

# Australasian SPARTACIST



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TEN CENTS



Police attack anti-Fraser march on its way to Labor Party rally in Hyde Park, Sydney, 24 October.

## For a general strike to keep the Liberal union bashers out !

**Immediate 35-hour week at full pay for all workers!**  
**Smash Labor's wage freeze and budget cutbacks!**

The alliance of bosses' parties, the Liberal/National Country Party (L/NCP) coalition, have used their numbers in the Senate to defer the Labor Government's budget in an attempt to force a double dissolution of Parliament and a general election. The L/NCP has acted on behalf of its bourgeois masters, who are determined to throw Whitlam out and replace him with an administration better suited to lead savage attacks on the living standards and the organisations of the working class. To defeat this ruling-class plot the ACTU must immediately call a general strike to keep the Liberal union bashers out of power!

But keeping the Liberals out is not enough. The working class must place no confidence at all in the Labor Government which throughout two years in office has demonstrated its servile toadying to the exploiters. Its few paltry reforms have been largely thrown out the window with the economic recession. It has not lifted a finger to stop the growth of massive unemployment. It has attempted to impose a wage freeze on the unions in the guise of "wage indexation". It has, in short, done everything possible to make workers pay for the recession. The working class must not bear the burden of an irrational system based on capitalist theft! A general strike against the Liberals must also demand: **Smash Labor's wage freeze and budget cutbacks!**

*For a 35-hour week with no loss in pay for all workers and a full, unconditional monthly cost-of-living adjustment to all wages!*

Although ACTU President Bob Hawke hastily withdrew his initial threat that the trade unions might themselves "withdraw supply", there have been spontaneous walk-offs by metal workers and other job stoppages and calls for strike action by unions throughout Australia, including Labor Councils in Adelaide and Newcastle. Australian capitalists have reacted in horror to the real possibility of a general strike. *The Australian* (18 October) characterised the possibility as "chaos transformed into anarchy". The ALP tops, desperate to get the bourgeoisie on side, have frantically opposed industrial action, and their colleagues in the trade-union bureaucracy have attempted to deflect militant sentiment into financial levies for ALP election funds while the "left wing" works to limit the aims of militant action to "forcing supply" and defending Parliamentary convention.

It would be criminal to call for a general strike lightly. General strikes raise as an immediate problem the organisation of necessary social functions by the working class and inevitably lead toward a direct challenge of capitalist rule. An attempt to bring down the bourgeois government in Australia now, posing as immediate alternatives working-class seizure of power or defeat by counterrevolution when the working class is saddled with a leadership of quislings and the revolutionary vanguard is extremely weak, would be crushed. But a general strike to keep

the Liberals out and against the wage freeze would not be a direct challenge to the central power of the state but a working class veto exercised against threats to its immediate basic welfare and rights. Such a *defensive* general strike can win a partial victory, encourage the development of factory and shop committees (sowing the seeds of dual power), and directly undermine the hold of the reformists over the working class.

Labor Treasurer Bill Hayden's budget, along with a number of petty scandals dredged up by the Opposition (the Khemlani loans affair, etc) and the "Government's whole record" of "mismanagement", is now part of the L/NCP's "case" for an election. So pro-capitalist that it was initially unopposed even by Liberal Party leader Malcolm Fraser, the Hayden budget revolves around a two-pronged attack on the working class: a sharp cut in social expenditure and a redirection of revenue to business, with harsh regressive taxes on consumer staples and further cuts in company taxes; and a renewed campaign, led by the new Minister for Labour, Jim McClelland, to ensure that wage rises are kept within the wage indexation "guidelines", ie less than the rise in prices, cutting real wages.

The L/NCP has voted to defer the budget not because they disagree with it but solely to precipitate an election. Marxists do not call for the passage of any supply bill whatsoever -- because that would be to put political confidence in the bourgeois state to administer society --

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**Portugal: Defend Porto barracks revolt — p5**

# Trotskyist League of Canada founded

reprinted from Spartacist Canada, No 1, October, 1975

The Trotskyist League of Canada (TLC) was founded in late summer with the goal of constructing the party of proletarian revolution in Canada. In this country where reformism, centrism and New Leftism have for years masqueraded as Marxism-Leninism the TLC proudly claims the mantle of authentic Trotskyism, that is, revolutionary Marxism-Leninism. The founding of the TLC represents an important event in the continuing growth of the international Spartacist tendency and a genuine step forward towards constructing the world party of socialist revolution.

The TLC Founding Conference marked the culmination of a successful fusion between the Canadian Committee of the international Spartacist tendency and the Bolshevik-Leninist Tendency, expelled left opposition of the Revolutionary Marxist Group (RMG). This principled programmatic fusion, along with the parallel development of recruitment of individuals out of the Pabloist and left milieus in Toronto and Vancouver, laid the basis for the Founding Conference.

One-third of the founding membership were previously members of the misnamed "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" (USec) in Canada -- primarily its centrist affiliate, the RMG. This section of the TLC membership includes one comrade who was a full member of the RMG Central Committee, two others who were members of an RMG Local Executive and a total of seven comrades who were founding members of the RMG.

Previous membership in the League for Socialist Action (LSA), reformist affiliate of the USec, was also represented. Another third of the Conference attendees were previously part of the RMG periphery, attending its study classes and other activities. Thus, most of the founding membership comes to the iSt having had experience in or around ostensibly Leninist organizations.

The founding of the TLC thus confirms once again the correctness of the revolutionary regroupment tactic pursued by the iSt. Even the USec has been forced to acknowledge the success of the iSt's regroupment orientation; the Italian USec section, for one example, admitted in its press that the B-LT took with it 10 percent of the RMG's total membership (*Bandiera Rossa*, 25 May 1975).

The TLC adopted its name as an expression both of its political program and current tasks. As a component national grouping of the iSt, the TLC is committed to the earliest possible launching of the International Trotskyist League, nucleus of a reborn Fourth International. As part of this international perspective, the TLC seeks to establish itself as the clear pole of revolutionary Trotskyism within the Canadian left -- through exemplary work in the trade unions, on the campuses and around important issues such as immigration, racism and defence of the workers movement and the oppressed against bourgeois attacks, and by exposing the various opportunist tendencies in Canada which falsely claim to represent Trotskyism, particularly the RMG and LSA.

In 1971-72, a left opposition crystallized in the LSA, at that time the only affiliate of the USec and also for many years the only visible ostensibly Trotskyist organization in Canada.

The Revolutionary Communist Tendency (RCT) came into existence in part as a left reaction to the LSA's accelerated adaptation and capitulation to feminism, the social-democratic New Democratic Party and Canadian nationalism, and in part as a result of the attraction exerted by the "revolutionary" posturing of the LSA's factional opponents within the USec, primarily its French and British sections, the Ligue Communiste (presently the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire) and the International Marxist Group, respectively.

Subjected in its formative stages to ferocious and hysterical bureaucratic repression by the LSA leadership, the RCT did not seek political allies on a positive and clear program but on a negative basis: hostility to the LSA's class-collaborationist "mass campaign" politics, rejection of the LSA's tail-endism and liquidationism toward the NDP, and even cliquist antagonism toward the LSA's "regime".

Seeing that the European sections of the USec, the core parties of what is presently the International Majority Tendency (IMT), shared this program of "negative differentiation" from the LSA and that these organizations appeared to be enjoying some real successes, the RCT simply embraced the centrist politics of the USec majority, without seriously investigating them or studying the history of the USec and other tendencies considering themselves Trotskyist. With the expulsion/split of the RCT and its fusion with two other groups, the Red Circle and the Old Mole (an inchoate left-reformist caucus in the NDP and a New Left student group respectively), the Revolutionary Marxist Group was founded in 1973.

From its inception, the RMG allied itself with the "extremist" wing of the IMT which was opposed to conciliating the LSA and its American co-thinkers, the Socialist Workers Party, and which argued for the immediate implementation of democratic-centralist norms on an international basis within the USec.

The RMG made no investigation of the Bolshevik-Trotskyist heritage embodied in the documentation and practice of the early Communist International and Trotsky's Fourth International. Instead, it squabbled internally over the "correct" application of the IMT's revisionist politics to the Canadian political situation. The first two years of the RMG's existence have thus been marked by a rather comic and futile effort to "locate", "crystallize", "politicize" and "penetrate" the elusive "broad vanguard" that the USec majority insists is in the process of emerging everywhere under the impact of the irresistible "new rise of world revolution".

The essence of the "broad vanguard" methodology is substitutionism, ie, seeing the possibility or likelihood for other classes or forces than the working class -- the only consistently revolutionary class in capitalist society -- to be the central and leading element in a socialist revolution. A parallel deviation from Marxism underlies the "new rise of world revolution" theory which, in its objectivism, denies the need for a politically self-conscious working class -- embodied in a mass Leninist party -- to intervene in the historical process and make the revolution happen.

Flowing from these two basic revisions of Marxist methodology come a series of opportunist errors in practice: rejection of the centrality of program in the construction of the revolutionary organization in favor of a policy of unprincipled and impotent propaganda blocs; rejection of the Transitional Program of the Fourth International as the basis for communist work in the trade unions in favor of economist trade

unionism; and rejection of the Bolshevik conception of a communist women's movement as a section of the revolutionary party in favor of the feminist-inspired notion of an autonomous women's movement.

The RMG's opportunism and sectarian hostility to interventions and united-front proposals made by comrades of the Spartacist League/US were instrumental in breaking a number of militants away from the RMG's periphery and membership in the direction of the Spartacist program. These comrades became the nucleus of the Canadian Committee of the iSt, formed in the spring of 1974.

The Bolshevik-Leninist Tendency (B-LT), formed in August 1974 as an indigenous left-wing oppositional tendency of the RMG originating in Winnipeg, waged a consistent struggle against the RMG's right-wing degeneration by calling for an immediate split between the IMT and the SWP/LSA-supported "Leninist-Trotskyist Faction" of the USec and a rejection of the IMT's centrist politics in favor of a return to the program of Trotskyism.

The focal points of the B-LT's struggle were the necessity for international democratic centralism, for a serious communist intervention in the trade unions centered on the construction of caucuses based on the Transitional Program, and rejection of the IMT's Pabloist positions on key international questions -- including the IMT's political support for petty-bourgeois guerrilla forces in South America, failure to call for political revolution to oust the bureaucratic regimes in the Cuban and Vietnamese deformed workers states, and support for popular frontism.

Pointing to the development of the Pabloist liquidationist current within the Fourth International in the early 1950s as the root of the USec's political errors and degeneration, the B-LT argued that the IMT had given up the struggle for independent Trotskyist vanguard parties and had redefined the role of "Trotskyists" as one of pressuring the reformist misleaders of the working class to the left and seeking "adequate" substitutes for the vanguard party in the revolutionary process. At the March 1975 convention of the RMG, the B-LT was expelled on an explicitly political basis, proving that the RMG's "assimilation" of the methodology of the IMT included not only its political positions, but its bureaucratic organizational practices as well.

The expulsion of the B-LT was probably the most important political event of its kind in the history of the Canadian left since Maurice Spector's expulsion from the Stalinized Communist Party in 1928.

Following this expulsion, the CCiSt and B-LT opened a period of joint work and discussion which revealed that the apparent programmatic congruity of the two organizations was complemented by a common assessment of the current tasks of revolutionary Trotskyists in Canada.

In a parallel development, individuals from the campus and left milieus (the latter with a history as sympathizers of the RMG) were recruited by the iSt in Vancouver, beginning in the winter. The Vancouver comrades energetically carried out exemplary work on the Simon Fraser University campus and around issues of importance in Vancouver, in particular, making a propagandistic intervention in the British Columbia strike wave that provoked a polemic against the CCiSt in the Communist Party newspaper, the *Pacific Tribune*. The Vancouver comrades' work against deportations and the Green Paper racist immigration policy of the government was written about antagonistically by *The Worker*, paper of the Stalinist Canadian Party of Labour.

The fusion of the CCiSt and B-LT means that the heritage and experience of the B-LT's fight against Pabloism becomes the common property of the new organization. Along with the recruitment of the Vancouver comrades, this development represents a deepening of the iSt's roots in the Canadian political terrain and lays the basis for stabilizing a fighting Bolshevik propaganda league in Canada.

A central theme of the TLC Conference was the need to counter the chronically New Left functioning of ostensibly Trotskyist groups in Canada, notably the RMG, by the re-establishment of Bolshevik standards of professionalism in all aspects of the life of the revolutionary organization.

While the LSA has had to liquidate its Winnipeg branch and shift the frequency of its

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## SPARTACIST Canada

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# Answer to black oppression: Separatism or workers' revolution?

The leaflet reproduced below was distributed at the Sydney public meeting and demonstrations in Sydney and Melbourne in defence of the Brisbane Three.

The SL had initially refused to build the Sydney meeting as part of the defence effort because the committee had refused to guarantee either an open platform or some provision for democratic discussion. The SWL grudgingly agreed to a period of floor discussion only when the SL refused to release \$100 of funds remaining from an earlier defence committee until workers' democracy was observed (the committee needed the money to fly in black civil service bureaucrat Charles Perkins). The SL then agreed to sponsor the meeting.

At the public meeting (which attracted close to 200 people) most speakers confined themselves to attacking racism and Bjelke-Petersen. The three speakers from the centrist CL failed to put forward any program to defend the Brisbane Three and fight racial oppression apart from a half-hearted proposal for an open enquiry conducted by



Workers on the Redfern Aboriginal Housing Project, an exercise in black community control. Kevin Gilbert, who favours his own type of separatist utopia, describes the use made of the project by "... blacks who are comparatively well-off already but who want to climb just that little bit higher - on the backs of their brothers ..."  
(Because a white man'll never do it, chapter 14).

blacks into the condition of black oppression. They also stated that blacks were a vanguard in Australia today by virtue of their oppression and, echoing Perkins, that the racism of the white working class was holding their struggle back. A Spartacist spokesman pointed out that racism within the working class would not be overcome by liberal guilt but through fighting for integrated struggle against the capitalist class, and moved a motion calling for the "Sydney Committee to begin a campaign to mobilise industrial action within the working class around the demands -- Drop the Charges! Smash the Queensland Acts!"

The meeting was closed abruptly with large parts of the audience calling for discussion. Predictably, the chairman, SWLer Jim McIlroy, having got the \$100, attempted to allow only about ten minutes for discussion (after having previously agreed to forty). The SWL's staid and heavy handed reformism was too much even for Perkins, who gave them a lesson in demagoguery by demanding a nationwide general strike to free the Brisbane Three!

Correction: In the article in ASP no 24 (October 1975) the number of SWL supporters at the Brisbane Three united front committee meeting of September 29 was misrepresented as having been 15. While we are not clear as to the exact state of affairs, it appears there were at least 7 SWL members at the meeting as well as some other people either influenced by or on the periphery of the SWL.

The vicious frame-up of anti-racist militants Denis Walker, John Garcia and Lionel Fogarty by the Bjelke-Petersen Queensland Government starkly confirms the Marxist understanding that capitalism, in its historical decline is incapable of granting any lasting reforms, and must attempt to savagely cut back even its minimal reforms and repress and demoralise the most militant representatives of the working class and poor as it moves into recession and crisis. This action by the Queensland Government is only part of a wider campaign against blacks, leftists and the workers movement. It is the elementary duty of all tendencies in the workers and left movement to defend these militants. But the issues raised by the repression brought down on Walker, Garcia and Fogarty cannot be limited purely to defence.

This racist attack raises the questions of what strategy can end black oppression and how to overthrow the final bulwark of that oppression, the bourgeois state.

The development of Australian capitalism, while historically progressive in establishing the conditions that make possible the ending of all oppression and exploitation through the elimination of their material basis in economic scarcity, brutally tore apart the primitive tribal societies and cultures of the Aboriginal people. Through means ranging from theft and degradation to systematic genocide Australian capitalism has succeeded in reducing the Aborigines to a caste of racial paupers, its surviving people used as cheap labour for inland cattle stations and seasonal farm work, or forced into government-controlled reserves or ghettos around cities and country towns.

Long and painful experience with the bureaucracy, corruption and hypocrisy of the federal government (whether Liberal or Labor) has shown that reliance on pro-capitalist politicians and parliamentary reforms will not fundamentally alter, let alone eliminate, the material conditions underlying black oppression. The reformist misleadership of the working class historically has pushed the most virulent racism (the "White Australia" policy). While no longer so explicit in its racism, today, apart from liberal charity, it does nothing for blacks, totally neglecting to organise black workers (usually super-exploited and among the most oppressed), and by restricting the class struggle to sectional interests and capitalist reforms, these class traitors actively help to maintain black oppression. Faced with these betrayals and the Aborigines' own marginal numerical weight (0.5% of the population), some black militants (including Denis Walker) have turned to separatism and withdrawal from "white" society, seeing in the slogan of land rights the promise of economic independence, "control" over their communities and "self-determination".

For Marxists the right of nations to self-determination is a democratic demand with a specific meaning -- the right of a nation to secede and form a separate state. This is only possible when the *material conditions* exist to bind members of an oppressed grouping together as a distinct *nation* -- a common territory, culture, language and political economy. Scattered throughout Australia, most Aborigines have been forcibly drawn into the bottom-most rungs of the social, economic and political life of the towns and the cities, their cultures and languages shattered, with no distinct political economy of their own. Thus the demand for self-determination is either utopian and/or reactionary, presumably envisaging forced population transfers (a blueprint for race pogroms), and placing the social problems of blacks upon a primitive form of social organisation which cannot begin to alleviate them.

However the assimilation of blacks into urban ghettos is incomplete. For the remnants of the traditional tribal society (eg the black reserves and missions or the Gurindji at Wattie Creek) land rights does have a real objective basis and political meaning. In such cases, where blacks are isolated from and not closely tied into Australian society, the right to live on and use in their own way the land they occupy is a minimum democratic right and would eliminate the most atrocious forms of bourgeois harassment, oppression and theft. This, however, scarcely constitutes the basis of a nation. In arguing against those who vaguely pose "land rights" as a cure-all for blacks, the Spartacist League has counterposed the concrete demand for the immediate return of all reserves and missions to the ownership and democratic control of those living on them. In *Australasian Spartacist* no 22 August 1975 we further noted that

"this demand does not cover all legitimate black claims to land rights. For example, ownership rights to land needed for religious practices currently or recently observed must be recognised. Moreover the black question goes far beyond land rights. The right to adequate health care, education and employment (blacks have a rate of unemployment ten times as high as the rest of the population); the end of all discrimination; the expropriation of the stations under workers' control; and in some non-metropolitan areas with a majority of blacks the right of regional autonomy, are key elements of a program to end black oppression as part of the transitional program for workers' revolution."

Within urban areas the demand for "self-determination" has been transformed into an appeal for "community control" or "black control of black affairs", a substitute kind of separatism

which tries to make a virtue of the concentration of blacks in ghettos such as Redfern in Sydney. According to its advocates, the oppression of blacks in such enclaves stems not from the de facto segregation of blacks within society, not from the utter poverty and rotten conditions which prevail there, but from white interference. But it is the racism of Australian capitalist society and the deprivation imposed on blacks -- housing and job discrimination, no access to education and adequate health care, deprivation of legal rights etc -- which forces them to live in these ghettos as a reserve pool of labour for capitalist exploitation. Advocates of black community control *accept* the prevailing racism which created Redfern and imposes segregation. Black "control" of poverty-stricken ghettos is meaningless, and would not even begin to attack the real problem. The means of production, wealth and state power remain concentrated in the hands of the capitalist class, which *benefits from and perpetuates* black oppression. Only the Australian working class can rip all social wealth from the grasp of the ruling class and smash the material foundations of black oppression.

Thus it is no accident that "community control" in practice has merely acted to contain black struggles within the framework of the concessions acceptable to capitalism, such as the Aboriginal Legal and Medical Services. These minimal reform services meet real needs and must be defended against cutbacks and extended. But they are completely dependent on bourgeois state financing; their claimed "autonomy" is a mere facade. And in practice, "community control" projects are a breeding ground for the petty-bourgeois aspirations of would-be black bureaucrats to "get ahead" in capitalist society, through bribes of administrative positions offered by the bourgeois state.

Characteristic of the reaction to these Leninist criticisms was that of black activists Marcia Langton and Gary Foley, who both spent most of their presentations at the Sydney John Garcia meeting on 26 August attacking the SL. They claimed that the SL has no real knowledge of the black movement and that political criticism of the movement when it was under attack from the bourgeois state is "destructive". Foley also argued that the "white" (ostensibly socialist) groups and their ideas are basically irrelevant to the needs of blacks anyway, at least until after the revolution. Such arguments reflect the common separatist line that only blacks can say anything about the solution to black oppression, that to criticise the black movement is to infringe on its "autonomy". Others have claimed that such criticism is an attempt to impose a policy on blacks. Maoists typically claim it is even "racist". Far from it: to *refuse* to criticise, openly and honestly stating your views; to *refuse* to attempt to point the way forward, is not just an abdication of revolutionary duty but is itself the patronising inverted racism of white liberals. Nor does political criticism inhibit the defence of Garcia, Walker and Fogarty. Such arguments lead directly to the bureaucratic *suppression* of criticism. Revolutionary criticism and workers' democracy are *essential* to the real unity needed to defend these militants. Broad support for them can scarcely be obtained by demanding that anyone who disagrees with the views of the Brisbane Three must suppress his own views before helping to defend them!

In stating that the 26 August meeting that the present aim of the black movement is "to withdraw black society from white society, designed to ensure survival until your great revolution", Foley confirmed the truth of our description of the current separatist politics of the black movement, and of our warning that this means abandoning the perspective of socialist revolution. Yet nothing could be more disastrous for blacks than Foley's "strategy": not only is it impossible for all blacks to withdraw *completely* from "white" (ie capitalist) society; *to the extent that they do* they will not gain "survival" but simply make themselves an easy target for racist pogroms.

While it is understandable that many blacks have been driven to embrace a false separatist course in the face of Australia's strong white racism, this is hardly true for the pseudo-Marxist and so-called revolutionary groups who, seeking short cuts to popularity, have uncritically tailed behind this destructive separatism in the name of "solidarity" and the "mass movement". The reformists of the Socialist Workers League (SWL) and the Communist Party of Australia see the main task as pressuring the bourgeoisie through "mass movements" or "mass mobilisations"

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# Isabel Peron's last hurrah



Flanked by generals, Isabel Peron and her now-deposed henchman/advisor Lopez Rega (right).

reprinted from Workers Vanguard no 82, 24 October 1975

OCTOBER 18 -- Isabel Peron sneaked back to Buenos Aires Thursday night and in a hastily called ceremony reassumed the Argentine presidency. After a 33-day forced "vacation", the hapless former dancer found that virtually no one wanted to see her back in office. It was finally agreed that she could return long enough to preside over yesterday's "Loyalty Day" celebration, commemorating the 30th anniversary of the massive demonstrations and strikes which brought the release of then-imprisoned Colonel Juan Domingo Peron and propelled him to the presidency, which he held from 1946 to 1955 and again in 1973-74. But today even the leadership of the Peronist Justicialista movement is determined to see the *caudillo's* widow quickly bundled off to Spain, where her Rasputin, the hated butcher Jose Lopez Rega, is now living.

In fact, the only reason Isabel was even permitted to set foot in the Argentine capital again was the evident failure of her replacement, the Peronist former senator Italo Luder, to carry out his appointed tasks of "defending the institutional process" and "smashing the guerrillas". During August and September the audacity of leftist guerrillas reached the point where many military officers were talking of a coup simply for self-protection. On August 28 the Revolutionary People's Army (ERP) pulled off a dramatic operation by successfully blowing up a C130 Hercules transport plane (loaded with elite anti-guerrilla troops) during takeoff.

Despite Luder's talk of "national reconciliation," he was unable to do any better. In fact, his term in office was highlighted by the left-Peronist Montoneros' first attack on the army. In a flashy assault on the northern town of Formosa two weeks ago, the guerrillas failed to release their imprisoned comrades but nevertheless pulled off a well-coordinated getaway featuring the hijacking of several planes, including a Boeing 737. The military responded by forcing the government to create an internal security council in order to rubber-stamp whatever measures the high command deems necessary. A good idea of the mood in the upper echelons of the armed forces was given by a speech of General Jorge Olivera Rovere at a wake for an officer killed by leftist guerrillas in August:

"We shall be unable to face the verdict of history until ideological instigators, perjurers, traitors and assassins and their accomplices disappear forever.... A lot of blood may have to be spilled, but it will be the blood of the enemy and not a fruitless holocaust for our soldiers." (*New York Times*, 21 August)

Last week General Luciano Menendez, known as

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

**PICKET:**

City Court,  
Russell Street,  
Melbourne.

9.30 am on:

11, 19 November

Called by the Emergency Committee to Defend Age/Herald-Sun pickets.

(Since the last issue of ASP further endorsements have been obtained from the Waterside Workers Federation, Building Workers Industrial Union, Liquor and Allied Industries Employees Union and the Australian Railways Union.)

For further information telephone (03) 429 1597

a hard-liner, made clear that an army crackdown will not be directed solely at the guerrillas. "In order to be effective," he said, "repression must be carried out in all places where there is subversive action.... Measures will have to be taken in the trade unions, universities, etc" (*New York Times*, 13 October). And, in fact, it is among the organized workers that the greatest potential resistance to a military takeover lies. With inflation now exceeding a 300 percent annual rate and the sharp increase of unemployment during the last two months, labor is in a restive mood. The 100 percent wage increases exacted by the militant general strike in July have already been wiped out by skyrocketing prices. An indication of the mood in the unions was the remark that "I would rather have my throat cut by the guerrillas than by members of the Textile Workers Union" by that union's president, Casildo Herreras.

But despite the increasing number of "Pinochetista" opinions being voiced among army officers, the Argentine military is by no means unanimous in desiring to take power. Having held power for 18 crisis-ridden years following their overthrow of Peron in 1955, the generals found they could not crush the massive popular resistance, restive working class and elusive guerrillas and finally turned the presidency over to the Peronist Hector Campora following the March 1973 elections. They are not eager to repeat this experience. Moreover, even the troops have begun to be "infected" with leftist ideas in the 90-percent draftee army. A 13 October DPA dispatch reports that "The refusal of the military authorities to use [conscript] soldiers in urban and rural search missions is well known."

After the July 1974 death of Juan Domingo Peron, the bulk of the Argentine working class continued to view Peronism as its banner and hope. The myth of this "benefactor" of the *descamisados* (shirtless) derived from his sponsorship of mass unionization of the Argentine working class, the largest in Latin America, and the rise of workers' real wages during the late 1940's. That the unions were effectively controlled by the government's Labor Department and were set up to forestall the advance of socialist-led independent unions was at first not noticed by many workers. While Peron had already begun to crush important strikes during the early 1950's as the country's economic position worsened, he was replaced by the generals' even more repressive rule before the bankruptcy of his regime had become clear to the masses.

Bonapartist regimes, such as that of Peron, seek to act as arbiters balancing between antagonistic social classes while maintaining the domination of the ruling class. For this difficult task both a "heroic" figure and ample doses of demagogic rhetoric are needed, often combined with various populist schemes. Napoleon Bonaparte represented the consolidation of anti-Jacobin reaction in post-revolutionary France. He financed his international exploits by the imposition of burdensome salt and wine taxes on the impoverished masses. Nevertheless, in the hundred days' period after his escape from imprisonment on Saint Helena in 1815, the "left" Bonaparte sought to forge an army by rallying around him the plebeian and peasant masses with promises to relieve them of the oppressive taxes.

When Peron returned to Argentina in 1973 we warned that "...the current Peronist regime will be a government of reaction -- an instrument to carry out the job the military has been unable to do, namely to put an end to the workers' militancy which has been raging through the country since 1969" (*Workers Vanguard* no 24, 6 July 1973). And so it was, as his regime and that of his widow adopted viciously anti-labor

policies. But this was not immediately clear to Argentine workers for, like Napoleon Bonaparte in 1815, Peron had made liberal use of leftist rhetoric during the last years of his exile, at one point even stating that he would be a guerrilla today if he were younger. Again like Bonaparte, he died before the Peronist myth had been shattered.

Although they cannot displace the fundamental class forces which determine the course of history, myths are not without importance at certain junctures. Thus after being freed of the oppressive and incompetent "constitutional monarchy" in 1848 -- and after the brutal crushing of the Paris proletariat in the June Days -- the French population voted overwhelmingly for Bonaparte's questionable nephew, Louis Napoleon, in a reaction against the bourgeois terror. Just as Louis was merely a farce of his uncle, so Isabel is only a caricature of the *caudillo*. Despite her constant calls on the workers to be true to her late husband, the strikes became more frequent, more general and more militant. Peronism without Peron -- bonapartism without the Bonaparte -- has been a failure for the bourgeoisie.

Though the Peronist myth is by now badly tarnished, it has not been shattered. For this it is necessary not only to expose the bankruptcy of a particular individual but to carry on a tenacious struggle to break the Argentine working class from all sectors of the bourgeoisie, including that sector represented by Peronist populism. And it is this task which the reformist, social-democratic Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST -- Socialist Workers Party, Argentine sympathizing organization of the United Secretariat) has consistently failed to undertake.

Already in the 1950's Nahuel Moreno (today one of the main PST leaders) began his decades-long capitulation to Peronism. For years he published *Palabra Obrera*, which described itself as being "under the direction of General Peron". In late 1972 the PST offered to vote Justicialista -- ie, for what even it termed a bourgeois party! -- provided 80 percent of the candidates on the Peronist slate were workers. And after Campora took office in May 1973, PST leader Juan Carlos Coral offered the new president "our proletarian solidarity". Last year these fake Trotskyists pledged to Peron their support for "the institutional process" (ie, bourgeois law-and-order), and then promised his widow to "fight for the continuity" of her government!

But now Isabel is not so popular with the workers, so PST calls for "the resignation of Madame President with the objective that Parliament put into functioning the established legal mechanisms, convoking a Constituent Assembly, which ... had been repeatedly promised by General Peron himself" (*Avanzada Socialista*, 8 August). What of the working class, the union bureaucrats, political independence of labor? The PST says only that "within this dramatic institutional process the workers movement should exercise a protagonist's role". It adds that the "CGT [labor federation] should impose its plan and ... put it into practice by taking power in its hands." Yet nowhere does the PST call on the unions to break from Peronism. As for the CGT plan, even *Avanzada Socialista* calls it a "plan of class collaboration" which does not call for "expropriating the oligarchy and imperialism". Thus once again, rather than seeking to break the Peronists' stranglehold on the working class, instead of putting forward a perspective of workers power, the reformist PST proposes merely to pressure the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy to implement its own class-collaborationist policies. ■

# Not putschism — For workers' revolution in Portugal

## Defend Porto barracks revolt!

abridged from *Workers Vanguard*, No 81, 17th October, 1975

OCTOBER 14 -- Last week 600 soldiers of a Portuguese army unit in the northern city of Porto moved into installations of the local artillery brigade, ran up a red flag and declared their intention to remain until an order disbanding their unit is rescinded and its author, the regional commander, removed. This barracks revolt by the military transport center (CICA) and its supporters in the artillery brigade is now seven days old, making it the longest open defiance of the military command by rebellious leftist soldiers to date in Portugal. But it is by no means the only case. At this point the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) is deeply divided and the discipline-minded general staff is hard-pressed to find dependable units.

The intra-MFA struggle began in late July as a faction fight at the top, with one wing grouped around then-Premier Vasco Goncalves and pro-Communist Party (CP) elements, a second around the supposedly "far left" General Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho, and a third composed of the "moderate" Group of Nine. The latter won out in the officer corps, forcing the retirement of Goncalves and placing the present sixth provisional government in power. But since the beginning of September the splintering of the armed forces has rapidly accelerated. Soldiers committees of various political hues have arisen to challenge the command structure, and units in various parts of the country have refused to obey

this month the northern regional commander, General Antonio Pires Veloso, ordered the transfer of two officers and five enlisted men suspected of being active in the SUV. When the CICA unit delegate assembly voted to oppose the purge, Pires Veloso sent paratroopers to take over the buildings and expel the soldiers. Two days later (October 7) the dislodged troops joined with the artillery regiment in open rebellion. Immediately the regimental grounds were surrounded by civilian leftist supporters.

Led by the bourgeois Popular Democratic Party (PPD), a mob of several thousand rightists moved on the unit but were dispersed by gunfire and tear gas. Pires Veloso then tried his hand with five armored cars, which were countered by two armored personnel carriers. The regiment continues to be surrounded by makeshift civilian-manned barricades, and the government has backed off from a direct assault. But the stand-off will not last forever. As virtually everyone in Portugal realizes, the country is on the brink of civil war.

The right wing of the MFA is now worried about its ability to emerge on top in a battle with leftists. There are reports of up to 30,000 weapons disappearing from government arms dumps during the last year, allegedly distributed to civilian leftists or in the hands of "insecure" units. A new Military Intervention Group was created last month to replace the unreliable

among them should think in terms of yet another coup, albeit with "support" from civilian leftists.

Yet this would still place power in the hands of the bourgeois armed forces. A more-left-than-ever MFA cannot carry out a socialist revolution! As Trotsky wrote of Spain in the 1930's:

"... at the approach of the proletarian revolution the officers' corps becomes the executioner of the proletariat. To eliminate four or five hundred reactionary agitators from the army means to leave everything basically as it was before. The officers' corps, in which is concentrated the centuries-old tradition of enslaving the people, must be dissolved, broken, crushed in its entirety, root and branch." ("The Lesson of Spain", July 1936)

There is another ominous danger in the prospect of a left-wing coup, namely isolation of the most advanced elements. The process of radicalization has been extremely uneven in Portugal, and there is no doubt that soldiers of certain military units, the industrial red belt around Lisbon, and agricultural workers in the south are well in advance of the rest of the country....

However, the right wing of the MFA is attempting now to crack down on "indiscipline". It is necessary to resist the sallies launched against the left by the government, but evasion and maneuver must be employed when the terrain is unfavorable. The workers movement must show that it has teeth without being provoked into premature actions. At present the top generals are seeking to avoid massive casualties, but any incident can be seized upon to launch a blood-bath. Thus tactics like the stationing of a defenseless "human barricade" in front of the Porto artillery barracks are criminally dangerous....

But when the showdown comes it is essential to strike with audacity and ruthlessness. Hopefully this will come when the revolutionary forces are ready. Yet there is no revolutionary party in Portugal today which has prepared such favorable conditions. It is still necessary to resist, even under adverse circumstances. The proletariat which goes down without a fight will not rise again for a long time....

In the Moscow uprising of December 1905, for instance, conditions were not favorable to the revolutionaries: the strike movement in Petersburg was losing momentum; the army had not yet been decisively won over, despite a number of barracks revolts; the Bolsheviks were a minority in the soviets. But when the artillery units opened fire on the barricades and crowds of strikers, the Moscow Bolsheviks nevertheless threw themselves into the struggle. In the aftermath of the defeat Lenin analyzed the struggle, pointing to weaknesses and errors. But he never concluded, as did the Menshevik Plekhanov, that "they should not have taken to arms"! "On the contrary," wrote Lenin, "we should have taken to arms more resolutely, energetically and aggressively" ("Lessons of the Moscow Uprising", August 1906).

Today the latter-day Mensheviks are already preparing to condemn the Portuguese masses for their heroic will to resist. The ex-Trotskyist and now cringingly reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) [American supporters of the so-called "United Secretariat"] has gone to new lengths in its endless cowardly blubberings against what it sees as tens of thousands of Portuguese "ultra-leftists". Having acted as shameless apologist for the Socialist Party (SP) as the latter was fronting for a vicious anti-communist mobilization of rightist terror in late July and early August, the SWP was understandably embarrassed by revelations last month that the CIA has been sending \$2 to \$10 million per month to finance Mario Soares' operation.

Ever resourceful in the cause of licking the boots of the bourgeoisie and its Portuguese lackeys, the SWP has found a way out: the European social democrats are to blame!

"No one has claimed that the CIA simply gave the SP a check each month. The money, it is said, was channelled to the SP through the European Social Democratic parties and unnamed European unions.

"Thus, unless one wishes to argue that the Portuguese SP has no right to accept funds from Social Democratic parties and unions in Europe, responsibility for giving the CIA an entry belongs in the first place with the conduits that agreed to 'launder' Washington's money." ([US] *Militant*, 17 October)

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Left-wing offices under attack by violent anti-Communist mobs in Porto earlier this year.

orders. So far, Premier Jose Pinheiro de Azevedo's program for a purge of the left has flopped.

The first of the leftist soldiers' "mutinies" was a refusal by the Military Police Regiment to embark for Angola at the end of August....

The rank-and-file revolt in the military continued to spread throughout the country, leading to the creation of the clandestine "Soldiers United Will Win" (SUV) organization which led a demonstration in Porto against the Azevedo government on September 10. The SUV is generally linked with the "revolutionary (or popular) united front" (FUR) set up by eight leftist parties, including the CP, on August 25 to support the faltering Goncalves "fifth government". While the SUV declared that soldiers had made a grave error by subordinating their struggle to the MFA, the FUR called for strengthening the "MFA-People Alliance"! These counterposed positions on a key question of the revolution -- what policy toward the bourgeois officer corps represented by the MFA -- are characteristic of the confusion reigning in the "far left" line-up.

A leftist anti-government demonstration in early October drew several hundred soldiers from throughout the southern region. The regional commander promptly moved to transfer 49 airmen from a base in Beja for participating in the protest. The ranks thereupon took over the base. While the chief of staff sent in five planeloads of parachutists to restore order, the presence of 1000 civilians and armed troops from other units surrounding the barracks convinced the regional commander to withdraw his transfer order (*Le Monde*, 5-6 October).

The CICA revolt had similar origins. Early

COPCON [security force], but has had great difficulty finding units which will join it. And at a marathon meeting of the Supreme Revolutionary Council, the leading body of the MFA, the military chiefs discussed the possibility of a leftist coup, making plans to withdraw the government from the capital in the event of a "Lisbon Commune" (*Expresso*, 4 October).

But while the "far left" military units seem to have a preponderance of firepower in the key Lisbon and Porto districts, a left-wing putsch would not bring about the workers republic fervently desired by tens of thousands of Portuguese socialist militants, nor could it even guarantee the military suppression of counterrevolution....

Unfortunately, the "far left" groups of the FUR have never put forward a Marxist program of working-class independence which could bring [the tremendous potential power of the proletariat] into play. Instead they have cheered allegedly "progressive" or "revolutionary" sectors of the bourgeois MFA. Nor have they proved capable of assembling the multitude of workers commissions, neighborhood commissions, popular vigilance committees, soldiers committees, etc, into a unitary organ which could serve as the base for a dual power to challenge the capitalist state apparatus. The most left-wing officers continue to cling to the MFA in part because they see no alternative.

In the course of the last year and a half, thousands of left-wing soldiers -- and, no doubt, even some officers who are sincere in their professions of socialism -- have come to profoundly distrust their demagogic superiors.... But their political education to date has consisted of a series of coups and attempted coups.... Thus it would not be surprising if the most audacious

## ... right to work

*bosses' armed thugs in a vain attempt to ward off revolutionary opponents. The leaflet distributed by the SL on the march and at the rally is re-printed, slightly abridged, below.*

This march has been called by the Socialist Labour League/Young Socialists (SLL/YS) in support of the right to work. The SLL's paper, *Workers News*, on 16 October 1975 called for all youth and workers to support this march and gave as its main demands: "The right to Work! Nationalization of the Basic industries without compensation, under workers' control. A shorter working week with no loss of pay!" The Spartacist League fully supports these demands to defend the working class against the capitalist recession and is therefore joining the march in order to advance the fight for them.

However this march suffers from serious political weaknesses which can only hold back the mobilisation of the working class to fight unemployment. These weaknesses result from the opportunist and revisionist policies of the SLL/YS.

The SLL/YS claim to be fighting unemployment, but their commitment to this fight is a *fake*. Last March, an unemployed workers' action group in Sydney organised a march through the City demanding jobs for all, a shorter working week with no loss in pay, and calling for strikes in support of these demands on the day of the march. The Spartacist League played a leading role in organising this action, which was officially endorsed by several unions. The SLL was asked to help build this march for jobs, but *not one SLL/YS supporter even bothered to show up!* That is how completely unserious the SLL is about really fighting unemployment.

The SLL/YS claims that the march today will deal an important blow in the fight for jobs and that it will expose the treacherous reformist misleaders of the working class. *On the contrary* -- it has been organised in a way which *interferes* with uniting the greatest possible number of workers against unemployment, and so as to *avoid* exposing the reformists. It is supposed to be "a campaign for the right to work, *in opposition* to the Labor Party and trade union leaders ..." (*Young Socialist* no 4, September 1975) (emphasis added). Furthermore the SLL/YS have made its central demand the expropriation of the capitalist class. This makes sure that the reformists do not take part. They will not be exposed because they have never claimed to support such a demand. The march will "expose" only

what everyone already knows: that reformists are reformists!

The reformist misleaders *are* traitors to the working class, the agents of the bosses within the labour movement. But the majority of the working class are still deceived and have *not yet* broken from them, do not yet understand the need to smash the capitalist state and take state power. In order to strike a real blow against unemployment, a broad *united front* of the working class is necessary, including even the reformist traitors, who all hypocritically claim to be against unemployment. Revolutionaries are interested in using the Leninist tactic of the united front to drag the reformists from their asylums in parliament and trade-union offices where they prefer to hide and placing them before the eyes of the class so that their hypocrisy can be exposed in practice with the aid of revolutionary criticism. But instead the SLL demands that workers who still support the reformists must break with their misleaders as a *precondition* to joining the struggle for full employment. Behind the SLL's seemingly revolutionary "opposition" to the reformists lies a political passivity which seeks to perpetuate an order of things wherein the SLL and reformists each retain their own rigidly demarcated spheres of influence, their own audiences at meetings, their own press, and all this together creates an illusion of serious political struggle. Such illusions aid only the reformists!

Marches of unemployed youth can highlight the need to fight for jobs, but they cannot by themselves strike a decisive blow against unemployment. It is only with the organised union strength of the working class that the unemployed can win even temporary significant victories. To mobilise that strength, it is necessary to demand that the trade-union officials act. That is why the Spartacist League is raising the call for nationwide strikes for an immediate 35-hour week with no loss in pay. The demand for a 35-hour week is official union policy -- let the officials put their money where their mouth is!

The SLL/YS claim to be a revolutionary alternative to the class traitors, but their record proves that they abandon the revolutionary program whenever necessary to suit their opportunist appetites. In its program for apprentices, the YS calls for *reducing* indentures to three years, (*Young Socialist* no 4, September 1975) -- instead of demanding the complete abolition of the semi-feudal system of indentures! In its "draft program" (*Young Socialist* no 1, June 1975) the YS demands "Adult pay at 18" -- a sellout of all young workers *under* 18, who receive inadequate "junior" wages! In the section of "youth facilities" the YS program descends to the worst reformist twaddle, featuring

of revolutionaries to expose the fake "communist" and "left" rhetoric put forward by the CPA and the AMWU bureaucrats that telecommunication workers and metal workers generally can be mobilised to launch a counterattack against the attempts of the bosses and the Labor Government to impose the whole burden for the present capitalist crisis on the working class. As the Plessey leaflet pointed out "there has been no difference in approach to the sackings by the 'lefts' like Pollock and Campbell and the right like Percer and Baker."

That fight is part of the general task of constructing an alternative leadership within the unions that not only stands upon a class-struggle program that has as its aim the expropriation of the capitalist class and workers power, but one that acts upon it as well. An alternative revolutionary leadership for the working class will not be created by simply *declaring* its existence; nor will it arise spontaneously out of militant upsurges. It must be built within the class on the basis of a political struggle for the revolutionary program on which it stands. And the militants at Plesseys in a very limited way are an example of how the building of such a revolutionary leadership must be begun. Not only have they consistently fought to generate a struggle against layoffs on the shopfloor at Plesseys but they have intervened at mass meetings associated with the award campaign this year, posing a strategy of a united, continuing national strike to be run by elected shop-floor committees in counterposition to the bureaucrats' attempts to limit the campaign to scrambling for crumbs before the Arbitration Commission, demoralising and useless one-day stoppages and ineffective and isolating "guerilla tactics", and finally dropping the award campaign altogether under cover of the pretence of over-award struggles.

Their work at Plesseys has shown, in a concrete way, how different struggles, whether they be on a local or national level, can be set into a revolutionary framework that can both give leadership to specific struggles and contribute to the building of revolutionary caucuses in the trade unions on the basis of a program which poses the necessity of struggle for workers' state power, and operating as a disciplined arm of a revolutionary workers' party that can lead the overall struggle. ■

the demand not for a *workers government* and the *abolition* of the capitalist state's armed goons, the cops, but.... "That Labor governments come to power in all states pledged to banning police victimisation of youth"! This demand breeds the most dangerous illusions in the Labor Party reformists who, if they take over the bourgeois state, will be unable and unwilling to stop the dirty work of cops.

The YS program does not even mention the special oppression of women, blacks or migrants -- issues of vital importance to working-class youth, who face racial and sexual discrimination in education, employment and all aspects of social life. It says nothing about the legal rights denied to youth under capitalism; nothing about the need to replace the bourgeois nuclear family which oppresses youth as well as women, tying youth to their parents legally. The Spartacist League answers such special needs of youth by raising demands such as: full legal rights for all youth! Living stipends provided by the state for secondary students! Lower the legal age of adulthood to 15! End class, racial and sexual bias in education! Free abortion on demand! Worker-student-staff control of the schools! Collectivise household duties!

The SLL often calls for a parliamentary Labor Government pledged to this or that reform or even "socialist policies", but never explains that socialist measures (which the SLL sometimes admits can never be carried out through parliament) can only be implemented by a *workers government* based on organs of workers power such as workers' councils. On the key question of state power the SLL engages in shabby opportunist evasion. Now, in the face of the political crisis brought about by the Liberals' attempt to oust Labor from the federal government, the SLL has called for a *new election* to fight the Tory union-bashers. While important sections of the working class support political strikes against the bosses' parties, the SLL sees the solution in a parliamentary election, refusing to call for Hawke and company to take action on their strike rhetoric. *Parliamentary elections will solve nothing*. The Spartacist League demands that the ACTU call a general strike to keep the Liberal union-bashers out of office, to smash the indexation wage freeze and for an immediate shortening of the work week with no loss in pay!

The SLL/YS claim to be building a mass revolutionary party, but what they are in fact building is neither mass nor revolutionary. Seeking a short cut to a meaningless quick "success", the SLL/YS tries to recruit youth and workers by throwing out the most important thing -- the revolutionary program. According to Tony Poland, "a member of the Youth Socialists National Executive ... [and] secretary of the Fairfield branch", "My branch is holding fortnightly discos to recruit new members for the state conference.... Another way of getting members, will be by charging \$1.00 to the disco -- 90 cents for the disco ticket and 10 cents for membership cards" (quoted in *Young Socialist* no 1, June 1975). A "membership" recruited to films and dances, not to the revolutionary program, is a *fake* because that membership does not represent support for the revolutionary program. *Bolshevik revolutionary organisations do not sell membership for ten cents at discos!*

Program is not important for the SLL because it pursues the objectivist illusion that workers will flock directly to the revolutionary party because of the economic crisis. That is why the SLL substitutes public relations gimmicks like this march for serious communist work in the mass organisations of the working class, which requires the building of *communist caucuses* in the unions, clearly based on the full transitional program, as an alternative revolutionary leadership. Unlike the SLL, Trotskyists cannot run away from this difficult task. *There are no short cuts to revolution!* ■

### PROTEST POLICE RAID ON WRP!

The Workers Revolutionary Party, British section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, has recently been victimised by a police raid on their educational centre. The ICFI's Australian affiliate, the SLL, has issued a call for the workers movement to protest against this act of repression by the British ruling class (*Workers News* 16 October). The Spartacist League supports this call and has signed the petition circulated by the SLL demanding an investigation of the raid; the workers movement internationally must stand united against state repression. But we register our strongest disagreement with the cowardly position, noted in their petition, condemning terrorism "in principle" and promising that "Any member of the WRP carrying firearms would be immediately expelled." Certainly Marxists are bitterly opposed to petty-bourgeois terrorism that substitutes individual heroism and mock-bravado for the patient preparation of the class for the inevitable battles against capitalist reaction. But the response of the ICFI amounts to pacifist capitulation to legalism that can only mislead revolutionary workers about the nature of the capitalist state.

## ... Plessey

nation from those of another. If the telecommunication monopolies plead poverty they should be expropriated.

In arguing for a motion to "demand the nationalisation of Plessey under workers' control without compensation, and a shorter work-week with no loss in pay" the group of Spartacist supporters at Plessey pointed out:

"The cutback in the order is the result of the government's decision to reduce the high demand for telecommunications equipment by pricing an essential public service out of the reach of the working people.... Society needs, not the Labor Government's present artificial cutback of the telephone system but a massive *extension* of it to create a cheap public communications system with free telephone installation for all. There is plenty of work we could do and could do it far more cheaply and efficiently if Plessey and the other companies in the industry were not raking off their present huge profits. Workers in the telecommunications industry must respond to the Labor Government's threat of more sackings by demanding that the government nationalise the telecommunications industry under workers' control and without compensation and with a shorter working week without loss in pay."

During the period of the sackings and mass meetings the CPA itself twice attempted to organise meetings outside the plant to discuss the sackings. The one that actually got off the ground attracted only a few workers and CPA members present were reluctant to discuss why their supporters *inside* the plant actually fought *against* the CPA's supposed policy on layoffs (of not accepting the sack and fighting for 35 hours on full pay), or the role that leading CPA members in the AMWU bureaucracy, Laurie Carmichael and John Halfpenny, have played in sabotaging the national MTF campaign. (One of their own supporters inside the plant, Roy Pollock, did not even know the meetings had been organised!)

But as the events at Plessey and the campaign around the national metal award this year clearly demonstrate it will only be through the struggle

## ... General strike

but demand that Fraser capitulate. To support supply with the excuse of opposing Fraser is a foul betrayal.

Whitlam claims workers must make sacrifices to end inflation and unemployment -- a treacherous lie! Inflation and unemployment are products of the capitalist system and will continue to exist as long as it does. Workers can defend themselves against inflation and unemployment only in opposition to the budget by struggling for a genuine, adequate cost-of-living adjustment and for a sliding scale of hours -- sharing the available work among all workers to maintain full employment with no loss in pay. In order to carry through these measures, it will be necessary to nationalise all basic industry and financial institutions without compensation.

Whitlam, Hawke and their reformist and centrist fellow travellers want the working class to believe that what is at stake is not a class conflict but the undemocratic character of the Senate and/or the Governor-General, the violation of constitutional conventions, etc. The abolition of the Senate and that vestigial remnant of past British imperialism, the Governor-General, would make the parliamentary system marginally more democratic; but *in essence* the vaunted "democracy" of Parliament is pure sham and no number of reforms can change it. The bourgeoisie controls social wealth and Parliament serves its needs, as the political organ for working out how best to maintain and reinforce its class rule. It is democracy for the capitalists, and they will never allow it to be used against their basic interests. Along with the rest of the capitalist state machine, it must be smashed -- and replaced with a profoundly democratic workers state based on workers' own organisations to appropriate the capitalist class.

Bourgeois-democratic reforms are useful; they provide better conditions for class struggle and help prove even the purest parliamentary democracy can offer no solution to the pressing problems of working people. But they must never be used to propagate illusions in Parliament. Revolutionists have a duty to consistently warn that the ruling class, however attached to its "conventions", will throw them away and apply the most ruthless naked force when necessary to protect their class rule.

Throughout this year there has been a polarisation of classes which has united the Australian bourgeoisie, including sections previously supporting the Labor Government, in a desire to see

CONTINUED FROM PAGE THREE

## ... black oppression

for immediate reforms. The SWL has predictably confined its efforts in the defence campaign to an appeal to bourgeois liberalism. Capitulating to the separatist illusions within the black movement, the SWL even calls for a separate black political party! This call for the political unity of all blacks to the exclusion of all whites is a disgusting betrayal -- a call for class collaboration and stronger racial division. Neville Bonner is on the other side of the barricades from poor blacks in Redfern or on the Queensland reserves; the revolutionary white proletariat will be on the same side.

While special organisations concentrating on the organisation of blacks to fight their oppression may be necessary, in order to be revolutionary any such organisation must be based on the revolutionary program -- emphasising those demands relevant to blacks' particular needs and problems, but also a program for workers power -- and must be under the leadership of the revolutionary workers' party. Only thus can the black struggle be organically tied to the general assault on capitalism necessary to black liberation.

The centrist Communist League also capitulates to the false consciousness of the black movement, which it tries to link to militant rhetoric about the need for socialist revolution. Thus the CL has called for "unconditional land rights" and published an article by then CL sympathiser (now member) Marcia Langton in their paper, the *Militant*, which echoed the SWL's call for a black party. (Langton, while still a CL sympathiser, on one occasion also called for black trade unions. The CL has never repudiated Langton's views.) The CL's appetites for a false unity with militant blacks leads them to abandon Marxist principles and to hinder the class struggle.

At the other extreme the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Labour League (SLL) does not fight for any program to answer the specific oppression of blacks. The only logical interpretation of the SLL's abstentionism is that it believes that no such fight is needed because the solution to

the L/NCP coalition returned to power. Although the ALP tops have been ever more slavish in bootlicking devotion to business and profit it has not been enough. Wage indexation has not produced the results required. The bosses have increasingly resorted to lockouts, provoked strikes, attempted speedup, and attacked union rights in a campaign of attrition against union strength. For the bosses the time has come for the government to put its foot down; but the Labor Government's strategy of restraining the working class through the sellout union bureaucrats has not been effective enough. The L/NCP, uninhibited by any ties to the unions, will be prepared to launch a crackdown on the unions at every opportunity. Finally, in recession conditions the ruling class cannot afford even the ALP's piddling reforms.

But the Labor Government's usefulness has not been entirely exhausted, as witness the metal trades bosses' recent sympathetic reception for McClelland. In recent months these traitors have tried hard to prove they can be tough on the unions if necessary -- refusing social service benefits to the locked-out Coalcliffe miners, vigorously denouncing the oil workers' campaign for a wage rise and continuing to oppose the metal trades unions' log of claims. If Whitlam manages to stay in power and is faced with a direct confrontation, he would not balk at using the armed forces of the state to try to smash the working class.

Despite the cavalier attitude of the bosses' parties to their own rules, the capitalists are not yet by any means finished with Parliament. Fraser's deferring of the budget is scarcely the virtual coup d'etat depicted by Whitlam. While the ruling class is prepared to see some of their normal rules stretched in order to get what they want, they are clearly not willing to see Parliament discredited in the eyes of the masses or to endure the extensive disruption likely to result from Whitlam's continued intransigence. Reformists inflate Fraser into a highly implausible Hitler only to play on these bourgeois hesitations and as a cover to divert the class struggle into a defence of Parliament, politically disarming the working class against real bonapartist or fascist threats.

The working-class upsurge against Fraser's move proves the reality of the ALP's roots in the working class and its organic ties to the Australian workers' organisations, the unions. A general strike to keep the Labor Government in power would be a class-struggle opposition to the widely recognised open representatives of the class enemy in direct conflict with Whitlam's class-collaborationist policies, bringing out sharply the basic contradiction within the ALP. The leadership and policies of the ALP reflect the false consciousness of the majority of workers

black oppression (and all other oppression) is proletarian revolution. This rampant economism is not only a complete rejection of Leninism; it is a disgusting capitulation to white racism within the working class. To ignore the special problems of blacks is to indirectly build racist chauvinism among white workers. Unless this chauvinism is smashed -- by the struggle of the vanguard party to win white workers to fight against all manifestations of black oppression -- the working class will remain unable to unite to successfully smash capitalism. That is why the SLL, despite its pretensions, cannot lead the socialist revolution but in fact holds it back. The treachery of the SLL's opportunism is reflected in their refusal so far to give any real concrete assistance to the defence of the Brisbane Three, in spite of their token verbal "support" of the defence campaign.

Only the development of the organised power and consciousness of the working class and the formation of a unified revolutionary leadership can lead the working class, with bonds forged in common struggle with the various oppressed groupings, to smash the capitalist state, reorganise production and thus do away with the basis of all exploitation and oppression. ■

who do not yet understand that their needs cannot be met within the framework of capitalism. The true role of Labor's misleaders can be made plain only in the course of the working class learning that its necessary task is to take state power. Under a Liberal Government workers will blame their continued oppression not on capitalism but on the fact that the bosses' parties are in office. For the masses to learn that the real problem lies elsewhere -- that the whole capitalist state must be smashed -- requires the experience of the Labor Government.

But that experience alone is far from enough. There must be an organised revolutionary alternative leadership of the working class, relentlessly exposing the reformists' betrayals and providing a clear program outlining the way forward, seeking at all times to regroup class-conscious workers who reject the ALP's reformism into a revolutionary vanguard party. This cannot happen unless the revolutionary vanguard refuses all political confidence in the reformists and consistently advances an adequate programmatic alternative in struggle, fighting to build an alternative leadership in the unions based on the full transitional program. ■

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## TLC founded

youth paper back to a bimonthly from a monthly and the RMG has yet to produce a press with a regular frequency, the CCiSt has experienced rapid growth in the last year and, as the TLC, expects to capitalize on that growth in the period ahead, publishing a regular press in the near future and expanding the work of the past year.

Greetings were delivered to the Conference by fraternal delegates from the Ligue Trotskyste de France, the Trotskistische Liga Deutschlands, the Nucleo Spartacista d'Italia, and the Spartacist League of the United States. A Central Committee was elected, signifying the emergence of the TLC as a national democratic-centralist organization.

Taking its place within the ranks of the international Spartacist tendency, the TLC has a heavy responsibility to the Canadian working class -- and to the reforging of the Fourth International as the indispensable instrument of the world proletariat's coming victory. Forward with the work of the Trotskyist League of Canada!

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## ... barracks revolt

Mario Soares' press agents are not fazed by anything.

The SWP's reformist dedication to bourgeois law and order is so profound that, after describing the diversion of 1000 automatic rifles from the military arsenals to a "far-left" group and the freeing of two soldier members of the SUV from a military prison by a crowd of several tens of thousands, it mutters disapprovingly about "direct action" which "isolated the left still more" (*Intercontinental Press*, 6 October). Instead of surrounding the fort and demanding the liberation of their comrades, the SWP thinks the demonstrators should have mounted a "broad campaign"!

No -- the problem is that the Lisbon workers do not have a revolutionary party! In the July Days during 1917, the Bolsheviks counselled caution to the angry masses, but they did not abandon them or stand on the sidelines clucking their tongues in disapproval. If there has been any oscillation in the SWP's despicable counter-revolutionary policies in Portugal it has been hidden in the face of danger in 1905, and that of Kerensky in July 1917 as he lined up with the darkest forces of reaction in seeking to drown the revolution in blood. ■

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## Not SLL/YS publicity stunts but class struggle! Fight for the right to work!

The arrival of a Spartacist contingent at Bankstown on the morning of 25 October, in response to the SLL/YS's open invitation ("All school leavers, unemployed youth and workers who are threatened with losing their jobs must take part..." -- Workers News, 16 and 23 October 1975) to join their Right to Work March for the 15 mile trek to the Sydney Trades Hall, not only helped expose another feeble SLL sectarian publicity stunt. It illustrated the lengths to which the politically corrupt SLL leadership would go in its desperate attempts to provoke physical violence to obscure its political impotence.

In a display of grotesque and infantile sectarian bureaucratism the SLL/YS leadership first banned the Spartacists from marching ("this is our march"). The SLL is very choosy about which workers are permitted to fight for jobs! When Spartacists insisted that they agreed with the demands of the march and intended marching, a line of SLL "stewards" stood across the path of the 19-strong contingent of SL supporters to prevent it following the main body of the marchers as they left Bankstown Square. After a short wait the SL contingent took a short detour, soon catching up with the SLL/YS contingent (which varied in numbers from 42 to 50 during the march). After initial threats from SLL national secretary Jim Mulgrew that the Spartacist contingent would be physically removed if they got too near, the two groups marched 20-100 yards apart, separated by a thin line of SLL thugs.

As the ludicrous spectacle of two forcibly separated contingents chanting slogans for the same march's demands drew nearer to the City centre, the SLL leaders tried hard to provoke a violent confrontation to justify the line they were feeding their supporters (that Spartacists were "provocateurs" and "disrupters"). They used the old Stalinist method of unsubstantiated cop-baiting -- against the SL in general, and one member in particular; they degenerated into re-

volting homosexual-baiting, a weapon drawn from the arsenal of fascism appealing to the most backward sentiments in the working class; and Mulgrew even invited individual SLers to "come around the back" at a garage toilet break to "settle it once and for all" ("just you and me"). When challenged to argue politics instead of "tough guy" posturing Mulgrew managed to rise to the occasion by spitting at the comrade. Carrying his calculated provocations to the limit, Mulgrew later purposefully lagged behind to merge briefly with the SL contingent and deliberately knocked off the same comrade's glasses. With exemplary discipline Spartacists refused to be provoked.

Spartacists of course were excluded from the

"public" "Rally" to welcome the marchers at Trades Hall. But outside, chief SLL goon Greg Adler discussed the SL with the local cops, saying "We don't want any help from you, but they sometimes provoke fights"! This scurrilous attempt to provoke the cops against the SL with blatant lies extended further when Adler threatened an SL supporter with arrest if he touched any SLL/YSer. In the context of the constant stream of explicit SLL threats of bashing throughout the day, the meaning is clear: if you defend yourself against SLL gangsterism, the SLL will call the cops on you! The SLL's bankruptcy is so complete that it must rely on the

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A rare sight: SLL/YS contingent in united action with other tendencies at a demonstration last March in defence of the BLF against Gallagher/Master Builders attack.



## More layoffs hit Plessey

Over the past twelve months workers in the telecommunications industry have faced a series of massive retrenchments. The major companies in the industry, Plessey, Ericson and STC, have sacked thousands of workers and laid the blame on the economic recession and the Whitlam Labor Government which, in its recent "economy" measures substantially cut back the annual order of Telecom Australia (the statutory body controlling telecommunications).

The response of the trade-union leadership in the telecommunications industry, primarily that of the unions grouped together in the Metal Trades Federation of unions (MTF) (which includes the "militant" Amalgamated Metal Workers Union -- AMWU), has been one of utter capitulation before the employers and government, a complete betrayal of the fight for jobs and living standards of workers in the industry. Throughout the period of retrenchments union leaders have not once attempted to lead a real fight in defence of jobs, preferring periodic excursions to Canberra, frequently in consort with representatives of the bosses association, the Metal Trades Industry Association, where they have pleaded with the Government to "do something". These missions have of course been a miserable failure. The trade-union bureaucrats, with no readily apparent options (outside a mobilisation of telecommunication workers against their fellow "negotiators"), have contented themselves with returning to workers to explain the "hopelessness" of the situation. The entire MTF bureaucracy at national, state and shopfloor level have simply helped shepherd workers out of the plant gates and onto the dole queues with the least possible fuss.

At the Plessey Meadowbank plant in Sydney there have been 600 workers laid off since September 1974, the fight against retrenchment never going beyond illusory "negotiations" (for accounts of previous layoffs at Plesseys see ASp

nos 15 and 17). A further 54 sackings were announced by Plessey in the first week of October. At the mass meeting which followed, in the absence of any perspective for struggle from union representatives, an AMWU militant and supporter of the Spartacist League Dave Grumont (who, with others had fought for militant action during earlier layoffs) moved a motion calling on the sacked workers to report for work as usual, and for all Plessey workers to begin working a 35-hour week with a fight for the full 40 hours pay using such tactics as limiting work to the base rate for bonus calculations and, if necessary, occupation of the plant.

This motion was never put; it was replaced by an "amendment" moved by a supporter of the reformist Communist Party of Australia (CPA) and former AMWU shop steward, Jim Campbell, calling on Plessey workers to work a 35-hour week until the retrenched workers were rehired. The "amendment" was passed and a further motion incorporating the substance of Grumont's motion defeated, leaving the sacked workers with no alternative but to leave the plant and transforming the 35-hour week from a weapon against layoffs into a pay cut! This "strategy", from an ostensible "communist" militant, completely dovetails with the line of the company and the Whitlam Labor Government that workers must sacrifice their already inadequate living standards to maintain jobs. But the end result of this abject surrender is a reduction in both jobs and living standards!

At a mass meeting a week later, having been told by the company that a shorter working week was not on because they were so far ahead on the order, the union representatives immediately surrendered. Right-wing Electrical Trades Union delegate Percer pushed successfully for a motion rescinding the 35-hour week decision -- unopposed by the CPA supporters. Otherwise these right and "left" reformists merely bickered over whether

workers should demand two weeks or four weeks advance notice of the next sackings!

A leaflet issued by Plessey militants and SL supporters Ern Casey, Dave Grumont and Tony Naughten analysing the sellout pointed to the necessity of widening the struggle and the role of the MTF and AMWU tops:

"The struggle against layoffs cannot be won by a struggle just at Plesseys and it is essential that we get maximum support from the AMWU and ... the MTF. However the attitude of the AMWU and MTF representatives to the events at Plessey has been completely irresponsible. At the first meeting, AMWU State Organiser Ted Lipscombe (who, like Pollock and Campbell supports the reformist Communist Party of Australia) gave a militant-sounding speech supporting the shorter week demand and calling for (carefully undefined) action at the shop level, but omitting to mention union policy of demanding a 35-hour week at full pay. Lipscombe did not turn up again."

The leaflet also warned that more layoffs can be expected amongst office, non-production and production workers. The recent union delegation to Canberra was told by Senator Bishop (the minister responsible for Telecom Australia) that Telecom was determined to reduce its stockpile of cross-bar switching equipment and that orders would be cut. And now it seems there is a proposal before the government for a cut in tariffs on telecommunications hardware from 37 to 15 percent which, if instituted, could mean that Plessey, STC etc may close down their Australian production and switch to importing from countries with a lower-paid workforce. The bureaucrats, typically, are calling for an increase in tariffs as the only way to protect the remaining jobs. The working class has no interests in tariffs which only pit workers in one country against those in others, and tie workers to protecting the bosses of one

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