



Workers' revolution to smash apartheid!

The ignominious defeat of imperialist-backed forces in Angola was a shattering but not necessarily irreversible blow to the plans of white-supremacist South Africa to establish a cross-continent buffer zone of economically dependent black client states. The government of Balthazar Vorster, while intensifying domestic repression and strengthening its military capacity, has simultaneously made new overtures to various African governments in the hopes of working out a deal sealing off the apartheid police state from "contamination" by its black-ruled neighbours.

Despite its "anti-imperialist" bluster, the victorious People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) regime in Luanda is prepared to reach a *modus vivendi* with Pretoria. In a widely noted interview disclaiming "any intention to undertake nationalisations" at present, Luanda's foreign minister, Jose Eduardo Dos Santos, opened the door to an arrangement with Vorster: "The Pretoria government must recognize a fact: the existence of our state.... We can then settle all the problems concerning South African interests and investments in Angola" (*Le Monde*, 14 February).

But despite offers of negotiations from both Luanda and Pretoria, the possibility of renewed war in southern Africa cannot be ruled out. In Rhodesia and on the frontiers of Southwest Africa (Namibia) armed conflict threatens to escalate dramatically in the wake of the MPLA victory. Landlocked and wracked by a serious economic crisis, the Rhodesian Front government of Ian Smith, representing a privileged racial minority of 250,000 whites, received word from Pretoria in late February that South African troops would not intervene to stave off guerrilla attack (*New York Times*, 26 February). Vorster is quite willing to sacrifice the Smith regime in Rhodesia to his strategy of detente if this can ensure a moderate black government. Smith's isolation, intransigence, and fundamental weakness against popular black resistance mean that time is rapidly running out for his racist regime.

South Africa's intervention against the MPLA in Angola was partly an attempt to strengthen "detente" with "moderate" African leaders such as the Kaunda regime in Zambia. Now this policy is in a shambles and the question is whether or not Vorster can strike up a new tune of "peaceful co-existence" in harmony with verbally more militant nationalists. In any case, he is taking no chances and has threatened massive retaliation if the MPLA aids guerrilla forces of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO).

Pretoria has been gearing up its war machine in anticipation of a major outbreak on the sub-continent. The 1975-76 defence budget was upped by 30 percent to nearly \$US1.5 billion. West German interests are widely reported to be aiding the racist regime in developing its nuclear capacity. Simultaneously, stepped-up domestic repression has led to a wave of political trials of opponents of apartheid.

The South African regime is complementing repression with other steps to stabilise internally. In April Pretoria will reactivate constitutional talks with its hand-picked representatives of Southwest Africa's tribal and ethnic groups, as the intended window dressing for the



SWAPO guerrillas in northern Namibia - a ten year war against South African occupation.

extension of "separate development" into the territory. Vorster is pushing ahead with plans to grant nominal independence in October to the Transkei, one of nine so-called tribal "bantustans" within South Africa. He hopes that "bantustan independence", along with a few other cosmetic changes, will be seen as a token of social reform.

Like its bedfellows in Pretoria, the weak bourgeois regime of Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda, whose policy of detente with racist South Africa is also on the rocks following the MPLA victory in Angola, complements external "detente" with a severely repressive domestic policy. Unemployed workers and youth, along with political opponents, are placed under military control in labour camps clearing previously uncultivated lands. Strikes are illegal in a number of "essential industries".

However, this did not prevent a wildcat strike wave in the copper belt in the middle of last year which forced concessions on wages and working conditions. Even the tame labour bureaucrats have begun to criticise the government. In response to the state of emergency declared last month, Newstead Zimba, general secretary of the Zambian Council of Trade Unions and leader of 68,000 organised copper miners, lashed out at "loud-mouthed leaders, the unfair budget, high

Continued on page two

SIXTEEN YEARS OF STALINIST RULE



IN CUBA

Castro holds first ever CP Congress . . . 6

Soviets and the struggle for workers power in Portugal . . . 6

The "positive side" of "millionaire fascist agent of US imperialism"

Fraser: Mao's new ally



"Friend of the people"?

Mao, "the Great Helmsman", has discovered a new ally down under. In a report in the Melbourne Age (15 March) the Chinese People's Daily is quoted as saying that a new agreement between the Australian Fraser Government and New Zealand's right-wing Muldoon government for a joint "defence" against "Soviet expansion" in the region is "fully justified" and "it is only natural that Australia and New Zealand, which bear the brunt of the threat in the Indian Ocean and South Pacific, cannot remain indifferent."

Ever faithful to the counterrevolutionary policies of the Peking bureaucracy, Vanguard, newspaper of the Maoist Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist), has accordingly uncovered what it calls a "positive side" to Malcolm Fraser. In his anti-communist, cold-war denunciations of the supposed Soviet Union naval build-up in the Indian Ocean, which echo the commander of the US Seventh Fleet and the NCC's Santamaria, the Prime Minister is "performing a very important service to Australia and the world", says Vanguard (29 January)! Fraser, "millionaire fascist agent of U.S. imperialism" who, after the "semi-fascist coup" of November 11 was "marching ... straight to fascism" (Vanguard, 12 February), it seems has discovered the danger of "Soviet social-imperialism"!

According to Mao-thought the "main contradiction" in the world today is the struggle for world-wide domination between the US and the USSR. But while Vanguard routinely asserts the need to struggle against both "superpowers", the Soviet Union is considered an "even more dangerous and insidious menace" (29 January). In the same editorial, in words which could have been lifted from any of the right-wing press, they accuse the recent Whitlam government of being "equivocal, even at times favourable to the expansion of Soviet social-imperialism" and extol the "far more realistic attitude" of the Fraser government!

The Soviet Union is of course not imperialist; like China it is a deformed workers state ruled by a nationalist bureaucracy which attempts to balance between the socialised economy of the workers state and conciliation of the imperialist bourgeoisie. But no matter how treacherous the policies of Brezhnev/Kosygin, US imperialist opposition to the Soviet Union, with which China is now openly aligning itself, is purely and simply counterrevolutionary opposition to the gains of the October Revolution.

Defeat of the Russian workers state at the hands of imperialism would be an enormous setback for the world proletariat. Thus Marxists stand for the unconditional defence of all the deformed workers states against imperialist attack, to defend the collectivised property forms; and for political revolutions to oust the nationalist bureaucracies, to re-establish the democratic proletarian rule necessary to the effective defence and extension of the revolutionary gains and to forge true worldwide communist unity against capitalism.

The logic of the Maoists' anti-Soviet bloc with the world's most dangerous counterrevolutionaries is leading it towards some tortured contradictions. For some time Vanguard has been calling for Australia to become "self-reliant in defence", that is for the "defence" forces of the Australian bourgeoisie, US imperialism's junior partner -- the same forces that intervened in Vietnam and are still stationed in Malaysia -- to be strengthened!

How long then will it be before our local patriots and anti-Soviet "anti-imperialists" are campaigning not for the removal of US bases such as the proposed Cockburn Sound naval base in Western Australia but their retention and even extension? Cockburn Sound, after all, is designed specifically to fight the Soviet "threat" in the Indian Ocean! This would only be consistent with Mao's followers in Western Europe who have been urging the strengthening of the US-dominated NATO. And last year the Chinese official Hsinhua news agency lauded US capitalist politicians opposed to defence cuts (Hsinhua Weekly, 3 November 1975) and mourned Ford's dumping of cold-war hawk James Schlesinger as Defence Secretary as "a loss to the nation in the pursuit of a prudent defence and foreign policy" (quoted in China's Alliance with US Imperialism, Spartacus Youth League pamphlet -- see review on page four of this issue!).

The Peking/CPA (ML) open alliance with US imperialism and counterrevolution is the real substance behind the Maoists' populist rhetoric. Nothing could show more clearly why Maoism, like Stalinism in its other forms, has long been accurately described as the syphilis of the workers movement. ■

Continued from page one

... apartheid

prices, poor economic planning" (Star, 14 February). Kaunda will move as sharply against rebellious miners as he did against militants of one of the black Rhodesian nationalist resistance groups, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), in 1975 and against the students at the University of Lusaka in January (for holding a pro-MPLA demonstration).

It is to the proletariat that the masses of southern Africa must look for liberation both from white supremacism and from capitalist exploitation. The petty-bourgeois strategy of guerrilla warfare, in addition to its general impotence in the face of powerful imperialist and sub-imperialist enemies, will if successful only throw up new bourgeois regimes that despite more militant rhetoric will follow in the footsteps of Kaunda. A case in point is the so-called "Marxist" regime established by FRELIMO in Mozambique.

"Revolutionary" Mozambique, like "neo-colonial" Zambia, is economically dependent on South Africa. In fact, the FRELIMO government is doing more business with its racist neighbours than the Portuguese colonial administration did. Significantly, since independence the number of Mozambicans working as contract labourers in Witwatersrand gold mines has risen from 100,000 to 150,000 as the new regime avidly seeks to accumulate foreign exchange reserves. (According to a colonial arrangement still in force, half the workers' salaries are paid to the Mozambique authorities in gold!)

South African working class: vanguard of liberation

Corresponding to the dominance of South African capital in the subcontinent is the key role of the substantial South African black proletariat in the struggle for liberation from the present tyrannical white supremacist regimes and their black nationalist quislings, clients and allies. South Africa's blacks are not a primitive peasant group, as the architects of apartheid pretend, but a five-million-strong proletariat. The urban population is several generations removed from the "tribal homelands", although lacking any rights in the "white" areas (87 percent of the country).

The entire apartheid structure is more than a fiendish system of racial oppression; it is also a brutal system of labour control. The pass laws, urban residential restrictions, "bantustan" schemes and denial of political rights to the "non-white" population are an attempt to allocate labour power between various sectors of the economy at the lowest possible wages while preventing any effective combination of the workers against their exploiters.

Black workers in the apartheid police state face nearly insuperable obstacles to organising in their defence, yet they have a long history of militant and courageous struggle. Under pressure from the ultra-reactionary National Party of Vorster and his predecessors, all unions which admitted black workers were excluded from the principal labour federation by 1954. While a handful of unions with leftist leadership joined

with purged African unions to form the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), it, like the African National Congress (ANC) and the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), was a victim of the intense witchhunt following the notorious 1960 Sharpeville massacre of blacks demonstrating against the invidious pass laws.

SACTU members were hard hit. Three union leaders were executed and two were sentenced to life in prison. Those not jailed were "banned" by the government or blacklisted by their employers, and by the mid-1960s SACTU had almost ceased to exist. With the suppression of black and multi-racial trade unionism and the outlawing of all mass protest by "non-whites", the left in despair made a verbal turn to guerrillaism.

Not much was ever done in the way of guerrilla or terrorist actions, and their impotence in the face of the heavily militarised Pretoria regime is readily apparent. It was not until a massive strike wave of black workers swept South Africa, beginning in 1972 and lasting well into 1975, that leftists again began to raise their heads (see "Black Workers Resistance Flares in Racist Hell", Workers Vanguard no 29, 28 September 1973). The government and employers responded with mass arrests and firings and, particularly in the mines, savage police violence.

Although the few illegal "African" unions have grown, legal persecution and employer recalcitrance have insured that less than one percent of the black workforce is organised. A central task for revolutionaries in South Africa is to fight for the right of "non-white" workers to freely organise labour unions, and to forge unity among the black, "Coloured" (mestizo) and Indian workers. A vital feature of the mass strikes that paralysed Durban in early 1973 was the solidarity among non-white workers in a city that was the scene of virtual race war between Indians and black Africans in 1949. In the minefields, where the vast majority of workers are migrants from Mozambique, Rhodesia, Lesotho, Botswana and Malawi, the strike struggles in 1973-74 drew them together for the first time and revealed the revolutionary potential for international working-class unity at the heart of South Africa's extractive industries.

Having gone nowhere during its paper guerrillaist phase, the CPSA is evidently turning once again to the unions, trying to revive SACTU. The keystone of the CP's policies at present is to slavishly tail the established black petty-bourgeois leadership of the African National Congress, rather than simply copying the respectable labour reformism of their counterparts in West Europe. However, the CPSA shares with its Stalinist brothers throughout the world the reformist "theory" of revolution by stages: thus it calls today in effect for a non-racist capitalist state. Its real goal is to be little more than loyal "left" advisors of the aspiring Kaundas of the ANC.

To destroy apartheid root and branch requires the overthrow of South African capitalism. For that task a Trotskyist party rooted in the black proletariat is necessary. Such a party would join together the hundreds of thousands of mine, transport and industrial workers stretching from the Witwatersrand to the Copper Belt -- and link up with their class comrades in the Angola and Mozambique port cities -- to form the backbone of a future socialist federation of southern Africa.

Australasian SPARTACIST

a monthly organ of revolutionary Marxism for the birth of the Fourth International published by Spartacist Publications for the Central Committee of the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand, section of the international Spartacist tendency

EDITORIAL BOARD: Bill Logan
Dave Reynolds (editor)
Aaire Hannah
Steve Haran

(Melbourne correspondent: John Sheridan)

GPO Box 3473,
Sydney,
NSW, 2001.

(02) 660-7647

GPO Box 2339,
Melbourne,
Victoria, 3001.

(03) 429-1597

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Two dollars for the next twelve issues (one year).

AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST is registered at the GPO, Sydney for posting as a newspaper -- Category C.

review of
Spartacus Youth League pamphlet

China's alliance



with US imperialism

The visit to Australia by US Vice President Nelson Rockefeller for the US Bicentennial "celebrations" will provide an opportunity for the local Maoists to clear their throats, dust off some of their old banners and once again come out onto the streets chanting "smash US imperialism". True, the red flags of past years have disappeared to make way for the "patriotic" Eureka flag, and the militant slogans of "Victory to the Vietcong" and "smash the capitalist state" have been transformed into limp, quixotic-reformist calls for "Australian independence". Collecting funds on campus for the Vietnamese National Liberation Front has given way to sponsoring forums by capitalists such as XL Corporation Chairman Ian Sykes as did the Maoists at LaTrobe University last month. Yet many Maoists may still recall the time, now long gone, when their proclaimed and genuine desire to stand with the oppressed of the world against imperialist capitalism was not in such rank contradiction to their Chinese masters, whose open alliance with US imperialism has been shatteringly revealed in action in the recent Angolan war.

Rockefeller and Mao: same line on NATO, Angola

Certainly those Maoists participating in the anti-Rockefeller demos are ensnared in a truly grotesque contradiction. If they were at all consistent the local practitioners of Mao-thought would not be demonstrating against Rockefeller but rather welcoming the unique opportunity to press upon this bloody representative of the US capitalist class the urgent need to boost America's military budget, to strengthen NATO, CENTO and other counterrevolutionary military alliances and to smash as many Soviet-supported national liberation movements and Communist parties as possible in preparation for war with that "most dangerous" of the superpowers; "Soviet social-imperialism". After all, this has been Peking's message to the policy-makers in Washington and the rest of the capitalist world for some time, most recently when the Maoist bureaucracy rolled out their red carpets to welcome the butcher of millions of Indochinese workers and peasants, Richard Nixon, a man justly hated and despised everywhere but in the ruling circles of "People's China".

Angola had already proved that it was not just a matter of more or less oblique hints in *Peking Review* or even gushing speeches at posh Peking banquets for such reactionaries as Britain's Ed-

ward Heath or Germany's Franz-Josef Strauss but one of brutal counterrevolutionary action. Mao's participation in the "Holy Alliance" of the CIA, Portuguese colonialism and South African apartheid in Angola took the form of open and direct military aid and advice to the FNLA/UNITA forces in their attempt to crush the Soviet-supported MPLA, forces acting with the intention, as the FNLA put it, to "kill every communist" in Angola. More than a few Maoists must be disoriented by such a betrayal, to judge from articles in *Vanguard*, paper of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) (CPA(ML)), chiding "some readers" for evident balking. As late as mid-1975, the Maoist bookstall at LaTrobe University featured books lauding the MPLA.

The recent publication of the pamphlet *China's Alliance with US Imperialism* by the Spartacus Youth League (SYL), youth section of the Spartacist League of the United States (SLUS), is particularly timely. The pamphlet meticulously documents the treacherous path of Maoist foreign policy as Mao picks up the rock of the struggle against the "New Czars" -- only to drop it on the oppressed masses of the world. The Maoists' lauding of the "anti-imperialist" butchers of Iran, Ceylon and Ethiopia while their insurgent "subjects" faced savage slaughter, their "advice" to NATO and US imperialism on "protecting" Portugal and capitalist Western Europe from the "threat" of "Soviet social-imperialism" are devastatingly chronicled. There are also, for example, chapters dealing with Maoism in the period preceding its turn to an open bloc with US imperialism, and giving a detailed account and analysis of the key role played by the Maoist strategy of class collaboration in preparing the way for the bloodbath of half a million leftists in 1965 Indonesia. It is worth mentioning in more detail two examples from the pamphlet which have not received wide currency on the Australian left.

Pinochet: "China has behaved well"

In Chile, in the period immediately following the September 1973 coup led by General Pinochet, the Chinese embassy was the only one in Santiago which closed its doors to workers and leftists seeking shelter from the slaughter campaign of the murderous generals. Within weeks China recognised Pinochet's regime and in 1975 offered the junta, which was facing economic disaster, a \$58 million loan. Small wonder that Pinochet was moved to comment in a recent interview with the *New York Times* that China "has behaved well". When its shabby diplomatic manoeuvres are at stake, the Maoist bureaucracy is willing to walk serenely over the corpses of workers and peasants.

Local Maoists are fond of saying that the Allende disaster proved the futility of the peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism. True -- but not according to Peking. In a letter to Allende dated 3 February 1973 (quoted in *Chile Hoy*, 3-9 August 1973) Chinese Premier Chou En-lai counselled the capitalist popular-front government to stick resolutely to that "peaceful", parliamentary road to disaster:

"only by acting ... in a prepared and gradual form can one reach step by step the objective of changing the physiognomy of economic backwardness and improve the living conditions of the people." (see *China's Alliance ...*, p 45)

Some Australian Maoists might recall that in the late 1960s *New China Pictorial* was wont to give favourable coverage to the Omani guerrillas (engaged in armed struggle against the feudal Omani Sultanate and an allied 8000-strong Iranian expeditionary force) replete with photos of the rebels reading the "little Red Book". The Omani guerrillas, still apparently clinging to the "Red Book" but long since having vanished from the pages of Chinese propaganda organs, are presently being ground to death by the brutal Iranian army. Not only has China long since suspended all political and military support to the Omani fighters, but at a banquet held in his honor by the Shah of Iran in 1973, Chinese Foreign Minister Chi Peng-fei proclaimed:

"Iran has to strengthen its defenses in view of the prevailing situation in the region. It is necessary and understandable for Iran to take measures to strengthen her defenses for safeguarding her security, independence and sovereignty.... We hope and are convinced that your country, under the leadership of His Imperial Majesty the Shahanshah, will build herself into a prosperous and powerful country." (*Hsinhua News Agency*, 17-18 June 1973) (see *China's Alliance ...*, pp 48-58)

As the SYL pamphlet makes clear these betrayals by Mao are not just accidents nor the personal evil machinations of Mao himself but are the inevitable results that flow from the material interests of the privileged, Chinese nationalist bureaucracy that Mao represents. This bureaucracy, petty-bourgeois in nature, is rooted in the deformity of the Chinese revolution which from its inception in 1949 when capitalist rule was overthrown by petty-bourgeois, peasant-

based guerrilla forces has lacked any organs of democratic proletarian rule (soviets). Our analysis enabled the Spartacist tendency more than 6 years ago to predict the possibility of a US-China bloc:

"At the present time, the Vietnam war and the extreme diplomatic and internal difficulties of the Chinese state have forced the Maoists to maintain greater hostility to imperialism and verbally disclaim the USSR's avowed policy of 'peaceful coexistence' while themselves peacefully coexisting with Japan. However, we must warn against the growing objective possibility -- given the tremendous industrial and military capacity of the Soviet Union -- of a U.S. deal with China." ("Development and Tactics of the Spartacist League", *Marxist Bulletin* no 9, Part II, 30 August 1969)

The Australian Maoist movement originated with the 1963 split from the CPA of a group of party functionaries and trade-union bureaucrats centred in Victoria which opted for the Peking side in the Sino-Soviet inter-bureaucratic struggle. The CPA(ML) would have remained nothing but a marginal sect except for the intersection of the wave of student radicalism touched off by the imperialist assault on Vietnam in the mid-1960s. Repelled by social-democratic reformism, inspired by trips to China during the early period of the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution", radicals such as those grouped around the Monash Labor Club in Melbourne were attracted to China's "Marxism-Leninism" out of an identification with the "wretched of the Earth", "people's war" (especially in Vietnam) and the supposed anti-bureaucratic fight of the Red Guard youth. There was also a deep repulsion from the slothful philistinism of Brezhnev/Kosygin who, in pursuit of "detente" with imperialism, were seen as betraying the colonial revolution.

But after all, what was the Khrushchev/Brezhnev line of peaceful coexistence with imperialism but a resurrection of Stalin's 1930s popular front strategy, which sought the "friendship" of democratic capitalism in return for directly beheading proletarian revolutions as the GPU did in Spain? And what was popular frontism but the working out in practice of the Stalin doctrine (fully adopted by Mao long ago) of "socialism in one country", the after-the-fact "ideology" of a parasitic, nationalistic bureaucracy which, having politically expropriated the working class, sought to buy "peace" from capitalism by betraying the international revolution, knowing full well that authentic workers' revolution in Germany, Spain or elsewhere would mortally threaten their own privileged position?

"Cultural Revolution", "social-imperialism" and "inalienable" islands

The Cultural Revolution, neither proletarian nor cultural, at bottom represented a power struggle by the Mao wing of the bureaucracy against the Lui Shao-chi party centre. As a battering ram against his rivals Mao demagogically mobilised masses of student youth, many of whom did fervently want to combat bureaucratism. Once entrenched in power Mao announced the end of the Cultural Revolution and the more militant and idealistic of the Red Guards were dispersed by the army. There was another aspect to this bureaucratic purge: the use of the Red Guards not just against Lui Shao-chi but also against the Chinese proletariat, reflected in the attacks on so-called "economism" and material incentives by the student youth, themselves the future cadres of the state apparatus.

The current Maoist analysis of the Soviet Union as a restored state capitalist economy ruled by a dark "social-fascist" regime fails at even caricaturing elementary Marxism. To hold that Stalin's closest colleagues in the immediate period after his death peacefully restored capitalism is a rampantly idealist rejection of the Marxist understanding of the state as the organised defender of a definite system of class relations -- a system which can only be qualitatively

Continued on page eleven

NOW AVAILABLE

ONLY \$1

Order from/pay to:

Spartacist League,
GPO Box 3473,
Sydney, 2001.



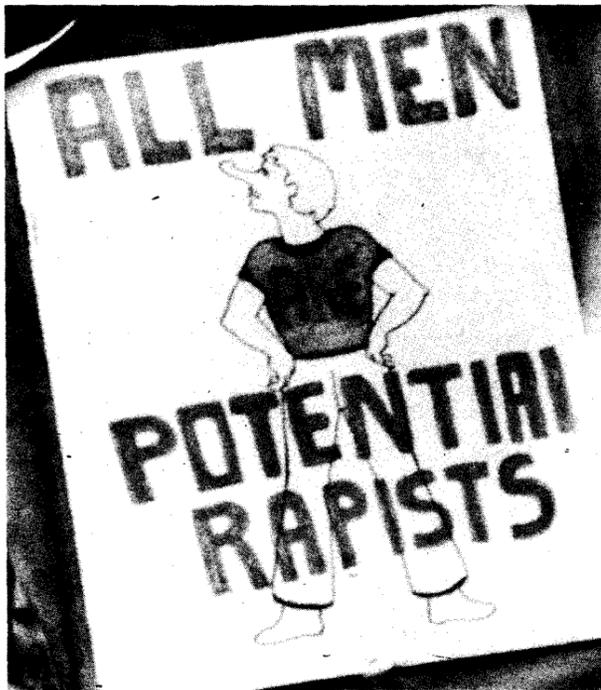
Against Our Will:

REVIEW

Susan Brownmiller,
Against Our will:
Men, Women and Rape
New York: Simon and Schuster

The main contention of Susan Brownmiller's *Against Our Will* is that rape (or the threat of rape) is the main way in which all women are controlled by all men. While "upper-class" men by and large leave the actual dirty work to "lower-class" men, she argues, they *all* benefit from the results -- subjugated, fearful women.

There are (at least) two things wrong with this theory. First, while rape is a criminal act of sexual coercion, it is *not* the main social mechanism by which women are oppressed. Women are oppressed principally through their isolation from socially productive labor and their relegation to stultifying household drudgery within the confines of the family. Second (and this is the fundamental flaw in all feminist logic



Placard at Sydney International Women's Day, 1976.

whether one accepts the rape thesis or not), current social institutions are *not* the result of a plot by men to control women.

Brownmiller's explanation of women's oppression rests on a simple biological premise -- men have penises. She writes: "... we cannot work around the fact that in terms of human anatomy the possibility of forcible intercourse incontrovertibly exists. This simple fact may have been sufficient to have caused the creation of a male ideology of rape. When men discovered they could rape, they proceeded to do so." The development of the family is explained as follows: "Female fear of an open season of rape, and not a natural inclination towards monogamy, motherhood or love, was probably the single causative factor in the original subjugation of women by men, the most important key to her historic dependence, her domestication by protective mating."

In *Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Frederick Engels writes:

"The more the traditional sexual relations [group marriage] lost the naive primitive character of the forest life, owing to the development of the economic conditions with consequent undermining of the old communism and growing density of population, the more oppressive and humiliating must the women have felt them to be, and the greater their longing for the right of chastity, or temporary or permanent marriage with one man only, as a way of release. This advance could not in any case have originated with the men, if only because it has never occurred to them, even to this day, to renounce the pleasures of actual group marriage."

This speculation would appear uncomfortably close to Brownmiller's thesis, except for the phrase "owing to the development of the economic conditions with consequent undermining of the old communism and growing density of population". The studies of primitive communism which Engels drew upon proved that sexual relations had been non-oppressive and non-coercive. He demonstrated that it was the development of class society which laid the basis for the economic, social and sexual subjugation of women.

Engels' pioneering analysis of the woman question identified the family as the main social institution which oppresses women. According to

the anthropological data of Morgan on which it is based, land in the Stone Age had belonged to all the members of society in common. While there had been a division of labor between the sexes, there had also been equality, for each had taken part in productive labor and had contributed to the economic life of the tribe. With the eventual increase in man's capacity to produce, it became profitable to employ slaves -- the first form of private property. Herds, land and other forms of property also became privatized for the first time, bringing about a revolution within the family; the domestic labor of women no longer equaled the economic power of men. Thus the establishment of private property and the family laid the basis for the inequality of women which continues to find its expression in various forms of oppression and exploitation, including rape. Engels concluded that women could achieve equality with men only when they took part once again in general economic production on a par with men.

In other words, since real and specific social institutions perpetuate the oppression of women, the only solution is to root them out, and the only means of doing so is a socialist revolution which smashes class society and frees women from domestic slavery. But Brownmiller cannot see this obvious solution because she remains firmly fixated on the male "ultimate weapon", the penis, which for her reigns supreme throughout history. *To posit an unchangeable, eternally rapacious male psychology, as Brownmiller does, is essentially to despair of significant social change.*

Rape in contemporary society is essentially a criminal act of individual hostility directed in the main at women as objects to be defiled. It transforms what is normally a pleasurable act of consensual intimacy for sexual gratification into an experience of fear, degradation and often injury for the victim. The essence of rape is brutality and utter dehumanization -- a nightmare of terror.

Brownmiller has assembled a great deal of information on the "typical" rapist, drawn mainly from police studies. This evidence bears out an analysis of rape as part of a continuum of violent crimes against individuals, which include assault, robbery and murder. The "typical" rapist's social profile is intermediate between that of men arrested for violent assault and those arrested for robbery:

"Far from the stereotypic, psychiatric construct of mild-mannered repressed, impotent homosexuals with an Oedipus complex, they are better understood as brutalized, violence-prone men who act out their raging hatred against the world through an object offering the least amount of physical resistance, a woman's body."

Police statistics on rape are quite revealing (even allowing for the fact that rape is universally admitted to be the least reported of crimes). The *Uniform Crime Reports*, which Brownmiller quotes, put out by the FBI and drawn from nationally-compiled police reports, show that 61 percent of accused rapists are under 25 years of age and that 47 percent are black and 51 percent are white. More detailed studies (although not done on a nation-wide basis) reveal that both rapists and victims come primarily from the "lower classes".

That rapist and victim are most typically ghetto residents in American society is not particularly surprising. Unlike the idealists who believed (as did, for example, the early SDSers) that the only reason that the poor had not revolted against their wretched conditions was because they had not thought of it, communists understand that the searing poverty, educational deprivation and degrading conditions of ghetto life sometimes create severely disoriented human beings and that high crime rates in lumen neighborhoods, including high incidences of rape, have their basis in the poisonous cauldron of terror, despair and frustration that is the American ghetto. But for many starry-eyed New Left liberals (like Brownmiller) the discovery that the "wretched of the earth", particularly in urban America, are sometimes driven to brutal acts came as a rude shock.

But nothing in the statistics which she cites supports Brownmiller's thesis that *all* men benefit from rape. The fact that lumpenized young males rape lumpenized young females cannot be interpreted to indicate that rape is natural to men. And if, as Brownmiller argues, upper-class men benefit from lower-class rape, they express their gratitude in rather peculiar fashion by visiting swift and violent punishment upon any young ghetto tough who rapes one of "their" women.

Furthermore, there are two important kinds of rape which do not appear in the police statistics -- rape among men in prison and rape in war. Al-



Susan Brownmiller.

Holly Forsman

though Brownmiller discusses these phenomena, she seems blind to the conclusions which one must draw from them. Men use prison rape as a means of establishing power relationships in a rigidly structured, coercive environment where they have literally no weapons but their bodies. Here, the concept of rape as means of keeping women subservient obviously does not apply. In war, the mass rape of the women of a conquered nation is a means of expressing power over and contempt for the *entire* conquered population, including the men. Mass rape is forced upon the vanquished, usually of another nation or race, by the conquerors; it is a way of using women as sexual property to humiliate the (male) enemy. (This is by no means to say that the men and women of the conquered nation are equally victimized by the rape of the women. In fact, the "tarnished" women are not infrequently subsequently rejected and further brutalized by their own countrymen, as occurred recently in Bangladesh.)

In racially tense America, cases of interracial rape, although a relatively small proportion of all rapes, provoke a violent reaction; or rather, cases of black men accused of raping white women create such a reaction. The most outrageous section of Brownmiller's book, particularly for leftists, deals with what she calls the violent intersection of racism and sexism.

Brownmiller's reassessment of the "Scottsboro Boys" case [nine black youths charged in 1931 with raping two white girls. Despite contradictory testimony at the trial, the local Alabama court found eight of them guilty and sentenced them to death. They were defended by the International Labor Defense.], and in particular the murder of Emmet Till (a 14-year-old black youth who was murdered by two white men in Mississippi in 1955 for "wolfwhistling" at one of the men's wives), carries her feminist position to its logical conclusion. Although she admits that "we are rightly aghast that a whistle could be cause for murder," she nevertheless insists that Emmet Till and JW Millam (one of the murderers) had something in common: "They both understood that ... it was a deliberate insult just short of physical assault, a last reminder to Carolyn Bryant that this black boy, Till, had in mind to possess her."

What is most interesting about Brownmiller's conversion to feminism is the fact that for years previously she had actively sympathized with Till. Her subsequent violent reaction against the Tills of this world is an interesting, if

Continued on page ten

Women and Revolution
Journal of the Women's Committee of the Spartacist League

International Women's Day 1976

SUBSCRIBE
4 issues - \$2

Order from/pay to:
Spartacist League,
GPO Box 3473,
Sydney, 2001.

Against Our Will: A Review...2
Architecture As a Tool of Social Transformation...6
Bolshevik Work Among Women: Part 2...18
Reactionary Backlash Targets Women's Rights...23
Union WAGE: Labor-Reformist Junkyard...32

Castro holds first ever CP Congress



"Carrier pigeons flew today from remote villages in the Sierra Maestra with early returns in Cuba's first national vote since Fidel Castro seized power in 1959," reported the 16 February *New York Times*. In balloting on the new "socialist constitution" the final count was 97.7 percent in favor and 1 percent opposed, with about 5.6 million people over the age of 16 participating.

This first national plebiscite came only a few weeks after the maiden congress of the Cuban Communist Party (PCC) held in late December. After 12 months of preparation (1975 was proclaimed "The Year of the First Congress") and a great deal of fanfare, the meeting convened at the Karl Marx Theater in Havana with a cast of thousands of delegates and foreign dignitaries.

The carefully orchestrated six-day conference, a masterpiece of political sterility, listened to a seven-hour report by Fidel Castro and follow-up speeches praising the "brilliant ability" of the "jefe maximo" to "interpret and express historical necessity" (*Granma*, 25 January). Commenting on why the congress had not been held before, Castro remarked with a bureaucratic arrogance that would make even the most cynical Stalinist hacks blush, "We are fortunate to be holding it now. Fortunate, indeed! This way the quality of the Congress is endorsed by 17 years of experience!"

Despite all the hoopla about "socialist democracy", the first-ever PCC congress certainly did not represent a break with the capricious Stalinist regime which has governed the island since a bureaucratically deformed workers state emerged in the fall-winter of 1960. But it is significant as an attempt by the narrow Castro ruling clique to solidify and broaden the governmental and party apparatus. This operation has meant a facelifting for the regime, extending even to the personal appearance of its leaders. Gone are the days when Raul Castro was the only commander of state armed forces to sport a pony tail. At the congress, both Castro brothers wore stylishly tailored officers' uniforms (no battle fatigues here!) complete with epaulettes.

A rubber-stamp Congress

The main theme of the congress was "the process of institutionalizing and restructuring the country". Until now virtually all decisions have been made by Castro himself or a small circle of close associates. Castro's report contained a long section, entitled "mistakes made", which admitted that there has been no semblance of democratic decision-making in the Cuban party-state:

"For years the Party's activities had been conducted by the Secretariat for Organization. The Political Bureau functioned as the Party's highest authority, but in practice the Central Committee did not exercise its functions. In addition to this, the Political Bureau -- composed of comrades who were in charge of many state functions -- considered the most important political questions, but there was no strictly systematic work in the leadership of the Party and the state." (*Granma*, 4 January)

Castro's conclusion was to propose a new constitution based on "representative organs of the proletarian state: the National Assembly and the Provincial and Municipal Assemblies of People's Power".

In his report to the PCC congress, Castro motivated the need to replace the 1940 Fundamental Law by referring to the "continual clash between a profoundly revolutionary process and the formulations of a bourgeois constitution". He hailed the new document as "an exemplary text of socialist democracy" and "a text worthy of the first socialist state of workers and peasants, of manual and intellectual workers, in the Americas, in which sovereignty and power are truly in the hands of the working people ..." (*Granma*, 4 January).

The 1976 constitution does codify the collective ownership of the means of production, a historic conquest of the working class. It also guarantees certain rights to the Cuban people,

such as free medical care and education, equal pay for equal work, paid maternity leaves and vacations, social security benefits, as well as the right to vote, work and full social equality.

But despite all the talk of elections and "organs of people's power", the "socialist constitution" is a far cry from workers democracy. It not only writes into law the political monopoly of the Communist Party (as "the leading force of society and the state"), but also the Castro regime's foreign policy of tailing after the Kremlin ("fraternal friendship, assistance and cooperation with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries").

Actually, Cuba's new "socialist constitution" resembles nothing so much as Stalin's 1936 constitution, which falsely proclaimed the advent of socialism and the disappearance of classes in the Soviet Union. In addition to territorial division of votes by an atomized population instead of soviet democracy organized around the workplace, this document wrote into law the political expropriation of the working class (through reference to the "leading role" of the Communist Party (CPSU), by then merely a mouthpiece for the ruling bureaucracy).

The "Great Leader of the Peoples" did not let the people approve (much less decide upon) his constitution, but in the 1937 elections to the "supreme soviet" of the USSR the regimented voters duly cast 98.6 percent of their ballots for the Communist Party candidates (Stalin, "Report to the 18th Congress of the CPSU", March 1939). If Castro got a mere 97.7 percent for his exercise in "socialist democracy", we can only assume ... that some of the carrier pigeons got lost in the Sierra Maestra!

For the rest, the congress adopted a party platform and statutes, and passed numerous resolutions covering every field of social and political life, all without a word of dissent or criticism. Castro was, of course, "re-elected" first secretary of the PCC and his brother Raul, now a self-promoted lieutenant general, was awarded the post of second secretary.

To test the waters of "people's power", the Cuban bureaucracy has conducted an "experiment" in the province of Matanzas, with mid-1974 elections for district, regional and provincial assemblies. The *Wall Street Journal* (4 December 1974) quoted Ramon Castro, Fidel's older brother (and a high-level Havana administrator), as saying of the Matanzas vote: "Now we are putting into the hands of the people the power of governing that they should have."

To provide an appearance of "grassroots democracy", a choice between different candidates was permitted, with 4712 individuals running for 1114 positions in the provincial assembly. All residents 16 years of age and older were permitted to vote except prisoners, applicants for permanent emigration and candidates in the 1958 "elections" of the Batista dictatorship. In addition to the above, candidates could be excluded if they were ever political, military, police and trade-union officials in the last Batista government, or if they had been "sanctioned for nonfulfillment of military duties and [dis]respect for national emblems" (*Cuba Review*, December 1974).

A close look at this "experiment" reveals its utterly farcical character and how far it is from genuine proletarian democracy. Aside from the formally democratic features of multiple candidates, right to recall and majority election, in practice all candidates were scrupulously screened by the PCC's electoral commission. Above all, no other workers parties that defend the social and economic gains of the Cuban Revolution against imperialism and counterrevolution were permitted to run in opposition to the candidates of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Thus, according to the *Cuba Review*, "If any detrimental information about the individual was found, the nominee was given the opportunity to withdraw as a candidate. Those choosing to remain in the race had the information included in their biographies" which were posted publicly along with their photos. Since no money could be expended in campaigning, candidates were elected strictly on the basis of these biographies, with the obvious assumption by many voters that those who had been appointed to the most posts in the past were the most qualified.

An even more restrictive screening process was employed for elections to the key post of executive committee, the full-time executive/administrative arm of the assemblies. Here nominees did not even have to be elected delegates! Moreover, the slates drawn up by the PCC electoral commission had to be accepted or rejected (no new candidates could be added); if turned down, the commission simply draws up a new slate. It is no surprise, therefore, that 75 percent of those elected as delegates to the provincial assembly were either members of the Communist Party or the Young Communist League (UJC).

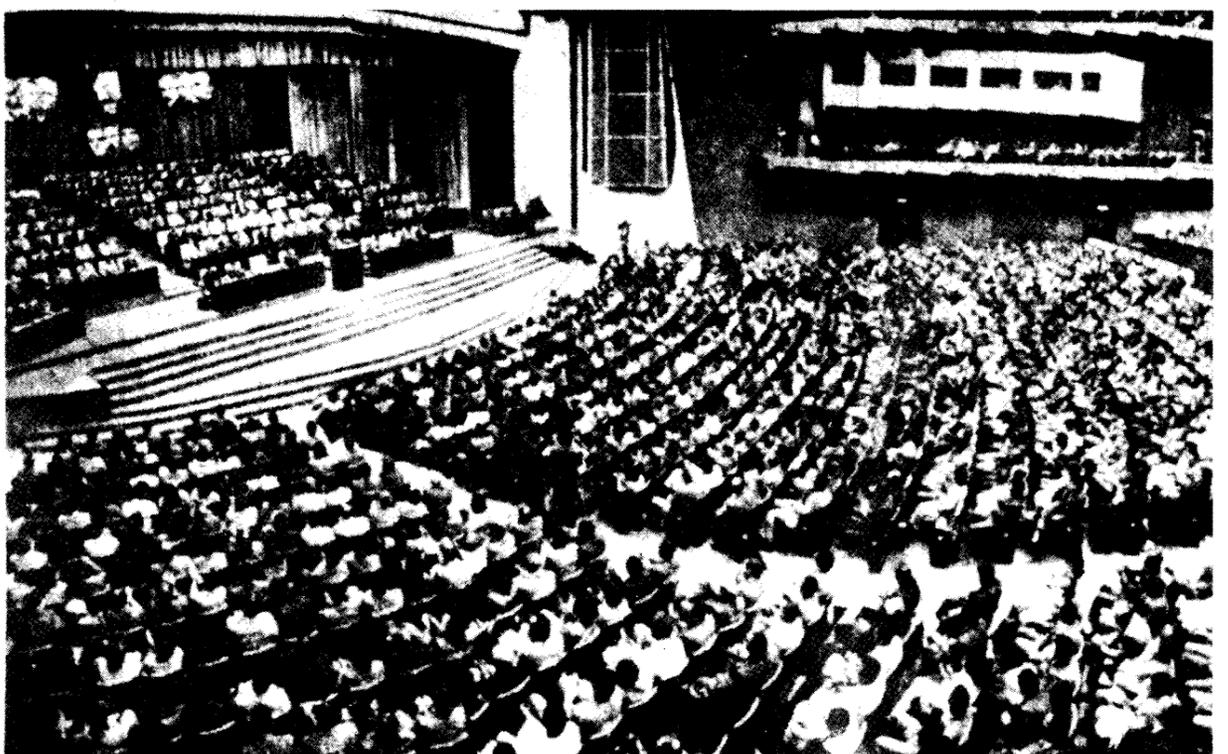
A five-year plan for Cuba

In announcing the Matanzas elections, Cuba's deputy premier and defense minister Raul Castro linked them to the struggle against bureaucratism: "We are convinced that to the extent the masses participate in state affairs, the struggle against all forms of bureaucratism will be more effective, the needs of the population and the community will be better met and the revolutionary state will be stronger, more democratic and solid" (quoted in *Intercontinental Press*, 22 July 1974). Similarly, the recent PCC congress which approved the new constitution placed special emphasis on overcoming the irrationalities of the present economic organization -- or, more accurately, disorganization -- of Cuba.

Castro's report stated that, in the past, "Economic management methods that have been put into practice have not been the best possible. Generally, our administrative cadres do not have the required economic consciousness, the required concern for matters regarding costs and production efficiency in general." That is only scratching the surface.

The report stated that in the early years, government economic expenditures were governed by

Continued on page eleven



Cuban Communist Party Congress in Havana, December 1975.

Granma

Soviets and the struggle for workers' power in Portugal



Luta proletaria

Soldiers march in "far left" demonstration in Lisbon, June 1975.

In the course of every revolutionary struggle there arises an urgent objective need to unite the forces of the proletariat (along with its allies among other exploited, impoverished and specially oppressed sectors of the population) to wage effective battle against the class enemy. This requires not only combining the forces of existing organizations of the workers movement -- which even in their totality seldom encompass a majority of the class -- but also forging new organs capable of rousing to struggle the more backward elements of the masses. In the Russian Revolution of 1917 this need was fulfilled above all by the *soviets*, or councils, of workers, soldiers and peasants. Under the leadership of the Bolshevik party, these councils were transformed from a *dual power*, counterposed to the bourgeois state apparatus, into the organizational framework of a revolutionary *workers and peasants government*.

The need for what Leon Trotsky called "*the highest form of the united front* under the conditions in which the proletariat enters the epoch of fighting for power" ("What Next?" January 1932) is urgently felt in Portugal today as the country teeters on the brink of civil war. While the popular-front government moves to restore discipline in the ranks of the armed forces by purging leftists and forming a new counterrevolutionary strike force -- and as ultra-rightist and openly fascist forces are gearing up for a new wave of anti-working-class terror far greater in scope than that of last summer -- the workers movement has no organ for united counterattack against the rightist offensive.

The sharp divisions in the Portuguese workers movement are present at every level. In the unions the Communist Party (CP) has a strong base among metal workers and agricultural workers, while an alliance between the Socialist Party (SP) and Maoist currents dominates the white-collar unions (bank workers, office workers). Among the numerous workers commissions, neighborhood commissions, popular vigilance committees, etc., the fragmentation is even more extreme. This can be shown by looking at several conferences and demonstrations over the last two months.

On September 27-28 the "First National Congress of Workers Commissions" was held in the textile town of Covilha. Despite weeks of preparation only 43 enterprises sent mandated delegates. Most of the left parties boycotted the meeting, alleging that it was dominated by the hard-Maoist Movement for the Reorganization of the Proletarian Party (MRPP). The "National Secretariat of Workers Commissions" elected at the congress includes representatives of TAP airlines, the Timex watch factory, TLP (Lisbon telephones), Efacec and OGMA (air force supplies depot).

Ten days earlier a "rigidly non-party" demonstration was called by a coordinating committee of workers commissions of the greater Lisbon industrial belt, drawing approximately 50,000 par-

ticipants. With its demand for ousting the bourgeois Popular Democrats (PPD) from the government and judging from the list of 40 endorsing workers commissions, observers concluded that the real organizer of the demonstration was the Communist Party. Among the sponsors were commissions of COPAM, Carris bus company, EPAL (Lisbon water works), a coordinating committee of workers commissions of the former CUF trust, and the Alfeite arsenal.

On August 2-3 another national congress was held, of the "Revolutionary Workers, Soldiers and Sailors Councils" (CRTSM), attended by delegates from approximately 50 enterprises -- among them Sacor, Lisnave and Setenave shipyards, the Siderurgia Nacional steel plant, Standard Electrica and Radio Renascenca -- and almost 20 military units. In spite of the imposing name, however, the CRTSM actually amount to front groups for the New Left-syndicalist Proletarian Revolutionary Party (PRP), and range in size from a handful of members to several hundred. This conference, also, was boycotted by virtually all other left organizations.

Thus there are at least three competing coalitions of what purport to be "organs of people's power", each representing more than 40 enterprises and each with its own access to arms. None is sufficiently broad to serve as the organizing center for proletarian revolution. The need for a unitary national soviet could not be clearer.

Why soviets?

Yet in Portugal today virtually no one is calling for soviets! Instead there is much talk of "organs of people's power" and "popular assemblies". The terminology is clearly Stalinist, corresponding to the reformist concept of a "two-stage" revolution in which the first stage is not proletarian revolution but some variety of multi-class "people's revolution". The concepts themselves gained currency in Lisbon after the assembly of the ruling Armed Forces Movement (MFA) adopted a "guide document" entitled the "MFA-People Alliance" last July 8. The document states: "The defense and energizing of the Revolution ... requires...: a) encourage the revolutionary participation of the masses by creating and developing unified groups, in order to create true organs of popular power..."

The "guide document" was immediately hailed by virtually all of the non-Maoist "far left". The Internationalist Communist League (LCI, Portuguese sympathizing organization of the United Secretariat), which claims to be Trotskyist, issued a leaflet stating that pressure from the workers had "obliged the MFA to recognize these structures as the organized expressions of the workers" (quoted in *Intercontinental Press*, 4 August). Its mentors in Paris agreed; the 18 July *Rouge*, newspaper of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR), concluded: "The 'guide document' incorporates and thereby encourages the development of the self-organization of the workers." Almost as an afterthought, *Rouge* adds, "But it also seeks to structure it."

Not "structuring" but *control* is what the MFA plan aimed at. It hoped to create an illusion of "transferring power to the working class" while keeping these organs firmly subordinated to the bourgeois state, establishing a corporatist structure which can serve as a transmission belt for MFA policies. The local popular assemblies are to be formed by workers commissions, tenants commissions and other rank-and-file organizations which "after study" the MFA "will proceed to recognize". The unit delegate assemblies (ADUs) will participate in the local popular assemblies as watchdogs, and the assemblies may undertake "self-defense" (ie, form militias) only on the

MFA's initiative and under its control. Significantly, the national popular assembly is put off indefinitely as the "last and distant stage in this structure". In the "transition period" all "organs of people's power" will be subordinate to the MFA's Supreme Revolutionary Council!

The institutionalization of the "MFA-People Alliance" set out in the "guide document", and reaffirmed in the "COPCON document" which was endorsed by the organizations forming the "Revolutionary United Front" on August 25, is the most blatant class collaboration -- tying the workers to the bourgeois officer corps. If implemented it would prevent the workers commissions from becoming organs of dual power. The "MFA-People Alliance" is just as much a roadblock to revolution as the CP's participation in popular-front governments -- in fact, even more of a danger because of the support to it from the centrists and left-reformists. The *Rouge* article puts its finger on the key issue, commenting: "The essential thing, however, is that ... the 'guide document' appears to the workers as a general expression of their aspirations...". The Pabloists of the LCR and LCI capitulate to these illusions; an authentic Trotskyist party would *fight* them, calling for independence of the workers commissions and popular assemblies from the MFA, and for the formation of soldiers committees in order to split the army and shatter the officer corps.

It is precisely independence from the bourgeois state that makes a soviet more than a committee -- the potential structure for the creation of a proletarian state. Those who today support the "MFA-People Alliance" are playing the same role as the social democratic USPD in 1918 when it sought to *combine* the German soviets with the bourgeois parliament. This inevitably meant the destruction of the soviets and the strangling of the revolution.

The soviets must not only be independent of the capitalist state, but must possess an organizational structure capable of drawing in the most backward masses. Its flexibility (delegates recallable at any time), directness (election in mass assemblies) and link to the source of working-class power (representation by workplace) give the soviet form the ability to reduce bureaucracy to a minimum, rapidly reflect shifts in the masses' opinion, formulate a revolutionary program through open debate and translate decisions into effective action.

Trotsky repeatedly asserted that "the soviet form does not contain any mystic power." In the abstract, he was prepared to admit that the revolutionary vanguard party or even a trade union (under revolutionary leadership) could fulfill the same functions. He pointed to Lenin's view after the 1917 July Days (when the leaders of the soviets were arresting the Bolsheviks) that the factory committees could become the organizational vehicles for the struggle for power. But as a practical proposition the likelihood is nil of a Leninist party encompassing the whole of the proletariat before the revolution, or of a trade union transforming itself from an instrument of "guerrilla war against the effects of the existing system" into an organ of insurrectionary assault on capitalism.

A concrete example of what the consequences of renouncing soviets can mean in a revolutionary situation was given by Andres Nin during the Spanish Civil War. Having abandoned the Trotskyist movement to become a leader of the POUM (Workers Party of Marxist Unification), Nin soon began denouncing "mechanical applications" of the experience of the Russian Revolution.

"In Russia there was no democratic tradition. No tradition or organization and struggle in

Le Bolchevik

publication de la Ligue Trotskyste de France

No 1, 1^{er} trimestre 1976,
0,50f

pour toute correspondance:

Bruno Porquier, B.P. 57
95 120 Ermont, France

the proletariat.... One can understand, therefore, the importance which the soviets assumed: the proletariat did not have its own organizations.... Our proletariat already had its trade unions, its parties, its own organizations: that is why soviets did not arise with us.... The existence of a workers movement under anarchist influence poses new problems, requires different tactics. The CNT is a potentially revolutionary organization, despite its prejudices and wrong positions...." (*La Batalla*, 26 April 1937)

This is false to the core. In the first place soviet-type organs of dual power *did* arise in Spain, the most notable being the "Central Council of Anti-Fascist Militias of Catalonia". The reason it never became a workers government is that the Generalitat -- Companys' bourgeois Catalan government, of which the POUM was a part -- dissolved it! But while this "explanation" was only an excuse for following the Anarchists into the Generalitat, the "theory" necessarily meant capitulation to the CNT bureaucracy, just as the USec majority capitulates to the Portuguese MFA.

Embryos of dual power in Portugal?

Clearly there is no national soviet in Portugal today; certainly the MFA not only will not, but *cannot* set up an organ of workers power. Yet there are numerous *comissoes* of various types that are neither part of the Intersindical union federation nor controlled by the armed forces. What is the character of these bodies? Are they perhaps "embryos" of workers power, comparable to factory committees, which the "Transitional Program" describes as "dual power inside the factory"?

It is first necessary to determine what distinguishes a factory committee from a trade union. Where a closed shop has already been instituted, Trotsky wrote, the formal membership may coincide. "The prime significance of the committee, however, lies in the fact that it be-

the boss is the workers commission (also controlled by the MRPP).

In other enterprises a different dynamic has developed, deriving from the tactics of the CP under the Salazar dictatorship. During the late 1960s and early 1970s the Stalinists sought to take control of the fascist unions. Since the latter were in fact state-controlled, the real organs of trade-union struggle were the clandestine workers commissions. This pattern changed only slightly after April 25, for the CP promptly took over most of the Salazarist unions (giving rise to the Intersindical federation) and followed a bitter-end strikebreaking policy. Thus a not uncommon pattern is that of *two* unions per enterprise: one that leads strikes (the workers commission) and one that breaks strikes (the Intersindical union)!

What is true of the workers commissions is also true of the neighborhood commissions. In explaining why it believed a popular assembly could not be formed at the moment in Vila Nova de Gaia (next to Porto), the left-social-democratic MES argued that "most of the neighborhood commissions, at this time, are either oriented to toward economic demands or are organs in which parties attempt to impose themselves..." (*Poder Popular*, 25 September). In the industrial town of Setubal, south of Lisbon, there is a municipal popular assembly, but two of the neighborhood commissions dominated by Maoists refuse to cooperate because of Communist Party preponderance in the assembly (*Politique Hebdo*, 18-24 September). The popular vigilance committees, "committees to defend the revolution" and similar bodies are largely CP-controlled.

The popular assemblies, in contrast to the workers and neighborhood commissions, are few in number and several were set up by the local military units. (At the beginning of August there were reportedly five in the Lisbon area, two of which had been set up prior to the MFA "guide document".) However, because of the dissension in the MFA, the officers have apparently not had

dence from the bourgeoisie is even farther advanced than among the workers commissions, due to the heated conflict between MFA commanders and various types of soldiers committees. The most widespread form of democratic representation in the barracks is the unit delegate assembly, apparently the norm throughout the country. While it is only advisory and some commanders seek to bypass it (such as by keeping troops on useless maneuvers for days to prevent them from meeting), it is certainly disruptive to bourgeois military discipline.

However, the ADUs are not necessarily counterposed to the officer corps. In contrast, the clandestine "Soldiers United Will Win" (SUV) started out as a leftist political organization within the barracks calling for the formation of elected soldiers committees and the destruction of the capitalist army. While they remain politically defined -- rather than inclusive -- and include a number of leftist officers, in some units the SUVs appear to have acted as a focus for generalized discontent among the enlisted men. In addition, during the CICAP barracks revolt in Porto earlier this month a special "struggle committee" was elected from the units present in the artillery regiment barracks; and there are now the first reports of elected soldiers committees in the Lisbon area. The recent comment by General Carlos Fabiao, the army chief of staff, about these groups is characteristic of the attitude of the military hierarchy: "I have reservations because it is a horizontal organisation and in the army we have a vertical organisation" (*Economist*, 18 October). True enough.

In short, there are a wide variety of "organs of people's power" in Portugal today. What attitude should revolutionaries take toward them? On the one hand it would be a serious overestimation of the level of class consciousness to view the workers commissions as factory committees, and the local popular assemblies as district soviets. On the other hand it would be disastrous to dismiss the popular assemblies as simply transmission belts for the MFA and the workers commissions as ersatz trade unions.

In reality, the nature of these organs is not clearly defined, not even that of the Porto "municipal council" which is seeking to become part of the bourgeois state apparatus. While the workers commissions are not yet factory committees, neither are they saddled with the cumbersome bureaucracy of the trade unions which would make them a hindrance as organs of revolutionary struggle. Like the British shop stewards councils in the 1926 general strike and the German strike committees in 1918, the Portuguese *comissoes operarias* can be transformed into factory committees and united into soviets. The task of Trotskyists in Portugal is not to invent imaginary soviets but to struggle within the existing mass organizations of the working class to build and unite workers councils nationwide, drawing in the workers commissions, popular vigilance committees, soldiers committees, neighborhood and agricultural workers commissions for the struggle for power!

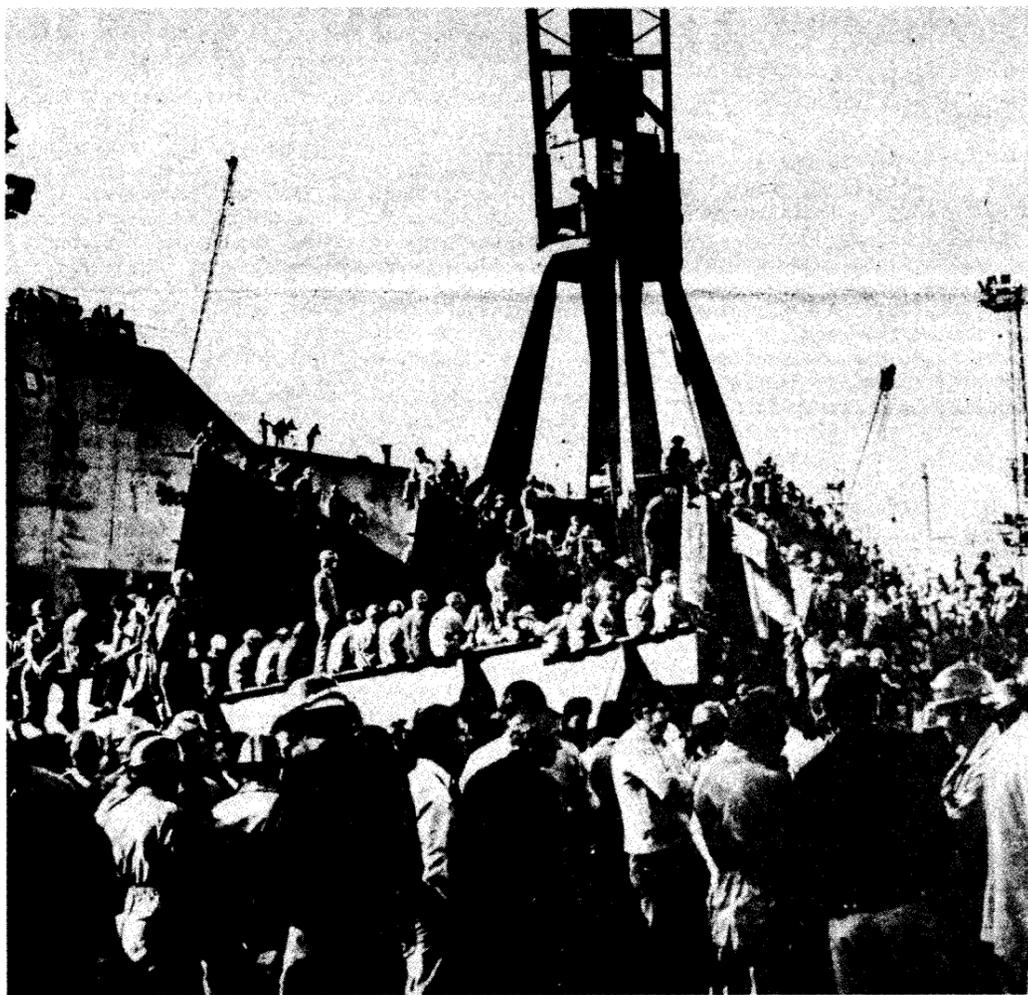
Soviets needed to crush counterrevolution

On November 16 well over 100,000 people jammed into Lisbon's Terreiro do Paco square, reportedly the largest demonstration since a mammoth May Day march the week after the overthrow of Portuguese dictator Caetano in 1974. The Socialists charged the latest demonstration was "insurrectionary", part of the CP's attempts to "take power" and aimed at the "demolition of the present organs of power and of the democratic structures". The Communists wrote that the "big weekend" would "play an important role in the coming evolution of the Portuguese political situation". The "far left" organizations of the "Revolutionary United Front" endorsed the march.

The crowd was in a militant mood. This demonstration came two days after construction workers had forced the government to grant a 40 percent wage increase by holding the Constituent Assembly and Premier Jose Pinheiro de Azevedo captive in Sao Bento Palace for 36 hours. Celebrating their victory the workers repeatedly demanded, "Pinheiro de Azevedo, now is the time, you can leave now!" Another popular chant was "The sixth government will accompany Franco in the journey he is going to take!"

Yet there was no insurrection. The main speaker, a leader of the Provisional Secretariat of the Workers Commissions of the Lisbon Industrial Belt, proclaimed instead that "We did not come here to take power. But we want to transform the power; we demand ... the inclusion in the government and the Revolutionary Council of men and political forces ... which will ensure the defense and triumph of our revolution heading toward socialism" (*Diario de Noticias*, 17 November). Likewise, the central slogan of the demonstration was "Reactionaries out of the government now!" In other words its purpose was simply to increase the number of cabinet portfolios held by the CP.

Continued on page eight



Informations Ouvrieres

Workers strike at Lisnave shipyards. Lisnave workers' commission, was able to mobilise almost entire shipyards for mass anti-government demonstrations.

comes the militant staff for such working-class layers as the trade union is usually incapable of moving to action." By this criterion there are very few factory committees in Portugal, perhaps no more than a handful.

The best known would be the Lisnave shipyards workers commission. On several occasions it has mobilized virtually the entire personnel for mass anti-government demonstrations. When Lisnave workers carried out an illegal demonstration on 12 September 1974 against the government's anti-strike law -- a demonstration in which they faced down a squadron of paratroopers as they left the plant gates -- the decision was taken by a general assembly. Out of 6,000 present, only 25 voted against despite the CP's opposition (*Revolucacao*, 21 September 1974). Moreover, the statutes of the workers commission provide that delegates can be recalled at any time (see the OCI brochure, "Problemes de la revolution portugaise", 1974).

But the majority of workers commissions are not factory committees in this sense. A typical example is the Timex workers commission. There are 11 unions at Timex, the largest being the watchmakers' union (controlled by the MRPP). Consequently, the main organ for negotiating with

time to "normalize" the popular assemblies, particularly given the trouble they have had with their own unit delegate assemblies. The only active military participation appears to be from "far-left" regiments, such as the RALIS artillery unit (Marvila popular assembly). At the other extreme is the popular assembly of Amadora, an industrial town across the river from Lisbon, in which the local military unit (the commandos) does not participate because its right-wing commander dissolved the ADU.

In addition there is a "municipal council of Porto". Under the previous left-wing governor of the Porto military region, the city's military administrative committee worked closely with and subsidized the neighborhood commissions which, together with the workers commissions and ADUs, were grouped together in a "municipal council". However, the present SP civil governor has refused to recognize the council since it is not in the (Caetanist) administrative code. The municipal council is continuing its attempts to gain recognition as a component of the local bourgeois government apparatus.

In the military there is even more diversity and, in some places, the struggle for indepen-

Portugal

Since April 1974 six provisional governments have crossed the doorstep at Sao Bento Palace, five of them in both directions. The sixth, led by the SP, its authority nil in the wake of the construction workers' victory and the massive anti-government demonstration, has taken the unprecedented step of going on strike. It has "suspended activities" until the Supreme Revolutionary Council, leading body of the MFA, restores order in the country. No doubt the SP would like to return to the first government, when General Spínola commanded with a heavy hand. The CP, now in semi-opposition, simply wants to return to the fifth, when it was dominant.

But adding one more to the succession of revolving-door cabinets in Lisbon will not turn the clock back. As the days tick by reactionary forces are perfecting their plans for a blood-bath, yet the masses continue to be tied to the "progressive" officers by the participation of the reformist parties (SP and CP) in a series of class-collaborationist coalitions with the MFA. The workers must demand not a cabinet reshuffling which eliminates the bourgeois Popular Democrats (PPD) -- the CP demand -- but that their leaders break with the MFA and leave the popular-front government. Counterrevolution can be definitively crushed only by a workers government, based not on the unreliable guns of the left-wing generals but on the secure foundations of independent organs of proletarian rule: *soviets*.

Only soviet power can crush the aspiring Francos and Pinochets in Portugal today, yet there are no soviets. How can they be built? Following publication last July by the MFA assembly of a "guide document" there has been a wide-ranging debate in the Portuguese left on "people's power" (*poder popular*). Almost every organization to the left of the CP has published an "organigram" depicting its model for how an "MFA-People Alliance" should be organized. In general there have been two poles in the discussion: those who view the existing workers and tenants commissions as the embryo of an alternative state power, and those who advocate founding entirely new organs cleansed of the weaknesses and reformism of the present committees. Both poles have gone along with the concept of an alliance with the officer corps, or at least with its "revolutionary" sectors.

What basis for soviets?

In contrast the Spartacist tendency has constantly warned against placing confidence in any wing of the capitalist army and repeatedly called for the organization of workers soviets in Portugal, not conjuring them up out of thin air or sowing illusions that they already exist, but beginning with elements of the existing mass workers movement. Thus during the strike wave of May-June 1974 we wrote that a

"central council of strike and factory committees must function as an alternative power, a workers government counterposed to the military junta and provisional government of the bourgeoisie. In other words, transformed into a *soviet*, the seeds of a future proletarian state, it will create a situation of dual power. But this will not occur spontaneously and requires above all the intervention of the revolutionary party, its winning over of the decisive sectors of the working class and consequently of the soviets." (*Workers Vanguard*, 5 July 1974)

In discussing the need for "autonomous organizations" of the working class, the New Left-syndicalist Proletarian Revolutionary Party (PRP) correctly noted that the several hundred existing

workers commissions "have very different qualities and character from company to company", and that the majority are essentially "trade-unionist [*reivindicativo*] and not directly political" (PRP leaflet, "The Autonomous Organization -- The Role of the Party"). What the PRP proposes instead is the "election of new, purely political commissions", or alternatively of "Revolutionary Councils". The prototype of the latter are the "Revolutionary Workers, Soldiers and Sailors Councils" (CRTSM), whose principal task is to arm the workers for "the taking of power" ("Platform of Objectives", *Revolução*, 23 April 1975). The PRP has a certain influence in key sectors of the Lisbon working class and in important barracks of the capitol district, but with its abstract conception of creating out of a void "purely political" bodies -- "electing new organs specifically for new objectives" -- it has completely passed by the real mass movement of the working class, so that today the CRTSM continue to be nothing more than groups of trade-union and soldier supporters of the PRP.

These formalist schemes are closely linked with syndicalist "anti-party" rhetoric, such as the call for a "non-party revolutionary government", the statement that "the working class distrusts the parties, and naturally has reasons for doing so", etc. Magical properties are ascribed to the revolutionary councils, which are described as "organs of political power organized in such a form so as not to degenerate into a party bureaucracy".

The absurdity of such abstract ideal models was made clear by the CRTSM's proposal for how workers of the Lisnave shipyards should organize themselves. In a diagram (*Revolução*, 1 August 1975) that would put the IWW's "wheel of fortune" to shame, three different assemblies are proposed (economic control, political power, military power), which in turn would have numerous (17, to be exact) commissions (political, political-cultural dynamization, purges [*saneamento*], union coordination, internal military, external military, etc). All this for a single enterprise! At least the Wobblies only saw their famous wheel as the model for a utopian "industrial government" -- the PRP apparently thinks these fantastical "organigrams" are a means of taking power.

The utopian character of the "purely political" Revolutionary Councils is so evident that the social-democratic Left Socialist Movement (MES) has been able to make some valid criticisms of the PRP. The CRTSM, says the MES, are based on a "guerrillaist conception" which focuses exclusively on guns, "disregarding the fundamental tasks facing the working class, such as control of production, nationalizations and fighting unemployment" (*Esquerda Socialista*, 18 June). They "will not lead to the formation of Workers Councils because they disregard the already existing foundations, seeking to create parallel structures" (*Esquerda Socialista*, 25 June). The MES calls instead for "strengthening and linking" the workers and tenants commissions.

On the key question of the ruling Armed Forces Movement, both left social democrats and syndicalist Guevarists grovel before the "socialist" officers. When the "guide document" calling for popular assemblies "recognized" (ie, controlled) by the MFA was passed, the MES termed this "a historic decision, a revolutionary decision", and supported the officers' plans without a word of criticism (*Esquerda Socialista*, 16 July). The PRP went even further, announcing that the "MFA-People Alliance" plan had "approved the dictatorship of the proletariat", quite a feat for "an assembly consisting of a majority of officers, most of whom are offspring of the bourgeois class" (*Revolução*, 1 August)!!

The PRP is so concerned to avoid the dangers of economism that it advocates totally new structures separate from the existing workers commissions. The MES is so committed to justifying working inside the existing organizations of the workers movement that it imagines the present commissions to be organs of dual power. But faced with the slightest attempt to integrate these organs into a corporatist scheme for reinforcing the tottering bourgeois state, both PRP and MES instantly fall to their knees.

For a Transitional Program

The struggle for soviet power goes far beyond the imposition of an organizational framework encompassing the bulk of the proletariat and linking to it other exploited sectors of the population. It is above all the political struggle to win the masses to the understanding that only socialist revolution can make possible the solution of their most urgent needs. To awaken this consciousness a revolutionary party must raise a program of transitional demands leading from the present objective needs of the working class to the seizure of power. But none of the groups in Portugal which proclaim themselves revolutionary socialists and communists have done this.

The Socialist Left Movement, for example, is now building a "Workers United Will Win" (TUV)

formation, evidently intended as a parallel to the soldiers' organization SUV, with the vaguest program imaginable. Although the MES declares the question of power to be on the order of the day, the TUV manifesto calls only for a "revolutionary government capable of firmly combating the capitalists" (*Poder Popular*, 23-30 October), something which every one of the parties to the left of the monarchists claims to favor and each of the six provisional governments has claimed to be. Typical of the demands are "for better working conditions" and "for a just workday". Under the heading "against unemployment", the only concrete proposals raised are opposition to overtime and organizing the unemployed; the demand for a sliding scale of hours, to provide work for all, is ignored. Likewise the program calls only for "reinforcing" workers control, already widespread, with no mention of the need for a planned economy under a workers government. Naturally there is not a word about the MFA in the entire platform.

This vagueness is deliberate. Not only does the MES fail to call for *workers* power, and consequently for the need to break with the bourgeois Armed Forces Movement, but its recent pamphlet on "People's Power -- A Political Plan?" speaks of dual power as "the ruling class gradually los[ing] parts of the total power it wields so that the other social classes involved in the revolutionary process can also exercise, in the same proportion, a certain part of the power". Such reformism is directly contradicted by the entirety of revolutionary history. Dual power is not a process of "power-sharing" but a life-and-death struggle between incompatible governmental organs representing the two principal classes, with no possibility of any but the most fleeting and unstable equilibrium. The MES, being unwilling to wage a *class* struggle against the bourgeoisie as a whole, including the officer corps, seeks to "fuse" with the "progressive sectors" of the MFA and thereby obtain "a certain part of the power". What is in fact obtained by such reformist policies is not a piece of the action but a counterrevolutionary bloodbath. Either the workers seize all the power or they will suffer ignominious and very painful defeat.

One group which ought to have something to say about a transitional program is the Internationalist Communist League (LCI), Portuguese sympathizing organization of the fake-Trotskyist "United Secretariat". However, throughout the past year and a half the dominant characteristic of the LCI's policies has been confusion, periodically supplemented by betrayals. Thus, for example, the 25 July 1975 *Luta Proletaria* refers approvingly to "The decisions of the last MFA assembly, recognizing the embryonic organs of workers power in the enterprises and the neighborhoods...". But two months later the 19 September *Luta Proletaria* remarks that the content of the resolutions of the MFA assembly (the "guide document") "has a vision of submission to the bourgeois state and not of its destruction".

The same is true, for example, of the LCI's use of the slogan of a workers government. Thus during the election campaign for the constituent assembly last April the LCI platform called for "a workers government within the framework of a capitalist state -- within the framework of the maintenance of capitalist economic and social relations and the maintenance of a political apparatus intended to perpetuate it" as a "first step" on the road to proletarian revolution (*Diário de Notícias*, 12 April). Such a concept is identical to that held by social-democratic and Labourite forces and directly contradicts the Leninist theory of the state, which holds that the capitalist state must be *smashed*, not taken over. But as soon as the first popular assemblies were formed, the LCI suddenly changed its slogan to call instead for a "Government of the Workers based on the Popular Assemblies, responsible to a National Popular Assembly". Meanwhile, it speaks interchangeably of workers power, people's power and workers and people's power. Evidently, for them it makes no difference -- all that counts is to be with the "broad/new mass/workers vanguard".

The most definitive test of where the LCI stands was the formation of the "Revolutionary (or Popular) United Front" (FUR) with the signing of the August 25 communique. This propaganda bloc of eight (now six) left parties, originally including the CP, not only was *not* formed for the purpose of common action -- such as demonstrations, formation of workers militias or soviets -- but its founding document was openly popular-frontist, giving support to the fifth provisional government headed by General Vasco Gonçalves "until the conditions necessary for the formation of a government of revolutionary unity are met".

The communique also called for support to Gonçalves' governmental program, one of whose key planks was a call for an austerity program, and to the so-called "COPCON document", which like the "guide document" calls for the MFA to "recognize" people's assemblies, as the concrete expression of the corporatist scheme of an "MFA-People Alliance". Although it had numerous criticisms of major points in the statement, the LCI signed on the dotted line (as did the PRP and

WORKERS VANGUARD

Rhodesia: White Supremacy
Living on
Borrowed
Time

Subscribe

\$US20 (\$A16) - 48 issues (airmail)

\$US6 (\$A5) - 48 issues (surface mail)

(includes SPARTACIST)

Order from/pay to:

Spartacist Publishing Co, GPO Box 1377,
New York, NY 10001, USA

MES, without criticisms). Since that time, although the Communist Party has left (and been expelled) from the FUR, this popular-frontist bloc has repeatedly been the vehicle for the subordination of the "far leftist" groups to the pro-Moscow Stalinists. The latest example was the FUR's support for the November 16 demonstration called around CP slogans and one of whose main chants was "Vasco! Vasco! Vasco!"

Lessons of the Bolivian Popular Assembly

Portugal is not the only nor the first place that the question of soviets has arisen in recent years. The Portuguese left press has carried numerous stories about such experiences as the *cordones industriales* in Santiago, Chile, in 1973, for example. But the sharpest debate internationally has centered around the Bolivian Popular Assembly, a body which was formed on May Day 1971, held its only substantial session in late June and was destroyed by a right-wing coup d'etat on August 21 of that year. Did the Bolivian *Asamblea Popular* have a "soviet character" as claimed by Guillermo Lora's POR (Revolutionary Workers Party) and its international backers, notably the French OCI? Or was it a "national parliament" as Gonzalez Moscoso's POR, affiliated with the USec, maintained? What would have been the tasks of Trotskyists toward such a formation?

It is agreed on all sides that the Popular Assembly was far from being composed exclusively of elected delegates; numerous union delegates were simply self-appointed or selected by other union officials. This was partly due to its origin not as the evolution of a strike committee but as a creation of the leadership of the COB labor federation along with the pro-Moscow CP, Lora's POR and Juan Lechin's nationalist PRIN. Consequently, although 60 percent of the Assembly was composed of workers' representatives, there was a high proportion of bureaucrats among the 132 delegates.

This undemocratic selection procedure is an obstacle to becoming a soviet, which is an organ of workers democracy, elected and recallable at any time. However, these origins would not inevitably prevent a body such as the Popular Assembly from acquiring a truly democratic character. Already in June the 18 miners' delegates had been elected in meetings of the local popular assemblies, a significant fact given the key position of the tin miners in the Bolivian proletariat. Clearly, a Bolshevik party would have agitated for immediate elections to the Popular Assembly, the means by which the revolutionaries can rapidly expand their influence against the rightist bureaucrats.

In fact, the 1917 Petrograd soviet was extremely undemocratically constituted in its initial stages, essentially consisting of Menshevik members of the Military Industrial Committee recently liberated from prison, trade-union and cooperative leaders, Menshevik deputies of the Duma and other well-known "names." Trotsky wrote:

"The organisation created on February 27 in the Tauride Palace, and called 'Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies,' had little really in common with its name. The Soviet of Workers' Deputies of 1905, the originator of the system, rose out of a general strike. It directly represented the masses in struggle....

"[In February] the Executive Committee was self-constituted, in advance of the Soviet.... "...The real leaders of the workers had not yet left the streets. They were disarming some, arming others, making sure of the victory....

"It required months of new conflicts and struggle in new circumstances ... in order that the soviets ... should become organs of struggle and preparation for a new insurrection." (LD Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, 1930)

The Bolivian Popular Assembly had not broken politically with the nationalist regime of General Juan Jose Torres. Not only was it not struggling to take power from the bourgeois government (apparently no group in the body had raised the call for "All Power to the Popular Assembly"), but none of the decisions taken during its session constituted a serious challenge to the government's rule. The most "audacious" decision was to call for 51 percent (majority) workers participation in the state tin mining monopoly! This, of course, gutted the transitional demand of workers control of its essential content -- taking production out of the hands of the bourgeoisie -- and was simply a form of pressure on Torres, who had called for minority worker participation.

Lora and his apologists explain that the time had not yet come to challenge the government. The OCI claims that, "At no moment did the process attain the degree of maturity necessary to launch these slogans ['Down with Torres' and 'All power to the Popular Assembly']!" (*La Correspondance Internationale*, March 1972). Actually the masses were considerably in advance of their centrist and reformist leaders, and were already eager to confront Torres. At the May Day cel-

ebration prior to the convocation of the Assembly, the crowd demanded arms and a socialist Bolivia. When Torres began his speech by referring to a promise made in his oath of office, the workers shouted back "Arms yes, promises no!" When he talked of defending "our revolutionary nationalism", the crowd replied "Socialism!" And the masses refused to allow Torres to walk at the head of the march to the Popular Assembly meeting.

More important is what the complaint that the situation was not "ripe" means. The OCI adroitly amalgamates two different slogans. Was it time to agitate for overthrowing Torres? Not until the revolutionaries were prepared to replace him. Until then it is necessary, as Lenin wrote in his "April Theses", to "patiently explain". But what are the communists to explain? Precisely that "the Soviets of Workers' Deputies are the only possible form of revolutionary government", or as Lenin put it in the form of a slogan: "Not a parliamentary republic ... but a republic of Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Laborers' and Peasants' Deputies..." ("The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution", April 1917). The centrist POR did not breathe a word about transferring power to the Popular Assembly, precisely because this would have upset its non-aggression policy toward Torres and its alliance inside the Assembly with the Communist Party.

The leader of the USec POR, Hugo Gonzalez Moscoso, concluded from these facts that, "The Popular Assembly is hardly more than a sort of



Workers' demonstration in Lisbon.

Vida Mundial



Syndicalist PRP's "Revolutionary Councils" demonstrate in Lisbon.

Revolucao

national parliament where the most important social sectors are represented ... and it has been 'accorded' an official status by Torres". He also remarked in an interview that, "The POR comrades in the Popular Assembly ... had no illusions. They simply are using the Popular Assembly as a forum, as a platform. That is all" (quoted in *La Correspondance Internationale*, March 1972). This abstentionist policy is just as wrong as the Portuguese PRP's insistence on building new organs beside the workers commissions.

It is evidently the case that the Bolivian Popular Assembly had not yet become a soviet because it did not yet constitute *in fact* a dual power. On the other hand, it was certainly not a parliament for it was not integrated into the existing state structure (rather being barely tolerated). Had it continued in session instead of disbanding after five days, never to meet again (despite an almost two-month interval before the Banzar coup), it *could have become* a soviet. But there was no revolutionary Trotskyist party to intervene along this axis.

Three conditions: a party, a party, a party!

It is perfectly possible to have a genuine soviet that never takes power or even seeks to. The German workers and soldiers councils in Germany in 1918-19 are an example of this. The Russian soviets of 1917 so long as they were dominated by the Mensheviks were another. The difference between Russia and Germany was that in the former there was a revolutionary party which had been steeled in more than a dozen years of combat against opportunism and was prepared to drive forward to take power. In Germany the Spartakusbund only transformed itself into the Communist Party a few weeks before counterrevolution struck; since it had functioned as a faction of the Independent Socialists until then it was not represented in the Congress of Workers and Soldiers Councils, so that the reformists and centrists had a free hand in strangling the revolution.

Portugal today is at a less advanced level than Germany (where there was an organ of dual power which however refused to topple the bourgeois state) or Bolivia (where there was an organ which could have become a soviet). But the workers commissions, tenants commissions, workers militias, soldiers commissions, popular assemblies and various other independent mass organizations of the workers which have sprung up during the pre-revolutionary period are elements which could be united and transformed into a soviet. For this it is above all a revolutionary Trotskyist party that is necessary. Without it these commissions will continue to be limited to militant trade unionism and pressure tactics.

In recent months one of the biggest obstacles to the formation of Portuguese soviets has been the sharp party division among the workers commissions, with at least three different left groups (the syndicalist PRP, the Maoist MRPP and the Stalinist CP) having at least 40 enterprises each in their respective coordinating committee or secretariat. With the decline of influence of the Communist Party-dominated Intersindical union federation, however, the CP has heavily shifted its efforts toward the workers commissions and its Provisional Secretariat of the Workers Commissions of the Lisbon Industrial Belt now includes 115 commissions representing 50,000 workers. Revolutionaries would naturally seek to work inside such an organization, but their goal must be to reach the Communist workers and break them from their treacherous leaders who only resort to organizing the commissions and reluctantly sanctioning militant tactics for fear of losing their base.

The entire Portuguese "far left" -- including the ostensible Trotskyists -- has failed to construct the intransigent Trotskyist party that is so urgently needed today. Instead they have capitulated politically either to the CP or SP, or directly to the bourgeois MFA. Many subjectively militant Portuguese workers, repelled by the opportunism of the party formations, are no doubt drawn to the syndicalists' anti-party propaganda

Continued on page ten

Continued from page nine

... Portugal

and their projected alternative of "non-party" "popular councils". But as we have shown in discussing the MFA's plans for co-opting "people's power" and the policies of the PRP, this attempt to sidestep the political struggle against reformism is only another way to capitulate to the left-posturing officers.

As Trotsky wrote in discussing the role of soviets in the Russian and German revolutions:

"Without a party, apart from a party, over the head of a party, or with a substitute for a party, the proletarian revolution cannot conquer. That is the principal lesson of the last decade.... We have paid far too dearly for this conclusion -- with regard to the role and importance of a party in a proletarian revolution -- to renounce it so lightly or even to minimize its significance." (LD Trotsky, "The Lessons of October", 1923)

For the formation of a Trotskyist Party in Portugal! Forward to the rebirth of the Fourth International! ■

(reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 82, 24 October 1975, and no 87, 28 November, 1975)

Continued from page four

Against Our Will . . .

tragic, case study of the worst aspects of guilty liberalism run amuck. Many white liberals in the early '60s took upon themselves guilt for crimes against the oppressed, thus setting in motion a chain reaction of masochistic self-abuse followed by eventual disillusionment and revulsion, resulting in a vicious lashing out at the formerly identified-with oppressed. The scenario can be roughly summarized as: liberal identifies with oppressed element, oppressed victim behaves brutally, liberal recoils and -- calls the cops. Which is precisely Brownmiller's solution to rape. As she puts it:

"... for a period of fifteen years after the murder of Emmet Till whenever a black teenager whistled at me on a New York City street or uttered in passing one of several variations on an invitation to congress, I smiled my nicest smile of comradely equality -- no supersensitive flower of white womanhood, I --- did not white women in particular have to bear the white man's burden of making amends for Southern racism?"

But *today*, thanks to her "enlightenment" by feminism, it's a different story: "Today a sexual remark on the street causes within me a fleeting but murderous rage." Murderous rage -- retrospectively directed against a 14-year-old black youth in racist Mississippi!

But this is only half the story. Eldridge Cleaver, in *Soul On Ice*, speaks up for the bloody revenge fantasies of black males, this time directed against white women, thus neatly closing the vicious circle. When Cleaver was 19, he saw a picture of the white woman Till had whistled at, was attracted to her and felt anger and disgust, both at himself and her. His conclusion: "Somehow I arrived at the conclusion that, as a matter of principle, it was of paramount importance for me to have an antagonistic ruthless attitude toward white women. The term *outlaw* appealed to me...." And so, he writes, "I became a rapist."

His rapes, though barbaric assaults against particular women, were actually aimed at the entire white race and especially at white males and stemmed from a psychology similar to that of mass rapes in war. Brownmiller and the Cleaver of *Soul On Ice* thus assume the roles of spokesmen for sex war and race war respectively. While the objective reality which gave rise to Cleaver's rage was rather different from that which motivated Brownmiller, both suffer from the same rejection of a class perspective in their approach to the questions of racism and sexism.

And who really benefits from all this murderous rage? Both Brownmiller and Cleaver would unhesitatingly answer, "white men"; yet their knives end up, somehow, pointed not at the common "enemy", but rather at each other. As the shattered remnants of both the women's movement of the late '60s and the various nationalist currents in the black movement continue to turn upon and tear at themselves and each other in ever-narrowing vicious circles of self-accusation, cynicism, apathy and despair, their attempted solutions to oppression (such as Brownmiller's call for more female cops) reveal themselves ever more clearly as dead ends.

The only solution to sexual and racial oppression and exploitation is international communist revolution, which will smash the capitalist state and bourgeois economic relations which perpetuate the vicious humiliation, torture and degradation visited upon both blacks and women in this rotten, decaying society. ■

(reprinted from *Women and Revolution* no 11, Spring 1976)

Who gave Healy his security clearance?

Healy slanders Hansen, Novack

Over recent months the political gangsters of the Healyite International Committee (represented in Australia by the Socialist Labour League (SLL)) have been escalating their campaign of slanderous personal vilification directed at long-time American Socialist Workers Party (SWP) spokesman Joseph Hansen. For their part the Australian Healyites have reprinted a seemingly endless stream of centrefolds from *Workers Press* (the now-defunct British Healyite daily) entitled "Security and the Fourth International", the central aim of which has been to smear Hansen, and to a lesser extent George Novack, as possessing guilty knowledge of the assassination of Trotsky by the GPU (the Stalinist secret police) in 1940. The technique is to present masses of both true and unproven factual minutiae about the circumstances of the assassination followed by a series of rhetorical questions directed at Hansen darkly insinuating that Hansen deliberately covered up facts in his possession and misdirected those who sought to protect Trotsky and then to 'unmask the GPU network which had murdered him.

Initially direct accusations were avoided, but recently the Healyites have thrown caution to the winds and are openly propagating the scurrilous and preposterous charge that Hansen and Novack were "accomplices" of the GPU. This smear campaign exemplifies the Healyite "method" in all spheres -- at bottom a confidence trick. The mass of pseudo-documentary "evidence" has not proved anything; it is mere camouflage for crude smear tactics. The Healyites' call for a "public enquiry along the lines of the Dewey Commission" (*Workers News*, 26 February 1976) is an utter fraud; to accept their calls for "investigations" would be to give implicit credence to Healy's fake "evidence".

The attempted exclusion of the local Healyites from a *Direct Action* forum (run by the SWP's sister party and namesake in Australia) after they tried to raise their accusations has brought forth howls of righteous indignation from the SLL who denounced the attempted exclusion as "political censorship" and accused the SWP of inventing "physical disruption" (*Workers News*, 26 February). What exactly happened at the forum is unclear; from their past record it is possible both that Mulgrew was disruptive and the SWP bureaucratic -- neither tendency has the slightest respect for workers' democracy outside their own pre-conceived interests. Moreover the SLL's protests reek with revolting hypocrisy. They have excluded the Spartacist League from all but one of their fake "public" meetings -- in order to evade not slander but sharp *political* criticism -- and justified it by the slander that Spartacists are "disrupters" and "provocateurs". However, the SLL certainly has the right to raise their smear at any public meeting -- and it must be attacked and exposed wherever it raises its dirty head. Thus when the American SWP excluded Healy's American acolytes from its public meetings, our comrades of the Spartacist League/US strongly protested, defending the Healyites' right to attend while condemning and exposing Healy's slanders.

Bolshevik criticism is what the Healyites fear most. The Australian gala opening of the SLL's slander pamphlet "The Assassination of Leon Trotsky" never got off the ground in Sydney, and at a poorly attended Melbourne meeting Spartacist pickets denounced the smear campaign. But the American Healyite Workers League (WL) has organised a series of slander forums throughout the US (under the guise of "How the GPU Killed Trotsky"). At the first meeting in New York excluded Spartacist supporters set up a picket line with signs demanding "Fight Hansen's Reformism Politically, Not with Stalinist Slanders", "Workers League 'Method' -- Anti-Democratic Exclusions and the Big Lie" and "For the Rebirth of the Fourth International". Inside the sanitised



Spartacist picket at WL slander-fest, New York, 28 February.

forum (where everyone unknown to the WL had been interrogated to root out suspected "secret Sparts") *Bulletin* editor Jeff Sebastian and new WL national secretary David North proceeded to regurgitate the endless fake-factual trivia and insinuations designed to convince the naive that, incomprehensible though it all seems, it must prove *something*. The Spartacist leaflet distributed outside noted that "Hansen's current role as chief ideologue for the reformist program of the no-longer-revolutionary SWP in no way alters this simple fact: the WL/WRP have produced exactly nothing to call into question this man's fundamental integrity as a Trotskyist in 1940."

The featured speaker -- one Harold Robins, former head of security at Trotsky's house in Coyoacan, Mexico -- carefully avoided backing up the WL on allegations pivotal to the WL's slander barrage. At no time did Robins state or infer that Hansen or Novack were "accomplices of the GPU". Nor did he echo the WL's insinuations about Robert Sheldon Harte, an SWP member and Coyoacan guard who was killed in an earlier GPU machine-gun raid on the house. Throughout his long and rambling remarks, Robins was clearly most concerned to protect himself from any charges of negligence. For Robins to lend himself to a campaign whose central thrust is to libel Hansen, apparently without endorsing the accusations against Hansen, demonstrates either criminal cynicism or incredible political malice -- or perhaps both.

At the forum, North read from the Spartacist leaflet which protested against the Stalin-style slanders. He accused the SL of being the SWP's attorney. But it is no accident that the SWP turned down the SL's invitation to join a demonstration against the despicable vilification of the SWP's own leaders. It falls to the Spartacist League to defend the *revolutionary history* of the SWP, the party which at the time of Trotsky's death was the revolutionary US section of the Fourth International.

The SL leaflet noted that the WL's mud-slinging is an attack not only against Hansen and Novack, "but at bottom against the revolutionary SWP of 1940, against Trotsky and the Fourth International [FI]. At the time of the assassination it was the Stalinists who charged that Trotsky had been killed by one of 'his own' in a falling out among thieves. The attempt to portray the FI as a morally degenerate gang was part and parcel of Stalin's central task: to discredit Trotsky and the FI as the legitimate continuators of the revolutionary tradition of Lenin." The Healyites have now made themselves worldwide "accomplices" of this despicable method. ■

Australasian

SPARTACIST



subscribe 12 issues — \$2

NAME.....
ADDRESS.....
CITY..... STATE.....
POSTCODE.....

mail to/make cheques payable to:

Spartacist Publications,
GPO Box 3473,
Sydney, NSW, 2001.

... Rawicki

demagogy about student welfare, offered to try to have the strike called off (Melbourne *Herald*, 11 March)! And at the Victorian Trades and Labour Council (TLC) on March 11, TLC President Ken Stone introduced the motion of support to the VSTA by echoing the bourgeois "concern" about idle schools, idle kids and idle teachers.

With Victorian teachers split into three unions -- the VSTA, the Technical Teachers' Association of Victoria (TTAV) and the Victorian Teachers' Union (VTU) -- and with many teachers unorganised (only about 6000 of Victoria's 14,000 secondary teachers are VSTA members) and with a confident Liberal government on the eve of an election, the initial relationship of forces meant a difficult struggle for the VSTA. Rather than fighting to try to overcome these conditions, the VSTA leadership has continually sought a compromise solution. When Rawicki was first suspended they did nothing outside of an impotent one-day stoppage to protest the trial and investigation procedures. Then at the first mass meeting on March 10 they moved only to "continue to press the Minister for an assurance that he will consider [!] Ms Rawicki's employment within a reasonable [!] time"! Fortunately this motion was not passed and instead teachers voted for a one-week strike, after a motion for an indefinite stoppage was declared failed following an extremely close vote.

VSTA leaders, "militant" IS refuse to fight tribunal

Faced with a decision to strike and fearing the fight needed to win, the Jenkins leadership backed away from combating and exposing Hamer/Thompson's demagogic prattle about "student interests". And capitulating to the petty-bourgeois "professionalism" that allows scabbing to be only a question of "conscience" for teachers, they have made little effort to widen and strengthen the strike. Even amongst VSTA members the strike was apparently only close to 50% effective. Now with the strike over they are seeking to get Rawicki employed as a teacher's aide (which can be hired independently of the Department), talking of the need in future of "realistic stoppages".

Continued from page five

Castro . . .

a rudimentary budget financing system (designed by Ernesto "Che" Guevara) which aimed at recouping outlays and centralizing administrative control. However, faced with inadequacies of the cost controls, particularly in agriculture, the Cuban leaders in 1967 introduced "a new system of economic records, preceded by the elimination of all commodity forms and the abolition of charges and payments between units of the state sector".

By abolishing all cost accounting in the state sector -- relying exclusively on physical output quotas -- the managers predictably could make only the crudest comparisons of various alternative projects. Meanwhile, the entire economy was geared to Castro's pet projects: first wild diversification without adequate technical knowledge or supporting resources; then an all-out drive to maximize sugar production in the late 1960s. This culminated in the famous fiasco of the "10-million ton harvest" of sugar cane in 1970, which actually produced only 8.5 million tons -- a whopping 15 percent shortfall. The entire economy was dislocated as virtually the entire workforce was mobilized for the harvest at the expense of all other production.

This catastrophe -- and a swift kick in the pants from the Russians -- finally sobered up the Cuban leadership, whereupon it fixed upon emulating the present procedures of Soviet economic planning and management. The year 1971 was symbolically proclaimed the "Year of Productivity" and a heavy use of material incentives was begun, distributing scarce consumer items (television sets, refrigerators, washing machines, bicycles, watches, etc) to the most productive workers. Now this is to be complemented by adoption of Cuba's first five-year plan, the "Economic Management System".

The plan represents a considerable step forward from the willful irrationality that has characterized Castro's economic policies in the past. One third of investment is earmarked for industry, and sugar output is expected to increase from the present 5.5 million tons to 8 million annually by 1980. But the fundamental bureaucratic character of the reform was indicated by Castro's characteristic comment that the first condition of success was that party and state leaders "should regard its implementation as a matter of personal concern, and a matter of honor".

Compared to a non-system where projects are selected and dropped at the passing whim of a

The VSTA leadership guaranteed Rawicki's sell-out from the beginning by refusing to challenge the legitimacy of the Teachers' Tribunal as a whole and to fight for its abolition. The Teachers' Tribunal, a device for imposing state discipline on the teachers' unions disguised as a supposedly "independent" tripartite body made up of representatives from the Education Department, teachers' unions and "neutrals", has been central to the dispute. The VSTA tops' only demand has been to "re-open negotiations on dismissal procedure", concentrating on the "unfairness" of the trial procedures and promoting illusions that the tribunal can be reformed to function "fairly" and "properly". VSTA members must demand the withdrawal of VSTA representation, the abolition of the tribunal and its replacement with union control of hiring. This is vital not in order for the union bureaucracy to enforce the "standards" of bourgeois education but for the organising of teachers as workers independent from the bourgeois state.

The VSTA has carefully avoided calling for her "reinstatement" as a permanent teacher, instead calling for "re-employment", hoping for a deal with Thompson that can get Rawicki a job without confronting the authority of the tribunal. This open capitulation was completely backed by the International Socialist (IS)-supported "rank-and-file" opposition within the VSTA, "Links", which includes not only IS supporter Tess Lee-Ack but CPA supporter Charlie Silver:

"This [the re-employment of Rawicki] is quite a feasible [!] course -- she can be re-employed as a temporary [!] by Thompson. The Tribunal need not come into it at all" (*Links* no 5, 10 March).

Throughout the campaign "Links" completely merged itself with the sellouts of the VSTA leadership, proving once again that without a program solidly based in a class-struggle perspective "rank-and-file" oppositions, no matter how militant, can only repeat the betrayals of the incumbent bureaucrats.

The VSTA leadership and its "militant" IS tail started with a demand for a treacherous compromise, Rawicki's "re-employment" as a temporary, conceding from the outset the tribunal's right to try and sack a permanent teacher. A class-struggle policy on the contrary would have de-

single leader, no doubt adopting the "Russian model" will produce improvements in the economy. But the new system will be far from a rationally planned economy, for it is still based on the exclusion of the working class from the fundamental political decisions governing the plan and its implementation.

Not bureaucratic "Honor", but workers democracy!

Castro periodically calls up images of "workers' participation" in the state apparatus and hands out tongue-lashings to the bureaucrats when another disaster takes place. Thus, after the failure of the 1970 sugar harvest, his address to the annual July 26 demonstration suggested the establishment of workers' committees to regulate distribution of goods and services to consumers, and called for some kind of workers' representation in management. The new "organs of people's power" are likewise touted as a means of increasing "participation by the masses in state and administrative affairs". But the key question is not "participation" but political power, which (naturally) Castro leaves in the hands of the bureaucracy, seeking above all to *solidify* it.

In response to the Matanzas elections the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) commented that reliance on the "decision-making machinery" typical of "current practices in the Soviet Union ... only increases the party's vulnerability to bureaucratic influences ...". "The Cuban revolutionary leaders should be the first to be aware of" these dangers, it added (*Inter-continental Press*, 22 July 1974). This conclusion is accompanied by a description of the organization of soviet power under Lenin in the early years of the revolution, and the friendly suggestion that Castro adopt this model instead.

The SWP article contains a subhead stating "Lack Analysis of Stalinism", directed at Castro and the Cuban "revolutionary leaders". Actually it is more appropriate for the SWP! The Cuban leadership is well aware of the consequences of the model it has selected, for to institute real workers democracy, through sovereign soviet bodies, would destroy its own privileged position and bonapartist rule. There is no better illustration of this than the fact that Castro selected none other than Blas Roca, long-time bureaucratic hack who led the Moscow-line Stalinists from 1934 until the late 1950s (when it boycotted Castro's guerrilla struggle in the Sierra Maestra), to carry out the "experimental" elections and screen candidates in Matanzas! What is needed is not the SWP's friendly advice, but a workers political revolution which will shatter the bureaucracy and replace it with soviet rule! ■

(reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 100, 12 1976)

manded Rawicki's reinstatement with full compensation for lost pay and benefits, called for the abolition of the Teachers' Tribunal, union control of hiring and compulsory unionism, and pointed out the need for reducing class sizes and period-loading with no loss in pay to end unemployment. It would have attempted to generalise the strike to the other teachers' unions (raising the need for amalgamation into one all-inclusive union) and sought labour solidarity from unions such as the Miscellaneous Workers Union, which covers school cleaners who recently closed down schools throughout Victoria.

To be able to effectively defend victimised militants and to put forward a fighting policy against the savage cutbacks in staffing and education expenditure requires their integration into a class-struggle program. Such a perspective will not be carried out by the sellout bureaucracy of the VSTA or their IS "rank-and-file" left cover but only by an alternative leadership pledged to the overthrow of capitalism and a real workers government. ■

Continued from page three

China's . . .

ively changed through a forcible, violent overthrow of the existing state power, whether by revolution or counterrevolution. In essence all Mao's talk of "Soviet social-imperialism" is just a cover for his alliance with imperialism, an attempt to offset Russia's immense material advantages over the economic and military backwardness of China.

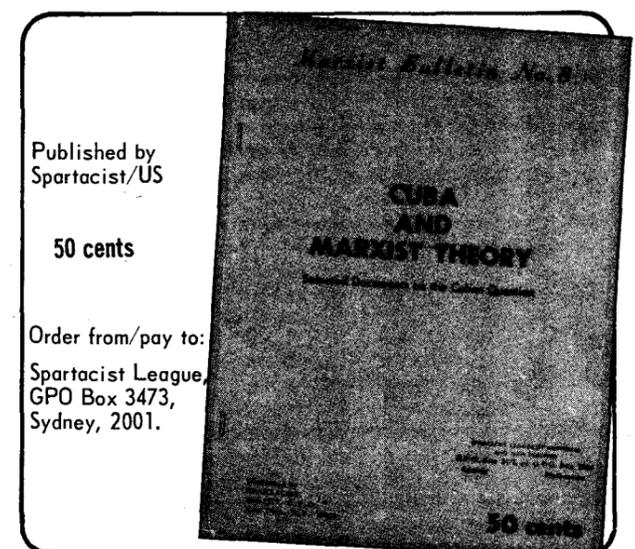
It is just such bureaucratic intriguing with imperialism which places the conquests of the Chinese revolution in mortal danger. For if US imperialism in the period of its death agony goes to war with the Soviets and wins, not only would this give capitalism a new historic lease on life, but a triumphant imperialism would have no trouble or compunction in dispatching the much weaker Chinese deformed workers state.

Nor is the "sacred" national egoism of the Chinese bureaucracy confined to Russia. On the occasion of his latest trip to China, CPA (ML) Chairman Ted Hill issued a statement which said in part:

"The South China Sea Islands ... are inalienable parts of China and have been so for centuries as history shows. All those who now claim that these islands are not Chinese are liars." (*Vanguard*, 11 March 1976)

And so the Vietnamese Stalinists, once the Maoists' greatest heroes, who have sent a military force to occupy part of "inalienable" China, the Spratley Islands, are now "liars". Bearing in mind that the Vietnamese crushed Thieu primarily with Russian armaments and have consistently supported Russian policy in Portugal, Angola and India, it will not be long until the Maoists are muttering about "mercenaries at the service of the New Czars" and the "dark social fascists" ruling over Hanoi and Saigon.

It is not enough to dissent from the outright counterrevolutionary acts of Chinese foreign policy. It is not enough to support whatever forces appear to be battling imperialism or reaction at any given moment. The counterrevolutionary policies emanating from Peking and Moscow must be destroyed at their root. And that root is the rule of a privileged bureaucracy which "defends" collectivised (proletarian) property relations by its intrigues with imperialism -- in a word, Stalinism. It is the historic task of Trotskyism, and no other tendency, to lead the working class to the overthrow of the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies and place the enormous resources of the Sino-Soviet states totally in the service of world revolution. ■





Melbourne teachers' strike fights victimisation

Reinstate Helen Rawicki!

The week-long strike called by the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association (VSTA) against the sacking of VSTA member Helen Rawicki reflects both the militancy within the ranks and the weakness of organisation and leadership of Victorian teachers. In the context of savage budgetary cutbacks in social expenditure, teachers have faced mounting attacks against their conditions and the minimal education reforms won during the period of Labor Government rule.

Rawicki was suspended from teaching in September last year on seven charges of alleged "misconduct". The obviously trumped-up charges against her included failure to behave "courteously" to a member of the public (she allegedly swore in the presence of a bank official who was supposedly "shocked to hear it coming from a lady" -- Melbourne *Herald*, 11 March); refusing to take more than one extra period (VSTA policy); not making graded assessments of her pupils (again VSTA policy); and failure to require pupils to remain in attendance at classes (she allowed them to go to the library).

At her initial hearing Rawicki was not allowed to have time to prepare a defence, or to question the principal (who had laid the charges on the basis of a "crime" dossier secretly col-

lected from students, parents and co-workers) or to even see the transcript! At her subsequent trial before the Teachers' Tribunal two months later the judgement brought down as the school year ended was for dismissal. Rawicki's sacking is widely recognised as a test case for all teachers. The charges laid for following VSTA policy are a direct attack on the union, the others so vague and widely applicable that they could be used against virtually anyone the principal or education department happened to dislike.

Both Rawicki and VSTA have been the subject of a vitriolic press attack since the campaign began. Liberal Minister for Education Thompson, looking for a confrontation with militant teachers and hoping to exploit public sentiment against teachers' strikes, has refused to discuss Rawicki's case with the union. "I think most people are anxious to see a greater degree of discipline in schools," he said, "... But if I were to override a decision of the tribunal, this would completely break down the disciplinary system" (quoted in the *Age*, 11 March). Thompson's "opposition", ALP spokesman for education Fordham, "deplored" Thompson's refusal but, capitulating to Thompson and Hamer's hypocritical

Continued on page eleven



Sacked VSTA member Helen Rawicki.

Navy stops flow on

Garden Island workers fight wage attack

Three hundred painters and dockers at Garden Island Naval Dockyard have been on strike since February 18, in response to the Navy's revocation of a long-established flow-on. This government provocation was followed by a Navy attempt to use sailors to scab, resulting in a 48-hour stoppage by all Garden Island workers on 22-23 March, backed up by a 24-hour sympathy strike at the Williamstown Naval Dockyard in Melbourne. Although the scabbing has been temporarily defeated, it is probable that the Arbitration Court will rule against the painters and dockers on April 2. In that event the strike is likely to continue, possibly to the point of exhaustion unless a more favourable relation of forces can be created than presently exists between the union and the Navy.

The agreement or determination under which painters and dockers at Garden Island have worked since 1955 is related by an automatic flow-on procedure to the Federal Painters' and Dockers' Award, which is in turn linked to the Metal Trades Industry Award. When metal workers in 1974 gained the principle of accumulation of special rates (ie, more than one penalty rate could be paid for the one job), this principle was extended to the Federal Painters' and Dockers' Award, and then to the Garden Island determination. For 14 months the Navy paid the accumulated rate for lagging (binding pipe with asbestos) and for cleaning tanks but then, invoking a petty proviso, they suddenly refused. This was at once discriminatory and inconsistent: a painter and docker working as assistant to a tradesman can now be paid a lower penalty rate than the tradesman; a warship taken to (privately owned) Cockatoo Island rather than Garden Island will have the work done on it at a higher rate.

Threat to permanency

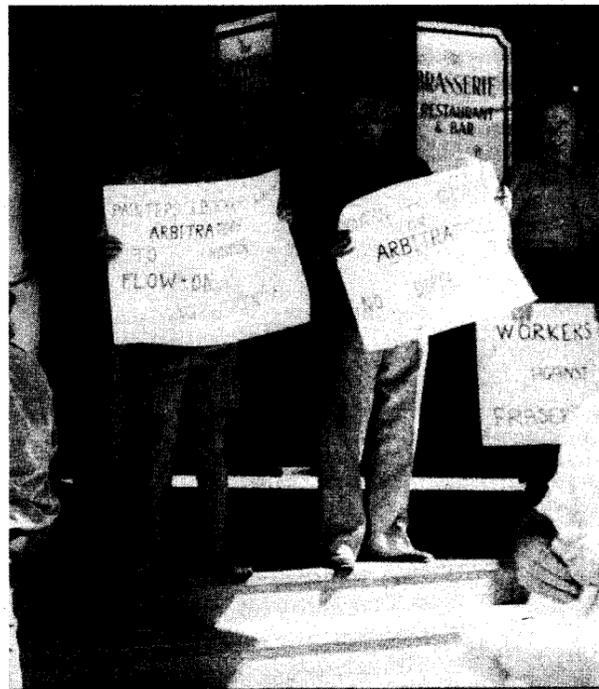
If successful, the Navy will have a legal precedent for denying future flow-ons, and thus a means to eventually isolate all government workers from workers in the private sector. This isolation would enable the wages of government employees to be depressed relative to other workers, and thus facilitate turning over many areas of work at Garden Island to private contractors. This would entail the loss of a great many jobs since the work would be performed episodically rather than by permanent employees. Thus behind the Navy's move is its desire to destroy job permanency, an important gain won by Garden Island workers in 1955.

From the beginning of the strike the emphasis in the work of the volunteer strike committee, which has acted as the de facto strike leadership, has been on collecting and allocating funds to sustain the strikers. Teams have scoured the factories of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Newcastle, and Port Kembla for donations. The solidarity of workers throughout Australia has been breached only by the extreme right-wing FIA officials, who treacherously recommended that their members at Garden Island do painters' and dockers' work -- an atrocity averted by the exemplary refusal of the FIA rank and file.

However, the strategy underlying the emphasis on strike funds is essentially passive, making the struggle simply one of endurance. Given that the repair of warships can often be postponed indefinitely, this can play into the Navy's hands. No effort has been made to translate moral and financial support into militant class-struggle support in the form of sympathy strikes, demonstrations and rallies. The shop committee at Williamstown, which was prepared to take action, had not even been informed of the strike until it was almost a month old. Proposals for actions such as seeking to spread the strike to the privately-owned docks, most importantly Cockatoo, have been opposed. Yet Painters' and Dockers' NSW President John Rainford has claimed that the maximum pressure on the Navy was already being brought to bear!

The strike committee, which includes as its leader Rainford, a prominent member of the reformist Communist Party of Australia (CPA), has correctly tried to put the strike in a political framework, pointing out that it is part of the opening stages of the anti-worker offensive of the Fraser government. But also at issue is the indexation system, which has been used by the Navy to justify reneging on the flow-on. More importantly, to the extent that they have tried to give political leadership and direction to the strike, militants in the strike committee have tacitly posed the alternative to Fraser as merely a return to a Labor Government. Yet many of these same militants have completely seen through Whitlam's treacherous reformism; and after all, the indexation wage freeze was introduced by Whitlam, not Fraser.

The ship-building and ship-repair industry has been among the hardest hit by automation and most threatened by the current world economic slump. Layoffs, already on the agenda at Garden Island, will almost certainly affect all trades, including painters and dockers, posing the need for a



ASp photo

Garden Island workers picket arbitration hearing, 23 March.

single industrial union for real unity in the coming fight. However, the problems of workers in this industry also reflect the attacks facing the whole working class engendered by a bankrupt capitalist system. Increased trade-union or shop-floor militancy is not enough. Unemployment and inflation must be answered with a struggle for a shorter working week with no loss in pay to maintain jobs and for automatic monthly cost-of-living adjustments with no strings attached to maintain real wages. This struggle cannot be carried out consistently within the confines of capitalism, but only through a real workers government based on workers organisations to expropriate the capitalist class.

The present reformist trade-union leadership will never fight for such a strategy. In fact they will do all they can to fragment, frustrate and betray it. The CPA, which is an integral part of that bureaucracy, is thoroughly committed to such a course. The Spartacist League is committed to building caucuses in the unions to strive to win leadership away from the reformists on the basis of a real revolutionary program. ■