behalf and pledged itself to co-operate with Indonesia and Australia to maintain regional "security" and "stability".

FRETILIN's alternation between a reactionary utopianism harking back to pre-feudal village communes and the usual ambitions of petty-bourgeois nationalists stems from the extreme backwardness of Timorese society. Ethnically, linguistically and culturally similar to the Indonesian half of the island, East Timor is only in the most rudimentary stages of formation as a nation. Over 90 percent of its 650,000 inhabitants are pre-feudal tribalists practising primitive shifting subsistence agriculture. Overlaying this is a thin veneer of colonial administration and economic development, with a tiny bourgeoisie-in-embryo (mostly Chinese merchants and Portuguese plantation owners), a minuscule proletariat (probably less than one percent of the population), and not even a significant peasantry. An independent state of East Timor will be unviable, and easy prey for neo-colonialist domination.

Independence is however under the circumstances a *precondition* for East Timor to exercise its clear right to self-determination, and Marxists must vigorously oppose its forcible integration into Indonesia. The independence of East Timor is a test case for an issue vital to the Indonesian revolution -- the treatment of the multiple national minorities in Indonesia itself, whose rights all Indonesian workers must staunchly uphold.

Whatever the exact method planned by the Indonesian generals for the annexation of East Timor, they can already count on the "understand-

ing" of the Australian Labor Government. The Australian trade-union movement must oppose all aid to the reactionary Indonesian generals, and along with their Indonesian class brothers must take industrial action in defence of independence for East Timor wherever possible. *Independence now for East Timor! Immediate withdrawal of all Portuguese forces! For mass action of the Indonesian and Australian working classes against Indonesian annexation!*

Matched only by the CPA in its uncritical tailing, the Socialist Labour League offers "full support" to FRETILIN (because it is supposedly leading the "Timorese Revolution") (*Workers News*, 28 August 1975); but virtually the whole Australian left has extended its blessing to FRETILIN, an organisation organically hostile to the Indonesian proletarian revolution. Today it may stand with the workers and poor, but tomorrow it will attack them. East Timorese workers must break from FRETILIN and fight for a program which includes full rights for working-class organisations and the expropriation of the plantations, transport and the two or three factories, and appealing to the Indonesian workers and oppressed to overthrow the reactionary junta and the capitalist system it guards.

To demand that the Australian capitalist state "be pressured to use all the power at its disposal to stop an Indonesian invasion and end[?] foreign interference" (*Tribune*, 19 August 1975) is simply to offer a left cover for Australian capitalism's own ambitions and leads in the direction of advocating the mutual slaughter of Australian workers and their Indonesian class brothers in a bosses' war. *Keep Australian bosses and their state out of Timor!*

In the absence of massive support from the Australian and Indonesian working classes for independence and against foreign intervention, the immediate prospects for East Timor are grim. The fighting has a tendency to degenerate into tribal/racial communalism; where this happens, the working class must oppose both sides. Even if the workers of East Timor were to seize power (which might be necessary in self-defence but which at the present time would surely be crushed), the best they could hope for would be to serve as an heroic example to the Indonesian proletariat. Only the construction of an Indonesian Trotskyist party can offer the Timorese masses a future free of degradation and repression as part of a socialist federation of the Indo-Malay archipelago. ■



A supporter of FRETILIN from a tribal mountain village gives the party's salute at a rally prior to the outbreak of civil war.

Trotskyists excluded from CPA Bolshevik Tendency joins Spartacist League

To the Spartacist League

Comrades,

Through our development in the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) towards Trotskyism and with the formation of the Bolshevik Tendency (BT) we have come to essential programmatic agreement with your tendency as the only contemporary continuation of the Leninist tradition of the communist movement. The CPA as a force for revolutionary change is long since completely bankrupt, and our development towards Trotskyism began in struggle against its gross reformism and class collaboration, for example its tailing of the fake "lefts" in the ALP and the union bureaucracy, its support for the popular fronts in Chile and Portugal and its reliance on the bourgeois courts and the classless protest movements to defend the NSW BLF rather than the mobilisation of even its own union support.

The BT developed through a differentiation within the petty-bourgeois intellectual "left" drawn into the CPA after the split of the Moscow-line Stalinists in 1971. These forces, which became known as the Left Tendency (LT), and which included Steve Haran, drew up an alternative party program in Adelaide in December 1973. That document, in the belief that the CPA had broken to the left from Stalinism, argued for a "marxist analysis" of Australian capitalism, a clearer differentiation from the ALP (characterising it as a party of the bourgeoisie) and an emphasis on rank-and-file activity in the working class, with the eventual aim of transforming the CPA through pressure on the leadership into a revolutionary party.

One year later, Haran attacked these assumptions in a document circulated at a December 1974 national LT meeting in Melbourne (reprinted in

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Trotskyists excluded. . .

Documents of the Bolshevik Tendency (DBT) no 2. Earlier that year the CPA National Congress had been able to formally absorb the LT's inadequate criticisms and thus co-opt them; and within the Sydney LT there was a growing realisation that the Aarons leadership was entrenched in a perspective of strategic alliance with the ALP "left" not qualitatively different from that followed by the right-wing of the CPA mainstream, grouped around Bernie Taft in Victoria. Haran argued that the break from Stalinism was not towards Marxism but towards a more militant reformism independent of the Moscow bureaucracy and that the LT had to abandon the role of a left "pressure" group in favour of a fighting alternative, facing up to the need for an eventual split from the reformist leadership.

Although this perspective was rejected at the December Melbourne meeting, the following six months were to be a period of political discussion and clarification leading to the issuing of a position statement. But the discussion process was subverted by Haran's suspension from the Sydney LT on 29 January 1975, ostensibly on the grounds that he had discussed LT matters with members of the Spartacist League (which Haran himself on his own initiative had openly reported to the Sydney LT) and that his political positions (eg, the ALP as a bourgeois workers' party, the reformist nature of the CPA leadership, feminism as a bourgeois ideology) were "incompatible" with the LT -- even though the LT had no elaborated membership requirements or firmly codified positions, and even though it was common practice for LT members (as well as other CPA members) to talk with other political groups! By this bureaucratic act of political cowardice, the LT embarked on a course of consciously subordinating the struggle for revolutionary politics in the CPA. In his appeal against the suspension comrade Haran pointed out:

"Political struggle and the knowledge that comes from it is the lifeblood of a revolutionary organisation. Without it the very real differences that arise become muted and glossed over, the political consciousness and development of the cadres is held back and the way is opened for bureaucracy, opportunism and more importantly, the entry of alien class ideologies." ("An Appeal Against Suspension", available in *DBT* no 2)

Comrade Fullarton, who had been moving towards Trotskyism in relative isolation, and who had been in contact with Haran over a series of letters in *Tribune* on Stalinism and popular fronts (reprinted in *DBT* no 3), came to the April national LT meeting in substantial agreement with the critique and perspective contained in Haran's discussion document "Out of the Swamp -- Towards Bolshevism" (available in *DBT* no 1). That document characterised the CPA "strategy" of "counter-hegemony" (for the CPA, the uncritical adoption of the melange of petty-bourgeois ideologies of the protest movements) and the "co-

alition of the left" (essentially a tailist bloc with "left" Labor), as "reformist idealism" and argued:

"The components of Aarons' counter-hegemony -- feminism, Black separatism, militant economism, syndicalism -- are in fact obstacles to the building of a revolutionary class-conscious counter-hegemony and they must be combatted and politically destroyed."

Posing the building of a Leninist vanguard party as the real alternative to Aaronsism, the document pointed out:

"The program is the basis of the party and the revolutionary program of this era remains the Trotskyist Transitional Program, a program that does not fall into the minimum/maximum trap but forms a bridge from the immediate demands and consciousness of the masses to an understanding of the need for socialist revolution."

Against both Aaronsite reformism and the syndicalism dominant in the LT, it outlined a perspective of building an alternative revolutionary leadership in the mass organisations of the working class:

"The basis for communist trade-union work is the application of the full transitional program to the trade union arena and around that the building of a caucus (an arm of the party in that particular union or industry)."

It pointed out that Haran's exclusion from the LT would "set a bureaucratic precedent that will make it impossible to resist further degeneration and reconciliation with Aaronsism." Nevertheless the suspension was accepted and acknowledged as an expulsion; and so on April 25 we formed the Bolshevik Tendency on the basis of agreement with the 1938 Transitional Program of the Fourth International and the document "Out of the Swamp -- Towards Bolshevism".

On 20 May the Glebe/Balmain branch (the branch in which the Sydney LT was concentrated) laid charges against Haran alleging that he intended to form a faction and split the party. The comrade had breached no rule or part of the Constitution, had committed no act that broke the discipline of the party (such as it is) -- the charges were based solely on a paragraph in his appeal against the LT suspension that had posed after a political struggle the need for a split from the CPA reformists. On July 20 Haran was expelled by a unanimous vote of the Sydney District Committee which included four members of the LT. Comrade Fullarton, to whom the charges laid against Haran would equally have applied, was not charged at all! He resigned from the CPA in solidarity with Haran.

The LT, by its open bloc with the CPA leadership in expelling Haran and suppressing political struggle in the Party, has exposed as mere claptrap any claims it may have had as a principled left opposition in the CPA. Its flight from Bolshevik criticism into the arms of its "opponents" flows, of course, from its political positions, an eclectic hodge-podge of syndicalism, academic pseudo-Marxism and general unseriousness that offers no clear political alternative to the reformism and the tailing of present consciousness

that characterises the CPA. Like the CPA in its relations with the social-democratic labour bureaucracy, the LT within the CPA subordinates the fight for political consciousness and principle to the short-term benefits of gaining "influence".

Like all opportunists, the LT believes that it can avoid the long and difficult struggle for revolutionary political consciousness by short cuts and panaceas -- the problems of building an alternative leadership in the trade unions, based on a revolutionary program, with roots and authority in the class, will be conveniently bypassed by forming shop and area committees on no particular program; the contradiction between the wretched bourgeois leadership of the ALP and its basis in the organisations of the working class is evaded by categorising it as a party of the bourgeoisie, rather than using the Leninist tactics of critical support, the united front and entrisism to set the base against the top; and instead of the "alienating" task of counterposing Marxism to bourgeois feminism within the women's movement, they substitute, with no perspective or program, the organising of working-class women as women. In all cases LT "opposition", always purely verbal and carefully kept outside the main arenas of political struggle, is in reality the crassest form of opportunism and capitulation. The LT is an empty shell of an opposition, reflected in its present decay as a national tendency within the CPA: the South Australian component (led by National Executive member Rob Durbridge and controlling the CPA apparatus there) has become nothing more than the radical wing of the Aarons leadership; the Melbourne group, centred in the Carlton branch, is demoralised; and the "left" LT section in Sydney, polarised to the side of the CPA leadership by the struggle of the BT and unwilling to take a stand on the right of organised tendencies within the party, has given up any ability to fight and, in the process, opened itself up for future attack by the party bureaucracy.

In our road to Trotskyism the fraudulence of the other groupings claiming to be Trotskyist and to represent the Fourth International became entirely clear to us. What characterises all these groupings (the Socialist Workers League (SWL), the Communist League (CL), the Socialist Labour League (SLL)) is their abandonment of the task of building a party based on the Transitional Program. Although they do this in different ways (the SWL liquidating into "left" Social-Democracy, the CL into the "new mass vanguard", the SLL into wild, cynical opportunism evoked by invoking the all-powerful "Crisis"), these pseudo-Trotskyists are united in their conscious avoidance of the political struggle necessary to cut through the confusion in the left and regroup the revolutionary elements around the Transitional Program. That struggle remains the central immediate task of communists and this application for membership is concrete confirmation of its validity.

Finally we recognise the qualitative difference between the organisational methods of the CPA and Bolshevik functioning in the tradition of Leninist democratic centralism. Our joint work with the Melbourne Organising Committee of the Spartacist League around the recent printers' strike further consolidated this understanding. In dissolving the BT and applying for membership we have no hesitation in accepting the discipline of the SLANZ in our determination to forge a genuine communist party in Australia and a reborn Fourth International.

Forward to world-wide proletarian revolution!

Doug Fullarton
Steve Haran
30 August 1975

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**Documents
of the
Bolshevik
Tendency**

issues 1-3
(the documentary record of the
Trotskyist oppositionists excluded from
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Defend Mitch Thompson! Drop the charges!

Mitch Thompson, a Brisbane activist in the student and labour movement for many years, was planted with marijuana by Commonwealth police in April and faces trial in September. Known to abstain from drugs (even including tobacco and alcohol) this is clearly a case of political victimisation which must be opposed by the workers and left movement.

Phone 79-8902 (Brisbane) for further information.

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Pabloism and Stalinism in Vietnam

For the revolutionary vanguard internationally, the crucial question posed by the recent developments in Indochina is that of the programmatic and strategic conclusions to be drawn from the setbacks dealt to international capitalism. Leninism holds that the destruction of the bourgeois state and the creation by the workers of their own state capable of laying the foundations for socialism requires the mobilisation of the proletariat behind a vanguard workers' party based on Marxist internationalism. Yet in Vietnam and Cambodia, capitalist property relations have been smashed by peasant-based forces led by Stalinist parties, communist in name only, with a long record of class collaboration and betrayal, committed to the anti-Marxist doctrines of "peaceful coexistence" of the workers states and capitalism on a world scale and "socialism in one country".



Cuba's "unconscious Marxist" backed Allende.

These phenomena, however, are not new. In Eastern Europe after the Second World War, the Soviet bureaucracy under Stalin -- the "organiser of defeats" of world-historic magnitude in China (1925-27), Germany (1933), and Spain (1936-39) -- deposed the bourgeoisie in a number of countries with the power of the Soviet Red Army and imposed from above bureaucratically deformed workers states. In Yugoslavia (1948), China (1949) and in North Vietnam (1954), such deformed workers states were created without the direct intervention of an already established workers state power in the course of indigenous guerrilla wars based on mass peasant movements and largely against the intentions of the bureaucracy in the USSR. And in Cuba, the bonapartist petty-bourgeois regime of Fidel Castro accomplished the same thing, even though at the outset Castro did not even represent the Stalinist variant of working-class reformist ideology (a form of bourgeois ideology within the workers movement, ie representing false consciousness) but simply radical petty-bourgeois nationalism.

It was precisely over unexpected developments such as these that the Fourth International after World War II became disoriented, providing the opening for an opportunist current to develop in the FI, represented by the revisionist theories of Michel Pablo, who held that events proved the objectively revolutionary character of the Stalinists under pressure from the masses, who characterised Mao's party as "centrist", and who ordered Trotskyists to liquidate into the Stalinist and Social-Democratic parties in order to "pressure" the reformist bureaucracies to the left. This revisionism led finally to the proclamation of Castro as an "unconscious Marxist" and to completely uncritical promotion of his regime. The false answers of Pabloism to the problems of such revolutions have undergone a certain historical test, the verdict expressed in the record of betrayal of its erstwhile "centrist revolutionary" heroes.

It can be shown that the policies of the Vietnamese Stalinists of the Indochinese Communist Party (since 1953 called the Vietnamese Workers Party -- VWP) sabotaged the struggle at every decisive point: from the 1930s when it engaged in gross popular-frontist class collaboration, to 1945 when to placate the imperialist robbers it helped smash the People's Committees of Saigon, 1954 at Geneva when it abandoned half the country after a decisive military victory over the French, the post-1954 period when it actively opposed and discarded military struggle in South Vietnam against the Diem dictatorship, and so on. But in the end, they were left with no alterna-

tive but either self-destruction and political suicide or the overthrow of the capitalist-landlord ruling class.

But didn't therefore "objective forces", the "dynamic" of the revolution, compel the Stalinists to follow a *revolutionary* policy? And doesn't that mean that under the pressure of events such Stalinist parties were somehow transformed into *essentially* revolutionary parties? Are not the victories in Vietnam, China, Yugoslavia, and Cuba a vindication, if not of the Stalinist strategy of class collaboration, at least of their *tactics*, the common feature of which is peasant-based guerrilla warfare? These are the conclusions of the Pabloists in answer to the apparent paradoxes in these revolutions.

But these conclusions are not justified, they represent a false ideology motivated by the desire either for a short cut to revolution or for short-term reformist "success" -- an *adaptation* to non-proletarian forces and bourgeois ideology, and they cannot be supported without either openly rejecting Marxist principles or falsifying history. We can show this by looking at some central aspects of the most systematic expression available of Pabloist views on Vietnam, in *Le parti communiste Vietnamiennne*, a book by Pierre Rousset of the International Majority Tendency of the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" (represented in Australia by the Communist League). Written in French, its key concluding chapters have been published in English translation in *International* (Vol 2 no 3, Summer 1974), the theoretical journal of the British International Marxist Group.

It is worth looking first at some examples of his general methodology. According to Rousset,

"The Vietnamese Communist Party belongs to that generation [?!] of communist [sic] parties which, before and after the Second World War, broke in practice with the Soviet bureaucracy's international policies. In Greece, Yugoslavia, China and Vietnam, they existed uneasily in the contradiction between their membership of the Stalinized Comintern and their involvement in the class struggle of their countries. They chose [!] the road of revolution. *Of all these parties, the Vietnamese has travelled furthest in the direction of a rediscovery of the principles of Marxism.*" (emphasis in original)

Of course, *every* Stalinist party, to the extent that it gained any real social base in its own country, felt the "contradictions" between its own, national reformist appetites and the exigencies of Kremlin diplomacy. But a break with Stalin scarcely meant a necessary break with Stalinist class collaboration or the appetite of petty-bourgeois layers for bureaucratic privilege. And "involvement in the class struggle" was and is no more a guarantee of *revolutionary* involvement in it during the war period or now than it was when Lenin polemicalised against the economists in *What Is To Be Done?*.

Rousset's analysis is not scientific materialism but simply empiricist worship of the accomplished fact. The revolutionary character of Stalinists cannot be deduced from the mere fact of their military defeat of the capitalist state. Why not, in that case, conclude the same about Stalin himself, because capitalism was overthrown in Eastern European countries on his orders? And how explain the absence of workers' soviets in *any* of these countries? How explain the counter-

revolutionary role *internationally* of Tito, Mao and the Greek Stalinists today, or that of the Vietnamese, who most recently together with the Kremlin welcomed Indira Gandhi's police state in India?

Rousset is faced with a small contradiction in asserting the "rediscovery of the principles of Marxism" by the leaders of the VWP: the unbridgeable gap between that assertion and the long heritage of class collaboration by the Vietnamese Stalinists *which has never been repudiated by them*. It was in 1939 that Ho Chi Minh declared, "For the time being, the Party cannot put forth too high a demand (national independence, parliament etc.). To do so is to enter the Japanese fascists' scheme. It should only claim for democratic rights..." ("The Party's Line in the Period of the Democratic Front", July 1939, in Fall (editor), *Ho Chi Minh on Revolution*, p 131) -- the complete negation of Marxist principles. So according to Rousset (for whom the "unique continuity ["from 1939 on"] of the Vietnamese Party is a very precious quality"), Ho and company fundamentally changed their class orientation and program without a *break* in continuity, without "reversals in policy", but through "corrections and a continued progression"!

Rousset systematically ignores the question of the *working class* in Vietnam, and the fact that the VWP has never led the working class in the cities on the basis of a *working-class* program. He treats as a secondary matter the fact that the VWP systematically sold out the urban proletariat in actual struggle. But for Marxists, the central role of the working class cannot be denied even in the backward or underdeveloped countries. It is no accident that Lenin's works are full of categorical statements such as the following:

"Beginning with the *Communist Manifesto*, all modern socialism rests on the indisputable truth that the proletariat alone is a *really* revolutionary class in capitalist society. The other classes may and do become revolutionary only in part and only under certain conditions..." ("*Revolutionary Adventurism*", *Collected Works* vol VI pp 197-198) (emphasis in original)

After 1945-46, when the uprising in Saigon led by the urban proletariat was crushed with the Vietnamese Stalinists' active assistance, they based themselves primarily on the peasantry in order to conduct a "people's war" on the model of Mao Tse-tung's CCP. It was in relation to such peasant-based, "communist"-led guerrilla wars that Trotsky wrote in 1932,

"But after all aren't there Communists at the head of the Chinese Red armies?... The fact that individual Communists are in the leadership of the present armies does not at all transform the *social character* of these armies, *even if* their Communist leaders bear a definite proletarian stamp.... Meanwhile the majority of the rank-and-file Communists in the Red detachments unquestionably consists of peasants, who assume the name Communist in all honesty and sincerity but who in actuality remain revolutionary paupers or revolutionary petty proprietors. *In politics he who judges by denominations and labels and not by social facts is lost.* All the more so when the politics concerned is carried out arms in hand." ("*Peasant War in China and the Proletariat*", *Writings, 1932*, pp 194-195) (emphasis added)

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Mao and Ho -- both led peasant armies in overthrowing capitalist rule: both defend national bureaucratic privileges by betraying revolutionary struggles.



USec on women's oppression:

Feminists in Marxist disguise

reprinted from *Women and Revolution* No 9, Summer 1975

The so-called "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" (USec) is an international rotten bloc of revisionists which claims to represent the continuity of the revolutionary international founded by Leon Trotsky. Its "Trotskyist" pretensions are spurious, and it will not be "united" much longer. The USec is being ripped apart by a major factional cleavage between the *centrist* International Majority Tendency (based mainly on the European sections led by Ernest Mandel, Livio Maitan and Pierre Frank) and the *reformist* "Leninist-Trotskyist Faction" associated with the US Socialist Workers Party.

Although the factional division in the USec is deep and encompasses virtually every important political question, the political programs of both wings stand fundamentally counterposed to authentic Trotskyism. An examination of the policies of the USec toward the woman question reveals that these opportunists have vitiated the entire content of the Leninist approach to work among women.

In an internal bulletin of the USec's French section, the head of the organization's work among women wrote:

"... even at the beginning of the twentieth century, revolutionaries largely put off taking up the fight against women's oppression until after the revolution... the fight essentially consisted in calling for women to join the ranks of the Communist International and in the class hostility to the *essentially bourgeois* mass feminist movements of the time. The analysis of woman's oppression, even with the qualitative leap of Engels' contribution, which viewed it as a social problem which could be overcome historically, remained marked by a frequently moralistic approach (cf. Engels' remarks on homosexuality) and limited by the imprint of the dominant ideology, as yet only partially mastered. In addition, the orientation of revolutionary Marxists toward the women's movement was dictated by the nature of the movements which had existed until then and their frequently hostile attitude toward the workers' movement. "For all these reasons, the advances of the Third International do not constitute a definitive answer, given the women's movements which have developed in an entirely different context today and which stimulate a deepening of the Marxist analysis of women's oppression." (Verla, Internal Bulletin no 8, undated [mid-1974])

In order to pursue its opportunist appetites unhindered, the USec falsifies the work of German left Social Democrats (SPD) and the Russian Bolshevik Party prior to the Russian Revolution, as well as the positions of the Communist International (CI), which were codified in the Theses of its Third Congress (documented in "Bolsheviks on Women's Liberation", *Women and Revolution* nos 2 and 3, September-October 1971 and May 1972). It rejects not simply the "moralistic" Engels, but also the fight of revolutionaries such as Clara Zetkin, VI Lenin and Alexandra Kollontai to have communist work among women directed by a women's section of the party, *under the political leadership of the party and with the party's program*. The USec is compelled to deny that this history exists, because its own program and practice stand flatly counterposed to the approach of the communist movement.

The USec's policy is easy to define: simple capitulation to feminism -- a petty-bourgeois, class-collaborationist current which is counterposed to the class-struggle politics of Marxism.

The USec conceives of the women's movement as a force independent of and at least implicitly co-equal to the workers' movement. A special supplement on "A Woman's Life" in the *Red Weekly*, newspaper of the British International Marxist Group (IMG), which supports the majority tendency within the USec, concludes:

"Only through the combined weight of the organized working class -- fighting alongside women's liberation groups ... and any other groups willing to take action -- will the fight for the liberation of women advance." (*Red Weekly*, 12 December 1974)

This is nothing less than a declaration that the "organized working class" is not the qualitatively dominant political and organizational force in the socialist revolution, but merely one of many vanguards, the arithmetical sum of which will somehow provide revolutionary leadership.

This petty-bourgeois notion that everyone should "do his own thing" stands in the sharpest possible contrast to the position argued by Clara Zetkin at the Third Congress of the Communist International:

"No separatism [Sonderbundelei], no doing your own thing [Eigenbrodelei] which would in any case lead to splitting the revolutionary forces and diverting them from their great goals of the conquest of political power by the proletariat and the construction of communist society. The communist women's movement means nothing other than the planned apportionment, planned organization of the forces, men as well as women, in the communist party, in order to win the broadest masses of women for the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat, for the struggle to overthrow capitalism and for communist construction." (*Protokoll des III. Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale*, Moskau, 22. Juni bis 12. Juli 1921)

The USec has thrown overboard both the programmatic and organizational norms of the Communist International under Lenin and Trotsky. Programmatically, these opportunists reject the CI's insistence that women's sections be active in all areas of interest to the working class and "put forward the most important tasks of the proletariat, fight for the unabridged slogans of the Communist Party", rather than centering their activities around reform struggles. The section of the "Thesis on Methods of Work Among Women of the Communist Party" dealing with "Capitalist Countries", states:

"Communist women should strictly adhere to the tactics of the party, not concerning themselves so much with the realization of reforms within the limits of the bourgeois world order, as taking advantage of every live question and demand of the working women as watch-words by which to lead the women into the active mass struggle for these demands, through the dictatorship of the proletariat."

While fully recognizing the need for commissions to carry out work around the special oppression of women, the Third Congress repeatedly took pains to make it clear that this did not mean the organizational separation of the women's commission from the party leadership. The resolution on "Forms and Methods of Communist Activity among Women" is definitive on this point:

"These Women's Committees are not to form isolated nuclei within the Communist Party, but should serve as administrative organs thereof for certain definite tasks. These are to mobilize and agitate the masses of working women for the struggle for the conquest of political power and for Communist construction."

If any further amplification were necessary, Clara Zetkin's presentation to the Third Congress provides it:

"Comrades, the conference [the Communist Women's Conference] was guided in the discussion of these questions and in formulation of its decisions by a supreme principle. There is no special communist women's organization. There is only a movement, there is only an organization of women communists within the communist party, together with male communists. The tasks and goals of male communists are our tasks and goals."

The communist approach to work among women begins from the understanding that *the class question is primary*. It is the task of the communist vanguard of the working class to organize all sections of the oppressed to fight for their liberation through the struggle for socialist revolution under the leadership of the

working-class vanguard. But the USec propounds a *polyvanguardist* conception: separate organizations of separate "vanguards" jealously guarding their "independence" -- from the working class but not from the bourgeoisie. Tail-ending reformism, presenting feminism as a kind of "Marxism", preaching the "self-organization" of women separate from the revolutionary party and even within the party itself -- this is the program of the USec for women's emancipation.

The reformist SWP is well known for its contention that the "most consistent" feminist must also (or eventually) be a revolutionary. This "theory" is nothing but an excuse to capitulate to the lowest levels of feminist consciousness, so that in fact the SWP has frequently been attacked *from the left* by "socialist-feminists" for its insistence on single-issueism and its refusal to mention working-class issues. And the USec majority shares this conception, although its application is accompanied by a more "militant", "working-class" rhetoric occasioned by the presence of mass reformist parties in Western Europe.

In France, the women's movement developed after the US movement and was originally not male exclusionist. By its own admission, the French USec group first took an abstentionist attitude toward the women's movement and did not in fact become involved in it until about 1972.

One of the first major interventions of this leading section of the USec majority -- and the one which set the tone for its hypocritical attempt to distinguish itself from the SWP-led minority -- was the "Bobigny trial", in which a 16-year-old girl was tried for having an illegal abortion. The propaganda of the French Ligue Communiste (now Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, LCR) consisted mainly of demanding free abortion on demand and the abolition of the 1920 anti-abortion law. A few days after the trial, it "supported" a demonstration but had no organizational contingent or banners of its own. Nor did its newspaper *Rouge* utter a single word of criticism of "Choisir" (Choose), a bourgeois organization in many ways similar to the American National Organization for Women (NOW). (One of Choisir's organizers is Claude Servan-Schreiber, whose husband briefly held a ministerial post in the Giscard d'Estaing government.) *Rouge* (13 January 1973) simply recommended to its readers that they "participate in and support the Choisir defense groups".

The Ligue also went along with having the SWP -- through its WONAAC conduit -- invite Mrs Servan-Schreiber on a speaking tour of the US, during which the SWP newspaper, *The Militant* (23 March 1973), uncritically presented her as "a journalist in France and foreign correspondent for *Ms. magazine*" representing the French women's movement.

Rather than seeking to intervene in the confused feminist milieu to fight for a class-struggle program, the French leadership *systematically retreated* from such a course, while at the same time claiming to be very critical of the SWP's single-issueism. But its "Contribution to the Debate of Work Among Women" repeats the SWP's central argument -- that feminism and Marxism are *complementary* and not mutually exclusive:

"For a long time we had an attitude of distrust, of rejection toward feminism. The entire history of the women's movement is the history of this conflict with the workers' movement. At the present time we should be able to bring about the juncture between feminism and Marxism, both at the level of theoretical analysis as well as of political practice; this juncture can be enriching in both directions. We must appropriate for ourselves the gains of feminism. We should lay claim to the stimulating movement of authentic revolutionary feminists."

How can the LCR criticize the SWP for this anti-Marxist adaptation to feminism while expounding the same opportunistic line itself? Because, says the LCR, French feminism is more "progressive" than American feminism: "The MLF [Mouvement de Liberation des Femmes] has always -- contrary to American women's Lib -- situated itself in the framework of radically calling into question bourgeois society." But with the exception of a few decorative holiday speeches, this is no more true in France than in the US.

The only way to claim that feminism and Marxism are mutually "enriching" is either to adopt a reformist minimum program and pretend that it is "anti-capitalist" or to reject program altogether. The British International Marxist Group (IMG), which supports the USec majority, has adopted the first course. For almost a full

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year it centered its work among women around a campaign in favor of the "Working Women's Charter". The "Charter" contains demands for a number of minimum reforms, such as equal pay for equal work and equal opportunity in various areas; improved maternity leave, day care, availability of contraception and free abortion "to be readily available". The final point of the "Charter" contains the clause which presumably indicates the need for "political action":

"10) To campaign amongst women to take an active part in the trade unions and in political life so that they may exercise influence commensurate with their numbers and to campaign amongst men trade unionists that they may work to achieve this aim."

On the basis of this vague reformist statement, the IMG's *Red Weekly* (27 June 1974) unabashedly asserts that the Working Women's Charter "tried to tackle all aspects of women's oppression ...".

To the extent that the USec majority does adopt a program for women in an effort to differ-



USec "humour": Alain Krivine "draws nourishment" from breasts of Arlette Laguiller.

entiate itself from the highly developed reformist political and trade-union apparatuses of the Social Democratic and Communist Parties of various countries, it is calculated to be only slightly to the left of them. The line of the majority is to "reform" the reformists' program -- the logical extension of the USec methodology of pressuring the bureaucrats to the left.

In France, for example, the Ligue rightly attacked the CP and SP Common Program, which calls for 1,000 additional child-care centers, on the grounds that multiplying inadequate facilities is no solution. But what does the Ligue counterpose to the Common Program?

"What we have to do is to demand the multiplication of public day care centers, of small, free units, open 24 hours a day, with a qualified male and female personnel and controlled by the parents." (*Rouge*, 19 April 1974)

Although this single demand is acceptable, it hardly amounts to a counterposed *political program*. In fact, the Ligue has no program at all for *communist* work among women, but only for capitulating to the petty bourgeoisie. The special Women's Day supplement of *Rouge* contained no programmatic demands whatsoever.

The contradictions facing the USec majority are even more flagrant in Sweden, both because of a relatively highly developed social welfare system and because the Swedish group, the RMF, is on the left end of the USec spectrum. The RMF gives uncritical support to "Group 8" (an umbrella title used by most women's groups in Sweden), as for example in a recent issue of *Internationalen* (21 March 1975), which simply endorses a meeting demanding "good" day care centers and calls for men and women to "get together". (For what purpose, one might ask.) It is indicative that the RMF raised the demand of a 30-hour week for 40 hours' pay only after the women's group of the dominant Social Democratic Party had raised the same demand.

The attempt to pose a left pole of attraction (not to mention an alternative!) within the women's movement conflicts with the need of the USec to capitulate to whatever "mass vanguard" happens to be at hand. The result is that the RMF calls for a political program for the women's movement and at the same time complains that if there were such a program, the "women's movement" would be destroyed:

"Experience shows that Group 8 organizes a large number of women who otherwise would not be active in the revolutionary movement. Group 8 spontaneously has a good view of unity work. On the other hand, ... Group 8 has no developed strategy for the transition to socialist society, a limitation which is at the same time its strength, because it means that women from various political camps can work together." (*Internationalen*, 26 April 1974)

This willingness to liquidate the Trotskyist program on the women question for the sake of the

"unity of all women" and in the praise of the ability of "women from various political camps" to "work together" is indicative of the USec tendency to liquidate the party itself when it is opportune to do so.

Although the International Majority Tendency frequently makes verbal attacks on the SWP for its lack of program and/or militancy, its leading section explicitly states that there should be no program in the women's movement. A concrete application of the "no program" line was visible in the work of the Canadian Revolutionary Marxist Group (RMG) in Vancouver. In the autumn of 1974, the RMG started a women's group in Vancouver, but RMG leadership of the group was soon challenged by sympathizers of the Canadian Committee of the international Spartacist tendency (CCiSt). The RMG's response was to dissolve the group while at the same time attacking the CCiSt for trying to introduce "irrelevant questions of program". In answer to a challenge by a CCiSt supporter to write a statement of position on the woman question, the leading RMGer replied:

"We cannot make a revolutionary communist intervention at this point in time. If you want to say we don't know what to do, o.k., we don't know what to do."

The capitulation to petty-bourgeois feminism which marks the USec's work in the women's movement transforms itself in trade-union arenas into the classic social-democratic capitulation to the trade-union bureaucracy. The IMG's campaign around the "Working Women's Charter" is one good example of this phenomenon. The SWP's intervention into women's trade-union work, recently centering almost exclusively on CLUW (Coalition of Labor Union Women) is another example of the USec's programmatic liquidation. CLUW represents an attempt on the part of the union bureaucracy to channel and control the militancy and discontent which is increasingly being expressed by women workers. But the SWP celebrates this creation of the union bureaucracy:

"The structure and program of CLUW provide a vehicle for reaching out to the masses of rank-and-file women workers and involving them in action. CLUW's program, which includes fighting for equality on the job and within the union, organizing the unorganized, child-care legislation and maternity benefits, and ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, is a good one. Our approach to CLUW is very simple: Build CLUW!" (*International Socialist Review*, November 1974)

Just to be sure that the union bureaucrats get the message, the same article patiently explains why union members must *not* fight the union leadership:

"To take the piecards on and win requires a different approach. First of all, the ranks as a whole must be mobilized in struggle, and that requires a struggle unambiguously directed against the class enemy: the bosses. That means concentrating our fire on the employers, not on the union officials. [Our emphasis] "Trying to organize a fight directly against the bureaucrats -- that is, around demands like 'Dump I.W. Abel' or 'Down with Leonard Woodcock' -- is a near-hopeless cause...."

"The defeat of the Meanys and Shakers and all the rest will be a byproduct of the workers' struggle, a problem solved in passing as workers engage in the real class battles."

Perhaps one of the few merits which the SWP has in relation to the majority tendency is the virtue of clarity. For the SWP, the resolution of the crisis of revolutionary leadership is no longer the central task of Trotskyists, but merely a "problem" to be "solved in passing".

In France, the line of the LCR has been an open invitation for the bureaucrats to form a kind of CLUW with a slightly more militant rhetoric, corresponding to the domination of the labor movement by a mass Stalinist party. Thus a major article in *Rouge* on women's unemployment concludes with the resounding call:

"Today, when an autonomous women's movement is being built, when factory women's groups are being created, it is up to them to develop propaganda concerning women's unemployment and to get the whole of the workers' movement to take up the defense of women." (*Rouge*, 13 December 1974)

The total lack of any programmatic alternative to reformism is, of course, simply the extension of the USec's trade-union work in general; of the notion, so well expressed by the SWP, of "starting from where the workers are" and the LCR which, in the internal document cited earlier, praises female LCR supporters at Renault for being inactive for an entire year on precisely the same grounds: "... the women's group at Renault ... did not appear publicly for a year, did not intervene, respecting the rhythm at which the women who made it up were gaining consciousness."

In the USec press and slogans the role that "humor" plays characteristically reveals (as

Freud noted) a deep ambivalence toward the subject matter to which it is applied. Thus, at bottom, the cartoons of Krivine in the *Daily Rouge* during the FCR election campaign basically reveal that the FCR could not take its own candidate seriously.

USec attempts at humor are characteristically either meaningless, in a misplaced effort to be "cute", or fundamentally anti-working-class and in some instances anti-communist. At best, they represent a refusal to take themselves -- and more significantly, their program -- seriously.

The analogous slogans of the French and German USec sections concerning abortion are typical of the effort to appeal to a petty-bourgeois sense of self-importance: "Toute politique sur notre ventre ne se fera sur notre dos" ("Any policy on our belly will not be on our backs" [ie, at our expense]), and "Keine Entscheidung über unseren Bauch hinter unseren Rücken" ("No decisions on our belly behind our backs"). These slogans are politically meaningless -- or, to the extent that they mean anything, are a liberal appeal for "participation" or "consultation", rather than a specific demand. Thus the political appeal is to petty-bourgeois feminism, in an effort to attract new forces not on the basis of political program, but on the basis of liberalism.

A not-so-innocuous example is the cartoon published by the paper of the pro-majority Portuguese Liga Comunista Internacionalista (LCI), *Combate*, as well by *Rouge* (in a special Women's Day supplement) and the *Red Weekly*. The contrast between the "nice young girl" referring to the United Nations' "International Woman's Year" and the stupid-brute-male-proletarian waiting for 1976 to get "back to normal" is presumably supposed to constitute an attack on the bourgeoisie. In fact, however, the cartoon simply furthers the message that "men are the enemy" -- and in particular the reactionary proletarian who wants "his" woman "in her place". The "humor" is directed against the working class by caricaturing its most backward elements. Particularly since the cartoon was first published in Portugal, where Latin machismo is dominant, it is impossible not to suspect that the artist (and the political leadership which printed the cartoon) secretly sympathize with the sentiments of the "proletarian". The USec's humor appeals to its members only because they too share the ambiguities toward working-class politics which are manifested in it.

Finally, what can one say of the cartoon which appeared in the *Daily Rouge* during the French presidential elections of 1974, in which Alain Krivine (who received 0.36 percent of the votes on the first round) is shown "drawing nourishment" from the enormous breasts of Arlette Laguiller (the candidate of Lutte Ouvriere, who received 2.4 percent of the votes)? There is no rational explanation for this cartoon; it is simply in utter bad taste and disgustingly male chauvinist.

Small wonder that the USec majority organizations tend to have few women in their leadership. They demonstrate a complete inability to approach the question of women's oppression seriously either within their own organization or in their public work. When they do approach the question, they merely reveal their ambiguity and lack of seriousness.

Female comrades within USec sections have had good reason to complain of male chauvinist behavior on the part of their male comrades and in the orientation of the organizations as a whole. Because the USec revisionists do not take seriously the question of women comrades as leaders within the revolutionary movement itself, they can only capitulate to the concept of an "autonomous women's movement" as a means of "protecting" women from broader political activity -- both outside the party and within it. Thus the December 1974 conference of the French Ligue voted to set up organizationally independent male-exclusionist "women's groups" within the party (Sands Amendment). And the same practice has been followed at least by the Austrian USec group, whose women's organizations appar-

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USec "Cartoon" reprinted in NZ *Socialist Action*, depicts "men as the enemy" by caricaturing most backward elements of the working class.

... Vietnam

Rousset not only "naively" takes the Vietnamese Stalinists' claims to be "communist" as completely good coin; following their lead he openly rejects the proletarian, socialist perspectives of Marxism upheld by Lenin and Trotsky, by attempting to give a pseudo-theoretical defence of the strategy of peasant guerilla warfare:

"One must never forget that in Vietnam the social weight of the peasantry was immense [as it was, of course, in Russia and China as well]"

"The Vietnamese communists [Rousset means the VWP] have discovered how to make a strength out of this weakness."

The VWP's reliance on the peasantry was not a "strength", not a clever military tactic, but a direct *consequence*, both politically and materially, of their betrayals and abandonment of the proletariat. And abandoning the central role of the proletariat in the permanent revolution, in program and in practice, it was *necessarily* subservient to alien class forces, representing not the socialist class interests of the proletariat but the petty-bourgeois interests of "revolutionary petty proprietors". Thus there is a *common basis* for both the VWP's betrayals of the proletariat and its resulting attempt to build a base primarily among the peasantry on a program of mild reforms and alliance with the phantom "national bourgeoisie" and "patriotic landlords": the class collaborationist nationalism of the VWP, its menshevik perspective of revolution in stages, dictating a bloc with the capitalist class.

It is not enough, however, for such renegades to be seeking such a treacherous pact; the bourgeoisie must also be willing. It is a law of the imperialist epoch of capitalism that the combined and uneven development of countries such as China and Vietnam produces an emerging bourgeoisie too tied to reactionary forces, too fearful of the mobilisation of the masses, to carry out its historical tasks. Class-collaborationist Stalinists, because of their role in misleading the oppressed masses whose allegiance they must retain in order to tie them politically to the class enemy, cannot abandon the bourgeois program as easily as the bourgeoisie itself. Under certain circumstances, such class traitors will not be able to follow the bourgeoisie into the camp of reaction -- as the Vietnamese Stalinists did in 1945 -- without accepting their own self-destruction.

In Vietnam, the bourgeoisie retained a deep distrust of the Stalinists because of the latter's claim to represent the working-class struggle for socialism and association with the Soviet workers state. Moreover, the Stalinists had already exhausted their usefulness to the ruling class in clearing the way for the reassertion of French control in 1945-46 over the backs of the working class. The bourgeoisie was so completely dominated and bribed by the imperialists that they could never as a class pursue a policy independent of the imperialists, particularly in circumstances of imperialist military occupation. However, the national liberation struggle, finding immediate support in the land-hungry peasantry and a section of the intelligentsia, continued after 1946; and the guerrilla war forced on the Stalinists further helped seal off the bourgeoisie from the "patriotic united front".

But if the Stalinists were compelled to fight the imperialists in spite of themselves, the *possibility* existed that they would win a military victory based on mobilising the peasant revolt. Provided the bourgeoisie remained hostile to any deal with the Vietminh, such a victory could only result in destroying the existent Vietnamese bourgeois state (during the 1946-54 war only a fig leaf for French rule).

Thus, in spite of an underlying continuity of class collaboration, in 1954 the Vietminh *did* win a decisive military victory resulting in the crushing of organised bourgeois power in North Vietnam and the establishment there of a state based on proletarian property forms, with a state apparatus formed around the cadres of the Vietminh. However, *the basic political character of the VWP did not change as a result but only acquired a new material base*. The role of Ho and his party in the 1954 Geneva settlement was a betrayal, demonstrating that such a bonapartist regime, even though based on proletarian property forms, jeopardises the vital interests of the workers state and the proletariat internationally in order to pursue its own nationalist aims. Even were the military situation in Vietnam at that time such that the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies could blackmail the Vietminh into giving half the country back to the capitalists, it was completely treacherous to deceive the

masses by declaring a "victory", as Ho did, what would in that case be a major forced retreat (eg see *Ho Chi Minh on Revolution*, p 246), and to refuse to expose to the Soviet and Chinese workers the perfidious role of Mao and Stalin's heirs.

But the military situation was in fact by no means unfavourable. The French had been decisively defeated on the battlefield at Dienbienphu, and as a liberal bourgeois historian has described it, the Vietminh was already dominant in more than three-quarters of Vietnam and was poised to overrun considerably more, and, a month before the Geneva Conference concluded, the French had begun their withdrawal from southern Tonkin. Yet the Vietminh at Geneva agreed to evacuate not only the Mekong delta south of Saigon, but also the vast area between the 13th and 17th parallels that had been one of its major political bastions (George McT Kahin and John W Lewis, *The United States in Vietnam*, revised edition, New York, 1969, pp 47-48). In addition, strong popular opposition to the war in France was preventing the continuation of the French imperialist campaign (already dependent on the US for 80 percent of its funding). The US ruling class had just concluded in an uneasy peace its costly and unpopular war against Korean workers and peasants. The Vietnamese ruling class was in confusion and disarray. Thus, what on the surface appears to be a rather senseless capitulation by Ho in 1954 cannot be explained by reference to the objective relation of forces, but



Tank of the liberation forces enters Saigon Presidential Palace.

only by the interests of a *bureaucratic caste*, privileged in a relative sense, and independent of the control of the working class.

Rousset explains away this consistent *bureaucratic-nationalist* policy by abolishing the difference in principle between deformed and healthy workers states, between the regimes of the Stalinists and the kind of state created by the Russian workers in 1917. Openly admitting the deformed character of the North Vietnamese workers state, Rousset dismisses soviet democracy as a side issue, simply a matter of degree:

"North Vietnam is a *bureaucratically deformed workers' state*.... there is ... no suggestion that the right of tendency is recognised in [the Party]. Above all, there exists no soviet system, with workers' councils making up the backbone of the State from top to bottom.

"The point here is not to reproach the Vietnamese Communist Party [to be avoided at all costs!] for not having been able to establish the socialist democracy of our dreams[!].... The USSR of Lenin and Trotsky was a *bureaucratically deformed workers state* in 1920[!]." (emphasis in original)

Rousset deliberately muddles up bureaucratic *deformations* in a workers state (Russia 1920) *founded on* and still attempting to maintain the *continuity* of soviet democracy with a qualitatively deformed workers state in which soviets have never existed, and the leadership of which, by Rousset's own admission, has never strived to create them! He then attributes the failure of the Vietnamese Stalinists even to *work towards soviet democracy for 21 years(!)* to a theoretical misunderstanding!

However, the objective relationship between the VWP and the Vietnamese working class as *described by Rousset himself* is analagous *not* to the Soviet Republic of 1920, but to the relationship of Stalin's bureaucratic apparatus to the Russian working class -- *after* the rising Soviet bureaucracy had *succeeded* in gaining the upper hand and smashing the Soviets and the revolutionary wing of the Bolshevik Party. Denying the centrality of the proletariat in the social revolution leads to denying the centrality of workers' democracy in the workers state. *That is what unites the policy of the VWP before and after the 1954 -- and 1975 -- victories over the bourgeoisie.*

Rousset implicitly denies that there is a material basis for the existence of a bureaucratic caste in Vietnam -- and thus soviets have not been needed to counter it -- on the grounds

that an automatic, overriding "objective" dynamic of the struggle is sufficient to prevent its crystallisation.

"Today the continuation of the revolutionary struggle is the main factor opposing these tendencies [toward bureaucratisation]. For this struggle prevents the *crystallization* [emphasis in original] of a privileged bureaucratic caste.... Had North Vietnam experienced such a bureaucratic *degeneration* [emphasis added] it would never have become involved ... at the side of the Southern masses. In 1959-60, the Vietnamese Workers Party would not have made the turn to relaunching the armed struggle.... For, let us repeat, it is not true that the North Vietnamese state or the Vietnamese Communist Party were *compelled* to take up the struggle again.

"... If a crystallized bureaucratic caste had existed in 1960 in North Vietnam, it would have given its allegiance to Moscow and submitted to the political imperatives of peaceful coexistence. The struggle in the South would have been resumed *against* the Vietnamese Workers Party...."

But didn't the VWP precisely submit to the imperatives of peaceful coexistence in 1954? This proves according to Rousset's own criterion that in 1954 a bureaucratic caste was already crystallising! And the struggle in the South *was in fact resumed against the wishes of the North Vietnamese leadership*. Intent on his sycophantic apologetics for the Stalinists, Rousset deliberately falsifies history.

There is plenty of evidence showing that Hanoi advised against and strenuously opposed the resumption of the armed struggle in the South, as documented, for example, by US liberals such as Kahin (who urged a "realistic" policy on the imperialist warmongers, arguing that the war in Vietnam was ineffectual in achieving US aims because based on faulty assumptions about the "enemy"):

"The bitter and militant frame of mind of the Southern Veterans and their impatience with Hanoi's insistence on non-violent policies must have been readily evident to Ho Chi Minh's government.... Emissaries sent south to test public opinion after the Declaration [of the Resistance Veterans, March 1960] were badly received, called cowards, and asked 'what are you waiting for to help us? If you don't do anything, you Communists, we will rise up against you too!'

"Even so, not until six months after the Southern Veterans had taken matters into their own hands did Hanoi publicly endorse their stand...." (Kahin and Lewis, op cit, pp 114)

Rousset, seeking to hide the reality of the bureaucracy, dismisses the possibility of *bureaucratic* motives for Hanoi's eventual support to the Southern struggle, by narrowly and arbitrarily restricting the concept of bureaucratic self-defence to the level of simple military survival in the North. But the question is not whether the North faced immediate military defeat in 1960, but *in whose interests* the VWP resumed the struggle. It was not in the pursuit of proletarian revolution in the South; the VWP, by backing the popular-frontist NLF, consistently sought to *divert* Southern revolt from attacking capitalism, attempting instead to neutralise the counterrevolutionary regime in the South by means of a "friendly" bourgeois coalition government. This aim, codified in the program of the NLF, was threatened by the wide-scale peasant revolt against the savage repression unleashed by Diem. The mobilisation of the masses threatened, if it escaped Hanoi's control altogether and became united under the potential revolutionary leadership of the Southern proletariat, to undermine the VWP leaders' rule in the North as well. But the bourgeoisie once again refused to back a compromise. Precisely because the US escalation in 1964-65 challenged the existence of the North Vietnamese workers state, the war in the South became more and more an extension of the military defence of the North.

It should come as no surprise that a bureaucracy based on the commanders of the Vietnam-wide guerrilla struggle which accomplished the 1954 revolution should have an interest of its own in maintaining its influence in the southern half of their nation. The artificial division of Vietnam in 1954 cut across the political, cultural and economic unity between North and South, and thus created enormous difficulties for the economic development of the North Vietnamese workers state and for the survival of the bureaucracy resting on its collectivised property forms as well. Vietnam is a single nation in which the struggle against imperialism in South and North has closely intertwined in spite of the partition. As a result, the bureaucracy and its regime in the North has always needed to retain its influence in the South, both to counteract counter-revolutionary forces and to insure itself against mass discontent.

The answer to the question: how can counter-revolutionary Stalinists carry out a social revolution? is that they can do so only in spite

of themselves in exceptional circumstances; only over the backs of a working class not organised as a class for itself or not recovered from decisive defeats; only with a nationalist perspective hostile to the world revolution; and only to create a regime which is an obstacle to the extension, development and defence of the revolutionary conquests it rests on.

The bureaucratic deformation was not inevitable or fated by history; that is to say, the smashing of capitalism by Stalinists leading a peasant revolt was not inevitable, nor the exceptional circumstances which permitted it, key among them the passivity of the proletariat. It was inevitable that given these exceptional conditions, the overthrow of capitalism in Vietnam would fall qualitatively short of working-class needs, ie that it would create a workers state deformed from birth. This fact is the true explanation for the apparent contradiction between the actual non-proletarian base and leadership of the revolution, and the fact of its overthrow of capitalist property forms to be replaced by those of a workers state.

Of decisive significance for the successful defence of the revolution is the question: will the regime issuing from the revolution aid or act against the international socialist revolution, the highest principle of revolutionary Marxists? To see the rule of a bureaucratic caste as a secondary question is to see internationalism, the keystone of viable revolutionary strategy, as a secondary question, a capitulation in principle to the material interests and nationalist perspectives of the bureaucracies, to the mirage of "socialism in one country". The basic character of the new Vietnamese society corresponds to Trotsky's definition of the Soviet Union in *The Revolution Betrayed*. To those who apologised for the regime of Stalin in the USSR, Trotsky replied:

"The more honest or open-eyed of the 'friends' ... concede that there is a spot on the Soviet sun. But substituting a fatalistic for a dialectic analysis, they console themselves with the thought that 'a certain' bureaucratic degeneration in the given conditions was inevitable. Even so! The resistance to the degeneration also has not fallen from the sky. A necessity has two ends: the reactionary and the progressive. History teaches that persons and parties which drag at the opposite ends of a necessity turn out in the long run on opposite sides of the barricades." (*The Revolution Betrayed*, Pathfinder edition, p 307)

So with the Pabloists today, most recently in the case of Vietnam. Those who apologise for obstacles to the revolution end up as obstacles themselves, preventing the arming of the masses with a revolutionary theory and program.

The character of the Vietnamese bureaucracy is of course modified in its expression, in the details of its configuration, by its specific development and the peculiarities of its origins and situation. But privilege is at the core of the bureaucracy. It is true that the necessities of warfare have to an extent masked the privileges of the bureaucracy, because their more obvious material forms have been subordinated to the needs of survival. Privilege is relative; and in the absence of workers' democracy, which presupposes an awakened, active, organised, class-conscious working class, there is no means of resisting the privileges which fall to the heads of the state apparatus as the ones with control over the repressive apparatus and thus over the distribution of scarce necessities.

In Vietnam, the new regime from the beginning has had no internal obstacles to the development of privilege, no internal means of resistance to the self-interest of the functionaries. Without massive aid from an international revolution to overcome the problems of socialist development in a backward country, even the healthiest Vietnamese workers state would face an inexorable pressure toward bureaucratic degeneration and a continuing threat of bourgeois counterrevolution, just as did the Russian workers state following the 1917-21 civil war. But because the Russian Revolution was accomplished under the leadership of the working class organised in Soviets, a political counterrevolution was necessary to install a bureaucratic caste. No such political counterrevolution has been necessary in Yugoslavia, China, Cuba or Vietnam.

political counterrevolution was necessary to install a bureaucratic caste. No such political counterrevolution has been necessary in Yugoslavia, China, Cuba or Vietnam.

The qualitative difference between a deformed workers state such as these and a healthy workers state does not reside in any specific degree of bureaucratic corruption, bourgeois norms of distribution, privilege and inequality; but in whether, on this material basis, there has arisen a distinct privileged caste with its own interests, counterposed to the working class; and in whether, in the service of such a caste, the tendency, the direction of motion, the practical effect of the ruling group is not toward socialism but away from it, both on the national and the international plane. The difference is qualitative in that these regimes, in their own national and historical context, have so great an autonomy from the working class (the ruling class on the basis of the property forms) that they constitute a brake on socialist development and an obstacle to the world revolution, which can be removed only by a supplementary political revolution to reassert proletarian control over the proletarian state.

Against the Pabloists who politically defend the bureaucracy in order to attempt to "pressure" it or "reform" it, we say that the task facing the Vietnamese masses is to oust the VWP bureaucrats and establish a regime based on workers' and peasants' councils, necessary to defend the conquests of the revolution. The establishment of the bureaucracy as a product of the revolution in Vietnam in no way negates the fact that while immediately a victory also for the Stalinists,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE FIVE

USec feminists

ently spend a large part of their time complaining to sympathizers about the conduct of their male comrades. Meanwhile an article in *Rouge* was presented as merely a personal opinion "to the extent that we have not yet had time to discuss it in women's groups", which can only be taken to mean that editorial policy is determined, not by an editorial board which is in turn elected by the organization's Central Committee, but by some "women's groups" whose members may not even be party members.

The logical outcome of the USec's "autonomous organization" for each component of the "new mass vanguard" is to reduce the revolutionary party to a federation of interest groups. This is not some novel innovation, some "creative" application of Marxism to a new context. In fact, it recalls the Socialist Party of the Second International in the US before World War 1. Leninism developed out of and subsequently counterposed itself to the social-democratic movement whose traditions the USec now unconsciously recapitulates. The USec has rejected Leninism.

The Spartacist League has fought to defend in practice the programmatic and organizational guidelines set forth by the first four congresses of the Communist International by intervening in

CONTINUED FROM PAGE EIGHT

Printers' strike. . .

the Socialist Workers League and the Socialist Left were also present supporting the picket. The role of left groups in such struggles should be supportive and not to substitute themselves for the workers. Substitutionism can only give credence to claims by the cops, media and some elements in the union leadership that "provocateurs" are causing all the trouble.

... One example of an ostensibly revolutionary organisation with a claim to be able to lead the working class is in the "Emergency Battler Supplement" (19 August) issued by SWAG. The leaflet, aside from ludicrous exaggerations as to numbers of cops and arrested and general mindless enthusiasm, poses nothing except a call for everyone to support the picket line. The pseudo-Trotskyists of the SLL in their fake "mass" paper *Workers News* (16 August) merely described the dispute and completely "forgot" to give any direction to the strike. In contrast, the SL leaflet of 18 August criticised the leadership's strategy and pointed out a fighting direction. The question of revolutionary political leadership for the working class is of central importance for conscious workers. For without it reformist trade-union leaders such as Pedersen will continue to undermine and demoralise the working class in struggle, weakening it and opening it up to further attacks. Pedersen, however, has made it all too obvious that he wants to concede the exemptions, in fact anything at all, to get back to work and the "freedom to negotiate". At the *Herald-Sun* on Tuesday (19 August) he attempted, without the slightest concessions from the

the revolution is a much greater victory for the working class, which because of it can tackle the bureaucracy from advanced positions and on the basis of collectivised property forms. Far better than still facing the capitalist-landlord enemy and the imperialist armies! But it is essential to recognise that the threat of counterrevolution remains until the class enemy has been beaten on a world scale. The program of political revolution can only go hand in hand with unconditional military defence of all the workers states against the class enemy.

The prospects for political revolution in Vietnam are greatly enhanced by the recent victories, which eliminate the immediate threat of bourgeois counterrevolution. To the extent that Vietnam recovers economically from the war damage and the planned economy achieves results, the privileges and the counterrevolutionary role of the bureaucracy will become more extreme and open. At the same time, the Vietnamese proletariat will be greatly strengthened. A heightening of class struggle throughout South East Asia -- Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia -- will pose sharply the class differences between the policy of "socialism in one country" and the permanent revolution. The sharpening of inter-imperialist rivalries and the increasingly disruptive economic crises of world capitalism will heighten the contradictions faced by the bonapartist bureaucracies. To organise for the political revolution in Vietnam, as in the other deformed workers states, a revolutionary party is necessary with a clear understanding of the nature of the Stalinist regime, and one which is part of a reborn Fourth International. ■

the women's movement on the basis of a class program. We say openly that to the extent that the women's movement is dominated by petty-bourgeois feminism and political unclarity, it must be polarized and eventually split around a transitional program of class-struggle demands for women. It is artificial, therefore, to separate more general "political" slogans from questions of more specific concern to women, since the "bourgeois reforms" concerning abortion, day care and other areas in which women are especially oppressed can be resolved only under the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the trade unions, women unionists must be an integral part of the struggle to build an alternative revolutionary leadership. To do this, they must fight against demands which divide the working class as a whole, such as the demand for preferential firing (of male workers) so that women workers can keep their jobs.

The Women's Commission of the Spartacist League therefore undertakes its work among women under the leadership of the Central Committee. Only in this way will women comrades not be forced to assume the entire burden of carrying out party work among women while the men lead the "real" fight for state power. Only in this way can women comrades play a full and leading role in the common struggle to build the revolutionary parties and reforge the Fourth International which alone can successfully lead the struggle for world revolution and lay the basis for the full emancipation of women and all oppressed sectors of society. ■

employers, to call off the pickets so that the issue dealing with the Budget could come out! Pedersen and his supporters are in fact rather exposed at the moment thus posing the possibility of a "militant" leadership taking over at some point.... Trade-union officials who take office on a program that does not break with class-collaboration will, whatever their intentions, misdirect the struggles of the working class....

CONTINUE THE STRIKE! DEFEND THE CLOSED SHOP! NO EXEMPTIONS!

NO SACKINGS -- RETRAINING AT FULL PAY! FOR A SHORTER WORKING WEEK WITH NO LOSS IN PAY LINKED TO A SLIDING SCALE OF HOURS AND WAGES!

EXTEND THE STRIKE! FOR ACTIVE PICKET SUPPORT FROM ALL UNIONS AND THE LEFT! FOR A COMPLETE UNION BAN ON THE *HERALD-SUN* AND THE *AGE*!

THE PKIU MUST CALL OUT THE AJA/PEU/VPOU! FOR A COMBINED SHOP COMMITTEE MADE UP OF DELEGATES FROM ALL UNIONS AND SECTIONS! FOR ONE UNION IN THE INDUSTRY!

FOR WORKERS' SELF-DEFENCE OF THE PICKET LINES AGAINST POLICE ATTACK! FOR A CLASS DEFENCE OF ALL ARRESTED PICKETS!

FOR EXPROPRIATION OF THE NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY UNDER WORKERS' CONTROL!

NO CENSORSHIP!

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP IN THE TRADE UNIONS BASED ON THE FULL TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM!

FOR A REAL WORKERS GOVERNMENT BASED ON WORKERS' ORGANISATIONS!

Published jointly by: Spartacist League and the Bolshevik Tendency
21 August 1975

MELBOURNE PRINTERS' STRIKE

Defend all the arrested Age/Herald-Sun pickets!
Drop all the charges!

PICKET: City Court,
Russell Street,
Melbourne.

9.30 am on:
10, 24 and 26 September
11 November

For further information telephone: (03) 429 1597



Pickets injured, arrested in Melbourne

Printers' strike sold out

The leaflet reproduced below was distributed by the Spartacist League and the Bolshevik Tendency on 21 August at the final mass meeting of striking printing workers at the Melbourne newspapers, the *Herald-Sun* and the *Age*. The strike, in opposition to an employer attempt to force the PKIU to grant exemptions from union membership for some senior workers in return for a 5 percent pay increase, lasted from 8 August to 21 August. Although it succeeded only in postponing resolution of the dispute, it demonstrated the potential power of militant mass picketing. Throughout the strike the employers pursued a provocative policy, instructing scabs and company executives to drive trucks through picket lines with police protection resulting in a number of violent clashes. At the *Age* on the night of 15 August, two people (including Storemen and Packers organiser Mick O'Grady) were badly injured by delivery trucks barging through picket lines under police direction, and seven pickets were arrested. Nevertheless, in the face of attempted sabotage by the PKIU leadership, the pickets were able to severely restrict the circulation of all three papers, to stop the publication of the *Herald* on one day, and to prevent an outright employer victory.

Despite a PKIU Board of Management motion that support be solicited from all unions, State Secretary/Treasurer Frank Pedersen made no attempt to get those unions with members still working at the newspapers to join the strike, and ignored offers of industrial action in solidarity from other unions, including the Seamen and Wharfies! A resolution carried at the 15 August strike meeting calling for a strike bulletin was never acted upon! At the next mass meeting on Monday 18 August the Spartacist League distributed a leaflet denouncing the bureaucrats' sell-out proposals and arguing for a united strike of all unions in the newspapers, militant picketing, and defence of all the pickets arrested the weekend before. The leaflet was welcomed by many printers who had received no information whatsoever from their officials. The meeting narrowly rejected (272 to 260) Pedersen's proposal, which was for a return to work so that negotiations could continue "in a proper fashion".

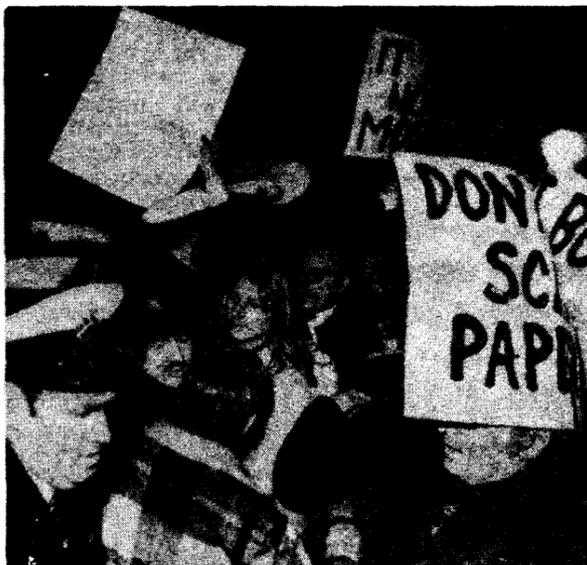
Repeatedly throughout the strike, the PKIU officials tried to get the pickets lifted and to keep pickets from obstructing newspaper delivery trucks. It was this treachery which made it possible to get trucks through the pickets, brought about police victimisation, and finally led to the vote on 21 August to return to work -- on the recommendation of not only Pedersen but "left" AMWU organiser Neville Hill. The basis for the return to work was virtually identical to the proposals rejected on 18 August: a 5 percent increase; and a two month "cooling off" period followed by a month of negotiations on the union-busting exemptions -- to be followed if unsuccessful by adjudication by a stacked "Board of Reference", consisting of union and employer representatives and an "independent" chairman! In spite of the inadequate 5 percent wage rise, the postponement of the crucial exemptions issue puts the dispute back into the control of the bureaucrats and only delays and therefore weakens the critical fight against redundancies and union bashing. At the 21 August meeting many of the workers who felt they had little choice but to accept a return to work nevertheless supported the militant picketing and openly expressed their bitterness at the sabotage of the union leadership.

Openly revealing their role as defenders of the bosses' interests, the police made at least 19 arrests. While most of those arrested (on trumped-up charges ranging from assaulting police to drunk and disorderly behaviour) were striking printers they also included AMWU organiser Jim O'Neill, two members of the LaTrobe Spartacist Club (Andrew Georgiou and Bruno Mascitelli), and a Communist League supporter. The prosecution of all these militants is an attack on workers' right to picket and the whole labour movement must demand that all charges be dropped! (Two of those arrested, Michael Sheridan and David Armstrong, have already been fined \$40 and \$200 respectively.)

The bourgeois press, naturally, tried to hide the issues of the strike and to slander the strikers. The Spartacist League was a particular

target for redbaiting attacks. The *Financial Review* (21 August 1975) concocted a fairy tale about "rent-a-picket" and outright lies about students "wearing hard hats and crash helmets in the style of Japanese radical students". And CM Evans, writing in the trendy *Nation Review* (29 August - 4 September 1975), advised both the trade union bureaucracy and newspaper owners to look at the "problems" caused by people "not directly involved in the strike" such as members of the Socialist Left and especially of the Spartacist League.

In fact Spartacist supporters, who consistently manned the pickets, won the respect of many picketers and furnished an example of serious communist strike support work. The rest of the Melbourne left made no effort at serious consistent work and offered no way forward for the strike. The Socialist Labour League, for example, showed up to take photos and interviews to adorn their newspaper, but refused to argue for any program for the working class or to offer concrete suggestions to lead the strike to victory. The Communist Party of Australia (CPA)'s *Tribune* (26 August 1975) trumpeted about mythical "important gains" and gently chided the PKIU bureaucrats for having "cautiously led" the strike!



Militants defend picket against cop attack.

Most disgraceful of all has been the disgusting refusal of these fake lefts to do anything in defence of the arrested picketers. The Socialist Workers League (SWL) refused to help build a defence rally, and a prominent supporter of the SWL, Andrew Jamieson, claimed that the Spartacist-initiated pickets at the trials of 27 and 28 August were just a "sectarian manoeuvre"! At the first picket a solitary SWLer, David Deutschmann, turned up to observe from a respectable distance and refused to carry an unsigned placard, "Defend the Arrested Age/Sun-Herald Pickets! Drop all the Charges!". Phil Herrington of the CPA decided that action would be "counter-productive"(!) and the CPA did nothing further. Nothing but betrayal can be expected of these reformists who criminally refuse to defend the victims of cop attacks in the course of the class struggle.

LEAFLET: CONTINUE THE STRIKE!

The strike at the *Herald-Sun* and *Age* is nearing the end of its second week. Originating out of a log of claims submitted by the Printing and Kindred Industries' Union (PKIU) (which included a \$36 wage increase and a 35-hour week), the strike has centred around an employer proposal to exempt sixteen leading hands at the two newspapers from union membership. The move to exempt department heads from the union is closely linked to the inevitability of the companies' using the introduction of new electronic scanning equipment to carry out widespread sackings and the Newspaper Proprietors' Association's (NPA) ability, with trained personnel on staff, to maintain production during strikes. In short the exemptions are key to smashing the strength and possibly the existence of the printing unions.

Revolutionists are not opposed to technological progress but put forward a program to ensure that such innovations are not at the expense of the working class. To the introduction of OCR

[Optical Character Recognition] the demands must be raised -- No sackings! Shorten the work week to share the work around with no loss in pay! Re-training on full pay! -- and in the face of resistance from the employers to these demands: for the expropriation of the newspaper industry under workers' control!

The PKIU rank-and-file have responded militantly to the threat to the union -- rejecting official recommendations to continue negotiations at the 8 August mass meeting. The second meeting on 18 August voted narrowly to continue the strike, rejecting the recommendation of the negotiating committee, moved by PKIU Secretary Frank Pedersen, for a return to work and negotiations on the early-start and piece-rates issues with a two-month "cooling-off" period in regard to the exemptions followed by a further month of negotiations. The proposal only reaffirmed Pedersen's position all along -- to end the strike and return to "responsible" negotiations. This is a strategy that cannot win. PKIU workers must continue the strike while aggressively seeking all possible aid from other unions -- black bans, joint picketing, etc.

It is obvious that the strike can only be won by shutting down newspaper production and circulation through organised militant and mass picketing. The union leadership has instead undermined the potential of the strike by failing to build the pickets so that scab trucks continue to get through and Pedersen has refused to respond to offers of support from other unions.

It is an elementary working-class and union principle not to cross picket lines and, more so, [not] to work alongside scab labour. Members of the AJA [Australian Journalists' Association], PEU [Photo Engravers' Union] and VPOU [Victorian Printers' Operatives' Union] who have continued working through the strike have protested being labelled scabs, arguing that their union leadership has not called them out. The main responsibility for this situation lies with the leadership of these unions who issued a statement (undated) which tried to excuse their lack of class solidarity by hiding behind an agreement they made with the PKIU leadership that in the event of industrial action by one union the others should keep on working but only perform their normal duties. This agreement must be revoked! The PKIU leadership must call out the AJA/PEU/VPOU!

Although most pickets have appealed to unionists still working to come out in solidarity, narrow craft attitudes have also been present -- a situation encouraged by the leadership's refusal to act -- and a hostility particularly towards the women members of the VPOU. Women workers constitute a crucial section of the working class and must be won to a position of class consciousness.

Tied in with the question of scabbing is the role of the police -- the armed guardians of private property. Their class function is to defend the interests of the employers against the working class. And it is largely with police aid that the scab trucks are getting through. There have been nineteen arrests so far -- most of whom are unionists involved in the dispute. The fact that non-unionists have been arrested has been used to further intimidate pickets. At the *Age* on Tuesday, 19 August, police pulled AMWU member Bruce Manning out of the crowd claiming that he was an "outsider". The question of "outsiders" has largely been raised in relation to left groups that have been supporting the pickets, mainly from those fearful of "politics" entering into the dispute. Supporters of the Spartacist League (SL) and the Bolshevik Tendency were on the picket lines on Friday, 15 August (where two SL supporters were arrested defending a PKIU vice-president, Vic Little). Although [we were] informed officially the next day that policy was to restrict the lines (which our supporters respected under protest), by 18 August some officials on the lines -- steward B Barnes and Vic Little -- welcomed "outside" support. And the 18 August mass meeting voted unanimously to defend all arrested pickets. At times supporter(s) of the Socialist Labour League (SLL), the Socialist Workers Action Group (SWAG), the Communist Party of Australia, Link, the Communist League,

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