

# Australasian SPARTACIST



NUMBER 33

JULY 1976

TWENTY CENTS

*National strikes now!*

## ACTU Exec sells out to Fraser



ACTU President Bob Hawke (left) claims "common objectives" with Liberal Prime Minister Fraser.

**Free quality health care for all!  
Expropriate the private health funds and insurance  
companies!**

A series of four-hour general stoppages across the nation, spontaneously extending into full-day walkouts in Brisbane, Newcastle, Wollongong and Melbourne; 24-hour stoppages by Sydney and Melbourne maritime unions and sections of the NSW branch of the Australian Workers Union; strong support for a 24-hour nationwide general strike; plus a barrage of calls on the ACTU to organise nationwide industrial action -- such has been the angry working-class response to the Fraser Government's attempts to implement their fiscal austerity drive at the expense of the Labor-initiated Medibank health care scheme.

Desperate to head off any confrontation with the Government the union tops, in a 12 to 5 vote at an ACTU executive meeting held June 21-22, refused to call a one-day nationwide general strike. Instead they called a "special unions conference" for July 5-6 and virtually demanded that workers withhold strike action while they attempt to barter down the Medibank tax levy from 2.5 to 1.6 percent. Once again the reformist misleaders, by refusing to mobilise their ranks and instead relying on diplomatic manoeuvres for meaningless concessions, are obstructing and demoralising a militant response to Fraser's attacks. National strike action is urgently necessary now. Time can only strengthen the Govern-

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## DECLARATION OF FRATERNAL RELATIONS

### between the international Spartacist tendency and the Organizacion Trotskyista Revolucionaria of Chile

I

The events of 1970 to 1973 in Chile posed, and continue to pose, a fundamental test of the revolutionary capacity of all who claim to speak in the historic interests of the working class. The self-proclaimed socialists who bound the exploited masses to the "constitutionalist" officers and "anti-imperialist" bourgeoisie through the Popular Unity (UP) coalition acted as a roadblock to revolution, and therefore an accomplice of counterrevolution. The first task of those who would prepare a proletarian insurrection to sweep away the bourgeois state, today in the hands of the blood-drenched Pinochet dictatorship, must be to draw the lessons of the Allende popular front. Only in this manner can the masses be broken from their treacherous reformist and centrist misleaders who pave the way for the coup of 11 September 1973. At that time the bourgeois popular front was replaced by another form of capitalist rule, the bonapartist military junta, which balances between the fractions and cliques of the middle and big bourgeoisie, reflecting the pressure of the major imperialist powers.

Already in late 1970 the Spartacist tendency warned:

"It is the most elementary duty for revolutionary Marxists to irreconcilably oppose the Popular Front in the election and to place absolutely no confidence in it in power. Any 'critical support' to the Allende coalition is class treason, paving the way for a bloody defeat for the Chilean working people when dom-

estic reaction, abetted by international imperialism, is ready."

Tragically, there was no Trotskyist party in Chile to galvanize the workers around the Marxist program of class independence, and the *Spartacist* warning proved all too accurate.

II

As Trotsky remarked in 1935: "In reality, the Popular Front is the main question of Proletarian class strategy for this epoch. It also offers the best criterion for the difference between Bolshevism and Menshevism."

The largest purportedly revolutionary organization formally outside the UP coalition, the MIR (Revolutionary Left Movement), was incapable of presenting a class opposition to the popular front. While attracting a layer of militant youth fundamentally from the petty bourgeoisie, and periodically criticizing the Communist Party (CP), the MIR never broke from the Popular Unity. Following the September 1970 elections it called on the masses to support Allende; today the MIR is part of the popular front in exile, seeking to "broaden" the class-collaborationist coalition by including even Christian Democrats. The individual heroism of many MIR militants cannot hide the political bankruptcy of these Chilean Castroites, the left cover of the popular front.

Nor did the Chilean disciples of the several self-proclaimed "Fourth Internationals" present a Trotskyist policy of irreconcilable hostility to popular frontism. The sympathizers of the "United" Secretariat (USec) were either mired in perpetual "deep entry" in the Socialist Party

(the traditional graveyard for pseudo-Trotskyists in Chile) or fawningly crawling after the MIR. (In fact, the USec played a central role in creating the MIR, but this did not prevent the Castroites from summarily expelling them two years later for "Trotskyism". Such are the rewards of opportunism!) The USec supporters labeled the bourgeois elements of the UP irrelevant, alibing the Allende regime with the label "reformist" and calling on it to carry out its own bourgeois program.

As for the two Chile groups adhering to the "Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International" led by the French OCI, neither of them characterized the UP as a popular front until after the Pinochet coup; and the minuscule Posadista group considered the Allende regime as a "revolutionary government", a category in which it also includes the military juntas of Peru and Panama.

III

However, some militants in Chile did seek to oppose the class collaboration of the two dominant reformist, or as Lenin said, bourgeois workers' parties (Communist and Socialist). In late 1972, elements of the TRO (Revolutionary October Tendency, allied with the reformist international minority of the USec) refused to go along with a fusion with the FRT (Revolutionary Trotskyist Front, led by L Vitale and allied with the centrist USec majority) because of the failure to resolve (or even discuss) differences on Cuba and guerrillaism, and the lack of a revol-

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# Declaration . . .

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utionary policy toward the UP. Consequently, this grouping was immediately expelled by the central committee elected at the founding congress of the PSR (Revolutionary Socialist Party) amid charges of "ultra-leftism".

The expelled tendency, which became the Revolutionary Trotskyist Organization (OTR), includes among its central leadership trade unionists with many years of experience leading struggles of the Chilean miners, both against the US monopolies and state agencies of the Chilean bourgeoisie. Having broken with the SP, in the March 1973 legislative elections they called for votes to the Popular Socialist Union (USOPO), a split-off from the SP, while giving it no political confidence. Although the USOPO leaders were reformists, they had been forced to break with the popular front because of leftist opposition among copper miners (its base) to the UP. Shortly before the Pinochet coup leaders of the OTR were at the head of a workers' march in Santiago demanding "break with the bourgeoisie".

Subsequently, in a document approved by its congress in October 1974, "A Political Defeat and the Need for a Balance Sheet", the OTR wrote:

"To say that the character of the UP was reformist means being an accomplice to the betrayals committed.... Thus the UP must be included in the list of the old popular fronts, the model designed to betray the working class."

## IV

At the time of the shotgun wedding which formed the PSR in November 1972, the tendency which became the Revolutionary Trotskyist Organization of Chile had already experienced the unprincipled maneuvering of the competing factions of the USec. In exile, the OTR came into direct contact with the United Secretariat leadership. Although invited to the USec's "Tenth World Congress", it was informed that there would be no discussion on Chile! This was only logical for a fake-International which had formally declared the Allende regime a popular front in 1971, while none of its sympathizing groups in Chile ever held this position; and then, following the 1973 coup, posthumously rehabilitated the UP to the status of "reformist". Clearly any honest balance sheet of the Chilean events could only be a condemnation of the USec's own opportunism and failure to present a revolutionary opposition to class collaboration.

The OCI, like the USec, had termed the Allende regime a popular front (although not taking the decisive step of calling for electoral opposition to *all* the parties of the UP coalition) while its Chilean supporters failed to make this characterization. In discussions with the OCI, the OTR sharply rejected the former's call for a vote for Mitterrand (candidate of the popular-front Union of the Left in the 1974 French presidential elections) and opposed the OCI policy of tailing after the Portuguese Socialist Party. In 1971, after playing a fundamental role in frustrating chances for a Bolivian revolution by its capitulatory centrist policies, the OCI's main Latin American ally, the POR of G Lora, concluded a political pact with the ousted Bolivian ex-president, General Torres. Subsequently the OCI has called for extending this alliance with the "anti-imperialist" bourgeoisie to a continental scale -- a Latin American super-Kuomintang. Such treacherous policies demonstrate the appetites of these pseudo-Trotskyists to commit betrayals as monstrous as those of the Chilean SP and CP.

Coming into contact with the international Spartacist tendency (iSt), the OTR found itself in fundamental agreement with the iSt's consistent class opposition to the popular front, put

forward in positions taken even at the height of Allende's popularity and expressed in the articles collected in *Cuadernos Marxistas* no 3 ("Chile: Lecciones del Frente Popular"). This initial agreement was extended to include the understanding of the nature of Cuba as a bureaucratically deformed workers state. The opportunists of the United Secretariat formed their pseudo-International on the basis of capitulating to Castro's popularity among petty-bourgeois radicals, terming Cuba a healthy workers state that merely "lack[ed] the forms" of proletarian democracy. In contrast, the forerunner of the Spartacist League/US, the Revolutionary Tendency (RT) of the US Socialist Workers Party (SWP) insisted that Cuba was a deformed workers state, and that workers' democracy could only be achieved through political revolution led by a Trotskyist party. It was for defending this Marxist program that the RT was expelled by the SWP, as part of the latter's rapid degeneration through centrism to cringing social-democratic reformism. Through a discussion of the history of the international Trotskyist movement, the USec capitulation to Castroism was traced to the Pabloist liquidationism which had destroyed the Fourth International in 1951-53.

## V

Among the earlier political positions, inherited from Pabloism, which the OTR had to re-evaluate, the question of guerrillaism was the most difficult. While in the TRO, the tendency which became the OTR had been strongly guerrillaist, accusing the TRO leadership of failure to carry out the decision of the USec's "Ninth World Congress" on "armed struggle" in Latin America. While the OTR had rejected peasant-based "foco" guerrilla war, it stood for guerrilla struggle by the workers.

In discussions with the iSt, the OTR came to the conclusion that Marxists must oppose guerrillaism. As the Revolutionary Tendency stated in 1963, "Experience since the Second World War has demonstrated that peasant-based guerrilla warfare under petit-bourgeois leadership can in itself lead to nothing more than an anti-working-class bureaucratic regime" ("Toward the Rebirth of the Fourth International"). Moreover, whether in rural or urban (Tupamaros) forms, whether as Guevarism, Maoist "people's war" or in a "Trotskyist" disguise (as in the case of the Argentine PRT/ERP), guerrillaism is hostile to proletarian revolution and inevitably leads to -- or is the reflection of -- Stalinist "two-stage" conceptions if not outright petty-bourgeois nationalism.

The proletariat *cannot* sustain guerrilla war, for the very concept implies the absence of a revolutionary situation and the kind of irregular fighting which requires an ability to retreat rapidly. In addition to its clear class interest, it is the *organization* of the proletariat which gives it political superiority over the atomized peasantry. This organization is the result of the position of the working class in the structure of capitalist society; to retreat into the hills would eventually destroy the class or the class character of its vanguard.

There is no better illustration of the impotence of guerrillaism in the face of a concerted offensive by the bourgeoisie than the recent debacle in Argentina. Even though guerrillaism (both urban and rural) is more widespread, better financed and equipped, of longer duration and of

more different varieties than anywhere else in Latin America, none of the guerrilla groups could lift a finger against the Videla coup or even stop the notorious AAA death squads which have assassinated thousands of leftists and workers' leaders with impunity over the last three years.

The revolutionary party must, of course, take an active role in organizing the self-defense of the working masses, and the use of guerrilla tactics is often vital as a subordinate civil war tactic. However, the road to power for the proletariat is through mass insurrection against the bourgeois state; the central military organization of the uprising must be an arm of and directed by the mass organization of the working class, led by the Leninist vanguard party.

## VI

In Latin America, Castroist-inspired guerrillaism has led a generation of subjectively revolutionary militants from one defeat to another, resulting in the useless slaughter of many of the most dedicated and courageous fighters. In numerous countries, thousands of militants have been grievously misled by the Trotskyist pretensions of the Pabloists and other revisionists into capitulation before non-proletarian leaderships.

We reject the claims of the several international groupings posturing as the Fourth International to be the continuity, either organizationally or politically, of the revolutionary organization founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938. The Chilean experience has again demonstrated the bankruptcy of these pseudo-Trotskyist imposters. Those who in 1970-73 were giving a left cover to Allende's Popular Unity, only a year later were creating illusions in the Portuguese Armed Forces Movement and/or its SP and CP collaborators. After playing a central role in creating the MIR, only to be expelled from their creature shortly after, the USec repeated this disastrous course with the debacle of the guerrillaist Argentine PRT/ERP, at the same time sustaining the social-democratic PST, which politically supported the Peronist government. Only an authentically Trotskyist International, firmly based on the theory of permanent revolution and committed to destroying the authority of all the reformist and centrist misleaders of the working class, can resolve the crisis of proletarian leadership.

In view of the large number of subjectively revolutionary militants presently within the ranks of various ostensibly revolutionary organizations and the central importance of politically destroying Pabloism on a world scale, the Revolutionary Trotskyist Organization and the international Spartacist tendency, in this declaration of fraternal relations, agree to undertake joint work toward the rebirth of the Fourth International. We seek to reforge the Fourth International by winning the best cadre and militants through a process of revolutionary regroupment. On the basis of the above points and agreement with the Declaration of Principles of the Spartacist League/US, subsequently adopted by the iSt, the parties to this declaration aim at achieving the unity of the Revolutionary Trotskyist Organization of Chile with the international Spartacist tendency, and in turn this will be a great step toward the formation of the International Trotskyist League, worldwide in scope.

17 May 1976

# Letter of resignation

In *Australasian Spartacist* no 29 (March 1976), we reprinted the statement of resignation from the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) of Graeme Grassie, a prominent former member of the CPA's Queensland branch who resigned in political solidarity with, and subsequently joined, the SL. Below we print his letter of resignation from the SL, which establishes clearly that his break from the SL is a break from Leninism.

While Grassie joined the SL out of genuine if abstract commitment to the program of Trotskyism, he proved to be a dilettante who, far from arguing against the SL's organisational norms, was frequently to assert that he could not find the personal commitment necessary to be a professional revolutionist. His so-called "differences" were literally invented after the fact to cover his cowardly desertion -- as his resignation itself acknowledges. Thus, the fraudulent assertion that the SL deliberately isolates itself from the "day-to-day world of the working class" comes from one who claimed he could not stand to work in a factory, and who while in the SL argued for a *reduction* in industrial sales. Grassie rejected our request (see the second letter reprinted below) that he argue for his views internally before leaving saying that his main reason for leaving was that he found bolshevik discipline "uncomfortable", and that fighting for his views would be even more so! We reject Grassie's misrepresentation of SL politics, and refer read-

ers for a true version in the first place to his own statement of resignation from the CPA.

Political Chairman,  
Spartacist League.

Dear Comrade,

I wish to submit my resignation from the SL. While this is due principally to my aversion to the organisational norms of the SL -- an aversion which I conceived on joining and have never overcome, programmatic differences flow inevitably from this. To the extent that the SL sees its complete isolation from the day-to-day world of the working class and the general Left movement as a virtue, I cannot concur. Nor can I continue to rationalise to myself the necessity of a tiny group's maintaining an almost military control over the lives of its membership.

This necessity is imposed by the "programme of splits and fusions leading to the crystallisation of the Leninist vanguard nucleus". Yet the differences in the ostensibly Marxist and revolutionary movement no longer seem to me to be such as require an artificial dissociation and hostility; moreover, this programme is quite unrelated to the real task of propagating revolutionary ideas in the working class, or elsewhere for that matter. To try to do this by "building the party from the top down" is mistaken in that it confuses objective conditions where revolution-

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## SLL hypocritical charges of gangsterism

# Healyite chickens come home to roost

Recent issues of *Workers News*, paper of the centrist Healyite Socialist Labour League (SLL) have warned of a desperate and growing campaign of provocation and intimidation launched against the SLL by the Moscow-line Stalinists of the Socialist Party of Australia (SPA), the reformist Communist Party of Australia (CPA) and the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP). In the June 17 issue final devastating "proof" of the sinister conspiracy was revealed with a sensational, circled picture of Joe Palmada, member of the CPA's new shadowy inner "troika", "lurking" in a bus shelter during what the SLL described as a "Stalinist stake-out at Central railway". But the truth was somewhat more mundane, a simple case of Mulgrew/Healy's gangsterist chickens coming home to roost.

The background to the Healyites' latest conspiracy plot began at this year's Mayday march when SLL goons prevented sellers of *all* left-wing papers from approaching any member of the SLL/YS contingent, shouting apolitical personal abuse and overtly threatening physical violence. In one case SLLer Greg Adler even appealed to a nearby cop to prevent an SL member from handing out Mario Munoz Defence Committee leaflets to SLL supporters. Healyite frenzy escalated when the SWP's *Direct Action* (20 May) reprinted sections of a sniping aside by the SPA's *Socialist* on the SLL's Mayday intimidation of salesmen, along with detailed examples of disruption and threats directed by SLLers at *Direct Action* salesmen in the western suburbs -- the latter charges never specifically denied by *Workers News* in page after page of copy devoted to "reply" over following weeks. The next week SLL salesman Richard Moore was attacked by an unidentified assailant on the Stalinist-dominated Port Kembla wharves and friction broke out at Sydney's Central railway between salesmen of the CPA's *Tribune* and *Workers News*.

Despite confused details and dubious sources (the only available account is the SLL's version) the assault on Moore was clearly a case of violent political suppression. We strongly condemn this cowardly attack -- those responsible must be exposed. As for the Central station incident, the SLL claims that at the first "stake-out" on May 27 a *Workers News* seller was slapped several times by CPA member Peter Cockcroft, and spat (!) in retaliation. The CPA claims Cockcroft was spat on and a cigarette knocked from his mouth, but that he did not strike back (*Direct Action*, 10 June). And, claims *Tribune*, the CPA defence



Workers News editor Nick Beams being excluded from SWP forum.

squad was sent only to protect their normal salesman who was on the receiving end of sexist abuse and harassment from *Workers News* salesmen.

We can easily believe the SLL has been harassing *Tribune* salesmen to the point of interfering with the CPA's right to sell. The Spartacist League has often experienced the same tactics reported by the SWP. The SLL has no legitimate complaint against the so-called "stake-out" designed to deter such harassment. We will defend any tendency against SLL harassment. We will defend the SLL against harassment by the CPA, SPA, or anyone else. The labour movement must be freed from every trace of the poison of gangsterism!

Manifest in the whole charade is the pious hypocrisy of everyone concerned. The SLL itself is notorious for their record of unprincipled slander, lying, cop-baiting, exclusionism and violence against opponents on the left. Stalinism, the tradition to which the SPA adheres, has used slander, exile, torture and murder to suppress the political exposure of its betrayals of the working class by Trotskyists for over 50 years. The SWP has a standing policy of exclud-

ing Spartacist supporters from "public" *Direct Action* forums and it defends in principle the use of cops and courts for defence against gangsterism in the workers movement (*Direct Action*, 24 April 1975). And on more than one occasion CPA spokesman Denis Freney has threatened to violently exclude us from activities around the defence of East Timor. All these outraged hypocrites ignore the need to defend workers' democracy except when their own rights are trampled on.

The SLL defends its Mayday activities by braying: "our crime is that we refuse to permit the assassins of Trotsky to enter our ranks to do their work" (*Workers News*, 3 June). Aside from deliberately confusing *internal* organisational life and *public* activities, this equation of the GPU assassins of Trotsky with a *Socialist* salesman on a Mayday march is riotously absurd. It is devastating testimony of its political bankruptcy that the SLL/YS cannot even permit its ranks to read the hidebound, ultra-reformist paper of the SPA! Is that what they call "defending" their organisation against Stalinist assassins? This does not help fight Stalinism at all. It invites the Stalinist ranks to retaliate in kind, which Stalinist leaders will not fail to encourage. *It helps Stalinism!*

The SLL's paranoid style reflects the growing gap between its grandiose pretensions to mass influence it does not have, and the reality that it is a frenzied, politically degenerating small group as isolated from the organised working class as every other group to the left of the CPA. To seal off their ranks from the realisation that Healyism is fundamentally a political con game the SLL must increasingly resort to slander and frame-up (eg, the "proof" that Spartacist collaborated with the FBI, the "charges" that US SWP leaders Hansen and Novack are GPU accomplices, etc).

For us workers' democracy is no abstract legal or moral absolute, in no way resembling fake, bourgeois democracy. All stages of building the revolutionary party require ceaseless political struggle and clarification, through which the vanguard and the whole class have the opportunity to test competing tendencies and programs in the light of the class struggle. Those who obstruct this struggle through violence, slander, threats, exclusion etc, only admit the inability of their politics to stand the test of struggle -- and consequently their inability to lead the workers to revolution and victory. ■

# New support for Munoz campaign

The alarming escalation of right-wing terror in Argentina over the past period underlines our repeated warnings that behind the "Gentlemen's Coup" in Buenos Aires lies a mortal threat to the working class. General Videla's "democratic" image is going up in smoke as foreign refugees and Argentine leftists are mercilessly hunted down, savagely tortured and assassinated by the junta and its AAA (Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance) henchmen. Socialists, labour militants and defenders of democratic rights must urgently protest against this bloodbath, which has cost well over 300 lives since the generals seized power two and a half months ago.

## New international endorsements

An important part of this defence has been the international campaign to save the life of Mario Munoz Salas, the Chilean working-class leader being hunted down by the Argentine junta which continues to symbolize the plight of the 20,000 to 30,000 people Amnesty International estimates have been arrested since the coup. In the past month new endorsements of the campaign have been received from across four continents. In Australia new endorsements were received from former Labor Minister for Health Doug Everingham and the Brunswick and Richmond Centre/South branches of the ALP.

In the United States a number of pickets, demonstrations and delegations to both the UN and the Argentine consulate have been organised by the Committee to Save Mario Munoz. Angela Davis, Kate Millett and Jane Fonda are among those who have recently added their names to the call to free Munoz, while United Auto Workers President

Leonard Woodcock sent a telegram to Videla which read:

"Deeply concerned about safety of Chilean trade-unionist leader Mario Munoz Salas who is being hunted by Argentine authorities. Munoz and his family must be granted safe conduct out of Argentina and under no circumstances should they be extradited to Chile."

Earlier, on 11 May, Congresswoman Bella Abzug had sent a cable urging the Argentine authorities to allow Munoz and his family safe passage out of Argentina.

In Europe new endorsements included Alexandre Oliveira, *Gazeta da Semana\**, Lisbon; Alfred Dallinger, Chairman, Private Employees Union\*, Austria; Paris Federation of the Socialist Party; Dominique Le Court, France; Pedro Pascal Allende, nephew of the slain Chilean President Salvador Allende and former national director of housing under the Popular Unity government; Albert Stroer, vice-president of the European Federation of Free Trade Unions\*; and Rudi Dutschke, former German SDS leader. Important endorsements have also been received from Israel, among them being Israel Shahak, Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights\*; Felicia Langer, lawyer defending Palestinians in Israeli military courts; the Committee of Arab Students, Jerusalem University; and M Warskhawski, Revolutionary Communist League (Matzpen-Marxist)\*. Also reflecting the international interest in the Munoz campaign, an article on page two of the 11 June *Le Monde* reprinted an appeal of the Committee to Save Mario Munoz.

On the vital financial side of the campaign, funds are still urgently needed not only to bring to public attention the persecution of Mario Munoz, but also to help obtain refugee status and safe conduct for him and his family out of Argentina. Readers in Australia are urged to send donations to the Mario Munoz Defence Committee, Box 3473, GPO Sydney 2000. Requests for further information concerning the Munoz campaign can be sent to the same address. Act immediately -- the life of a revolutionary workers' leader is at stake! ■

\*for identification purposes only

I endorse\*

My organisation endorses\*

the international defence campaign to save Mario Munoz, organised around the demands:

**Mario Munoz must not die!**

**Stop the political repression in Argentina and Chile!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Signed

I am willing to work with the Committee to save Mario Munoz.

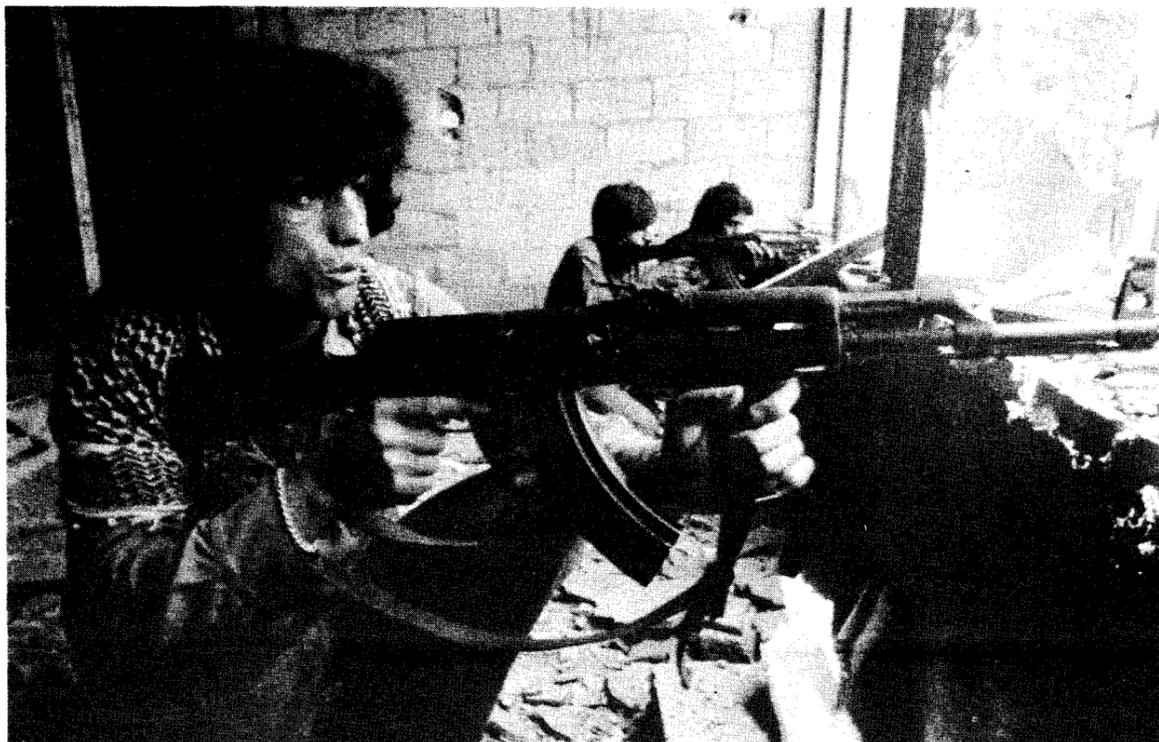
I donate \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to help save Mario Munoz. (Make payable to the Mario Munoz Defence Committee, GPO Box 3473, Sydney, NSW 2001.)

\* Endorsement indicates willingness to permit your name or your organisation's name to be used to internationally publicise the campaign of the Mario Munoz Defence Committee.

# Syrian troops out of Lebanon!

Since the beginning of June, Syria has been engaged in a full-scale military intervention into the Lebanese civil war. It has reinforced the 15,000 Syrian or Syrian-controlled troops already in Lebanon with an additional 13,000 regular soldiers and 400 tanks, most of which are Soviet-made T-54s.

Syrian troops had previously infiltrated Lebanon under the guise of Palestinian commandos (the Syrian-controlled as-Saiqa Palestinian guerrilla organization in Lebanon contains 7000 men, and the 3000-man Hittin Brigade of the Palestine Liberation Army is also pro-Syrian). However, on April 9 Syria massed 8000 regular soldiers inside the Lebanese border, partially to bolster support for Elias Sarkis, its candidate in the Lebanese presidential elections. On May 27 Damascus consented to another six months extension of the UN observer force on the Golan Heights, thereby freeing up units of the Third Armored Division, which are normally held in reserve for combat with Israeli forces on Golan, for the June invasion of Lebanon.



Palestinian troopers at defence post in Beirut.

The June invasion, preceded by the Syrian-imposed election of Sarkis (see *WV* no 112, 4 June), was undertaken with the approval of the United States and Israel. On May 26, US special envoy to Lebanon L Dean Brown (who formerly served in Vietnam, Cyprus and Jordan during the 1970 civil war there) stated that the US had "made a mistake in discouraging Syria from sending troops into Beirut last month as a peace-making force in the civil war" (*New York Times*, 27 May 1976).

The attempt of Sarkis, elected by Syrian bayonets, to negotiate an agreement with the contending forces in the Lebanese civil war collapsed in late May over the question of the continuing presence of Syrian troops. Following this collapse, the civil war quickly escalated, with over 115 reported killed and 230 wounded on May 29. Coinciding with this escalation, Ahmen al-Maamari, a fanatical Muslim army commander, encircled and savagely shelled two isolated Christian towns in northern Lebanon -- Andakat and Al Qobaya -- threatening to wipe them out.

Both Fatah, the leading Palestinian group, and Druze patriarch Kamal Jumblat, a leader of the Lebanese Muslim forces, called on Major Maamari to cease this genocidal attack, but Maamari is a man who likes to be on the winning side. He has gone from being a supporter of Jumblat's ally, Lt Ahmed al-Khatib, commander of the "Lebanese Arab Army", to being an enemy of Jumblat and a supporter of the Syrians. Since the Syrians are currently backing the Maronite Christians, Maamari's attack on these towns was a provocation to justify further Syrian military intervention.

In addition, on May 31 Syria sent 2000 additional troops into northern Lebanon near the encircled towns and 4000 along the Damascus and Beirut highway to reopen that road to the reactionary Maronite Phalange, which holds the

coastal area north of Beirut. Jumblat, who only a week earlier had denounced French president Valery Giscard d'Estaing's offer to dispatch combat troops to its former colony in the Levant, now appealed to Lebanon's former imperialist master: "I have asked for French diplomatic and

political assistance to defend our independence." So much for Jumblat's self-proclaimed "socialist", "progressive" and "anti-imperialist" sentiments (which have been taken as good coin by wretched opportunists like the Healyites).

Of course, the Maronite reactionaries were overjoyed by Syrian reinforcements rushing to their aid. A joint statement issued by the incumbent president Suleiman Franjeh, Interior Minister and former president Camille Chamoun (who had called for the US Marine invasion of Lebanon in 1958), Phalange chief Pierre Gemayel and the leader of the clerical-fascist Order of Maronite Monks, Charbel Rassis, said: "We appreciate what sister Syria is doing in Lebanon in spite of the difficulties it is facing in Lebanon and elsewhere" (*New York Times*, 6 June).

## The Pentagon and the Kremlin

The Ford administration, having given Damascus the green light to invade Lebanon, responded to the invasion by stating: "The Syrians have

played a constructive role in Lebanon." For his part, the bloodthirsty Israeli prime minister, Yitzak Rabin, viciously remarked: "I am not shedding any tears over the military encounter between the Syrian Army and Arafat's terrorists."

Rabin's gloating at the sight of Arab killing Arab lays bare the genocidal and racist character of Zionism. But the Palestinian refugee camps that were yesterday blown up in the name of Zionism are today strafed and bombarded in the name of the "Arab Revolution".

The Ba'athist rulers in Damascus who demagogically denounced the Sadat's "Sinai Agreement" with US imperialism and Zionist Israel -- putting themselves forward as uncompromising champions of the Palestinians' rights -- are now hailed by Washington and Tel Aviv as they perpetrate the mass murder of Palestinian refugees and Lebanese Muslims. Arab nationalism, like Zionism and all forms of nationalism, translates into national chauvinism and ethnic genocide, even when both parties to the conflict speak Arabic.

The Syrian invasion of Lebanon is also another serious blow to Moscow's already badly damaged prestige in the Near East. Since Sadat abrogated the Soviet-Egyptian "friendship pact", the USSR has become increasingly dependent upon Syria and Iraq as its sole purported allies in the region. To the acute embarrassment of the Kremlin, the May 31 Syrian invasion of Lebanon took place on the eve of Soviet prime minister Alexei Kosygin's state visit to Damascus.

Since, as Stalin once remarked, paper will take anything that is written on it, Kosygin and his Syrian hosts managed to cover over their differences with a joint communique blaming the Lebanese civil war exclusively on the imperialist powers. It is certainly true, as we have pointed out before, that the imperialists laid the basis for the communal war in Lebanon. But today it is Syrian soldiers with Russian weapons who are doing the work of the imperialist powers, taking the place of the US Sixth Fleet and the Marines.

The Russian prime minister arrived in Damascus following a visit to his other Near East "ally",

Iraq. Since Baghdad made its peace with the Shah of Iran (backed by the US and China) on the basis of bloody suppression of the Kurds, the Iraqi colonels have turned their self-serving martial demagoguery in another direction and massed troops on the Syrian border.

In Lebanon, the Syrian and Iraqi Ba'athists are on opposite sides of the barricades, the former currently supporting the Maronite Christians, the latter supporting the Muslims and the main Palestinian forces. Already in April, Baghdad cut off shipments of crude oil for the Syrian refinery at Homs (Assad is now promised supplies by Saudi Arabia) and escalated the long-standing battle over the use of Euphrates waters. Following the May 31 invasion, Iraq moved additional troops toward its Syrian border.

Thus, not only is the Palestinian cause being drowned in blood with Soviet weapons in the hands of Syrian troops; but even more Soviet military hardware is now being lined up on the Syria-Iraq border threatening a shoot-out between the USSR's two main Near East allies!

The Arab League, responding to the Syrian invasion at a meeting in Cairo, has decided to send a "token" peace-keeping force to Lebanon composed of Saudi, Sudanese, Syrian, Libyan, Algerian and Palestinian troops. However, to the great discomfort of the Palestinian nationalist leaders -- who have based their entire strategy on obtaining support from various sheiks and colonels -- this force is so token that it is not scheduled to even show up in Beirut for at least another week! Damascus officials, meanwhile, have made it quite clear that there will be no major troop withdrawal on their part, and "Syria will continuously be exerting its efforts for its Lebanese brothers".

Syrian troops currently have Beirut under seige, the airport closed and the southern approach cut off. (Maronite forces control northern exits, while the eastern exit is the Damascus road, on which Syrian forces are but nine miles from the Lebanese capital.) There are also heavy concentrations of Syrian forces in the eastern Bekaa Valley and in northern Lebanon. Thus, except for the extreme south, Lebanon is essentially under Syrian military occupation.

## Not Arab nationalism but proletarian internationalism

No doubt Syrian nationalist demagoguery is used to justify this invasion. Following World War I, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan were considered by Arab nationalists to be part of an integral territory of Greater Syria and it was only through the machinations of the imperialist victors that the Levant was carved up along its present borders. The Damascus Ba'athists aspire to maintain a reactionary-ruled client state in Lebanon in order to shore up their own none-too-stable bonapartist rule. Itself a complex matrix of religious, racial and national minorities, Syria fears that the sectarian civil war in Lebanon could easily spill over the border.

Today it is Syrian troops that fight to maintain the imperialist status quo in Lebanon, which can only culminate in more sectarian communal conflict and petty national wars. In the context of giving no support to either side in the Lebanese civil war, we call for Syrian troops out of Lebanon. With "leftist" Muslim leader Jumblat now seeking to internationalize the extremely fluid conflict, calling on imperialist France as well as the Arab states to intervene, the Muslim/Palestinian coalition cannot be regarded as waging a struggle to which the working class could give military support. However, with superior Syrian forces apparently determined to "discipline" (crush) the Palestinian commandos, armed clashes may occur in Beirut and elsewhere in which independent proletarian forces might form temporary military blocs with Palestinian and various Lebanese forces in the course of defending workers' quarters and refugee camps against a bloodbath.

With the "militant anti-Zionist" Assad (who came to power after blocking Syrian military aid to the embattled Palestinian commandos in Jordan during "Black September" of 1970) threatening a Lebanese "Black June", the bankruptcy of all wings of Arab nationalism is manifest. A genuine and democratic unification of the Near East will not come about through the intrigues and mass-acres by the colonels and sheiks and Zionists, but only when the victorious Arab and Hebrew proletariat overthrows the rotting capitalist system and forges a socialist federation of the Near East. ■

(reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 114, 18 June 1976)

# Italian elections: a mandate for a mess

## No to the "historic compromise"

The Italian elections have been and gone but with no party reaching a clear majority the prospect ahead remains a continuing governmental crisis. Although the Italian Communist Party (PCI) increased its vote by 7 per cent to 34 per cent, chiefly at the expense of the small Social Democratic and Liberal parties, the polarisation amongst the Italian populace still left the main bourgeois party, the Catholic Church-backed Christian Democracy, with 39 per cent of the vote. Despite the PCI's electoral gains and fawning respectability the Christian Democrats continue to adamantly reject the PCI's call for a "coalition of national unity". But whatever amalgam is put together by the Christian Democracy, its life will be brief and the inevitability of its collapse holds out to the PCI traitors the prospect of finally consummating their "historic compromise" with capitalism. The following article, reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 113, was written just prior to the elections. Its analysis and content is still pointedly relevant.

For the past three decades, Italian governmental politics have seemed the living embodiment of the US Army acronym SNAFU ("systems normal, all fouled up"). But through the innumerable revolving-door cabinets, the linchpin of all the post-World War II governments has been the Christian Democracy (DC). Now, in the parliamentary elections scheduled for June 20, for the first time in 30 years the combined vote of the reformist workers' parties may approach a majority. For the past year, this prospect has mesmerized the traditional power brokers, causing an extended crisis of bourgeois leadership. The upcoming Italian elections are also seen as a key test case by the leading imperialist powers on the question of Communist governmental participation throughout southern Europe, an issue that is now on the agenda for the first time since the late 1940s.

But the Christian Democrats' internal crisis and possible defeat at the polls by no means signal their departure from office. The reformist Communist Party (PCI) has repeatedly made clear that it does not wish to enter the government without the DC. The lesson of Chile, says PCI leader Enrico Berlinguer, is that you can't run a country with a mere 51 percent of the votes. Instead he proposes a "historic compromise" with the Pope, the generals, the bureaucratic nepotists and the plutocrats -- in short, a deal with the capitalist power structure of Christian Democratic Italy.

The real lesson of Chile, however, is the danger to the working class represented by all stripes of popular frontism, whether in the form of a broad "historic compromise" or a more traditional "left government". From the social democrats' "left bloc" with bourgeois liberals in the 1920s to the Popular Unity in Chile or the "MFA-People's Alliance" in Portugal, class-collaborationist coalitions with the bourgeoisie have repeatedly spelled defeat for the working class, blocking the road to revolution and conciliating the forces of reaction until they are ready to strike from a position of strength.

Today in Italy, the axis of revolutionary struggle is once again the popular front, and it is precisely on this question that the comparatively large centrist and left-reformist groups demonstrate their inability to present a consistent opposition to the PCI. Mired in eclecticism, the "extra-parliamentary" forces of yesteryear have buried all principled considerations in a "far left" electoral cartel, the Democrazia Proletaria (DP), that seeks to maximize its votes by simply calling for a more left-wing popular front than the wall-to-wall coalition envisioned by Berlinguer and company.

The task of the Trotskyists is not to give a left cover to this shameless electoralist class collaborationism, either through direct participation or "critical" support, but to provide intransigent Marxist criticism of the reformists and centrists, refusing to give support to their candidates so long as they are committed to bourgeois coalitionism.

### Crisis in the Christian Democracy

Following the "administrative" (municipal and regional) elections last June 15, when the PCI boosted its vote above 33 percent, long-time Christian Democratic boss Amintore Fanfani was ousted as DC secretary and replaced by a colorless "center" politician, Benigno Zaccagnini, in an effort to "rejuvenate" the party. But the cliques, clans and fiefdoms of the ruling party are so entrenched that a year later no significant step has been taken that could spruce up the DC's electoral image. On the contrary, the Lockheed affair indelibly stamped the party as the very incarnation of corruption: in April it was revealed that a former premier had received bribes in exchange for facilitating the purchase of several military transport planes.

On the economic plane as well, the Christian Democrats have been unable to reverse their fortunes. In 1974 a severe balance of payments crisis was avoided through a \$2 billion loan from Germany, reputedly on the condition that the Communists be kept out of the government. For a time, the immediate foreign exchange crunch was averted and an industrial recovery seemed underway (industrial production in the last three months has increased by almost 20 percent). However, already a hefty trade deficit is in the offing for 1976, the lira has fallen by more than a third relative to the dollar and inflation is increasing (now at 21 percent) and due to rise sharply with the money supply up more than 50 percent over the past year (*Economist*, 5 June).

So the Christian Democracy is faced with the need to impose drastic anti-working-class austerity measures in a period of internal party crisis and declining popularity. Simultaneously the DC leaders are under considerable pressure from international and domestic power centers to draw a hard line against cooperation with the Communists. US Secretary of State Kissinger issued numerous warnings against PCI participation in the government, the latest coming after Premier Moro officially consulted the Communists for the first time since 1947 shortly before sharply increasing taxes and bank interest rates in mid-March. The Pope, in turn, is goading for an anti-Communist crusade, with the Vatican newspaper, *Osservatore Romano*, labeling the elections a choice between "liberty and dictatorship".

The Italian Socialist Party (PSI) opened the government crisis on December 31 when its secre-



PCI campaigning: "Go with the PCI to save Italy".

tary, Francesco De Martino, announced that it would no longer support the sinking ship of the DC minority government, and that the PCI would somehow have to be brought into power. In the succeeding weeks, PSI leaders sought to appear to the left of the Communists, by proposing a "left alternative" and favoring abortion reform and other democratic measures which the PCI was willing to modify in the interests of a "broad" coalition with the party of the Catholic hierarchy. However, the Socialists' real motivation was to avoid being squeezed into irrelevance in a PCI/DC coalition.

By appealing to leftist-inclined workers and secular liberals, they hope to carve out their own electoral milieu *without breaking from popular frontism*. The PSI's "left alternative" is open to both the PRI and the Radicals (PR) as well as to an eventual left split from the Christian Democrats. And in any case, at the last Socialist Party congress a resolution was approved which holds open various governmental possibilities following the elections, including a "government of national union". Having seen its privileged relations with the DC over the last decade go up in smoke, the PSI seeks to establish a new position, as the axis of the popular front (and possibly head of government) with the bourgeois parties.

The Communist Party continues its efforts to consummate a popular-front government with the DC, a long-term goal which goes under the name of the "historic compromise". The reformist PCI's compromise with capitalism is, of course, of long standing. As Berlinguer recently said: "We have always offered to collaborate with the Christian Democrats, but they have always said, 'no'" (*New York Times*, May 30). In its conservative reform policies (amounting to little more than "clean government") in the "red regions", its opposition to early elections, its willingness to postpone a referendum on abortion and its clamping the lid on the latest round of contract negotiations, the PCI is enthusiastically demonstrating its willingness to sacrifice the interests of the workers in favor of respectability.

Domestically, the PCI pledges its support for an "effective executive" (ie, freedom of action for the police) and promises to the monopolists that their profits will be guaranteed. In its election platform the word "nationalization" is stricken from the vocabulary, and instead it calls for reinvesting profits in Italy. The PCI "recognizes not only the particular social function of the small and middle-sized companies, but also the freedom of initiative of all private enterprise". At a more general level, Berlinguer's proposals are more and more minimalist: from the "new model of development" to the "medium-term program", the PCI has now reduced its bid for the basis of a corridor coalition to a "legislative term agreement" outlining only a few limited reforms.

Internationally, the Communist Party has pledged its support to Italy's traditional foreign policy alliances and explicitly states it will not demand that the new government break with the anti-Communist Western military alliance NATO. This commitment is embodied in particular in the person of Nino Pasti, former deputy commander of NATO and ex-head of the Italian air force, who is a Communist candidate this year. Another PCI candidate is Altiero Spinelli, a member of the Common Market's policy-making commission. (Still others include businessmen and Catholic church notables.)

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## SPARTACIST

edizione italiana



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PREZZO: 75c

Scrivere a:  
Spartacist League,  
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Sydney, NSW, 2001.

# Black anger . . .

Continued from page eight

Johannesburg to protest the murderous government repression were joined by hundreds of black and white bystanders. As they chanted "Power to Soweto" and raised clenched fists, policemen, reinforced by white railway workers and motorcycle gangs, viciously set upon them and dispersed the march. In Durban, black students attempting to march on the City Hall were also turned back by club-swinging police.

## Soweto - symbol of oppression

The dispute which sparked the Soweto massacre on Wednesday is indicative of the all-pervasive oppression of non-whites in South Africa. In line with the Afrikaner-based Nationalist Party's program of forcibly reintroducing tribal divisions and cultural backwardness, instruction in one of seven tribal "mother tongues" became the norm in "Bantu" primary schools beginning in the mid-1950s. For the small minority of blacks able to attend secondary schools, English, the language of industry and commerce (and hence a necessity for economic advancement), was the rule until recently.

In 1974, however, authorities in the Transvaal, the province in which Soweto is located, introduced Afrikaans as a second co-equal instructional language in the secondary schools. For the black students, this reinforced the enormous burden of acquiring academic skills and was seen as a callous act of cultural subjugation, forcing them to learn the language of the hated ruling party. A month ago, a boycott started at Phefeni Junior Secondary School and soon spread to seven other schools, leading up to the mass anti-Afrikaans march on June 16.

The language dispute is but one of the innumerable excrescences of the apartheid system. Soweto contains a population of over 1,000,000 black people in 35 square miles. Of its 102,000 tightly crammed bungalows, perhaps half have cold running water, less than a quarter have electricity and only 15 percent have inside bathrooms. The average family income is \$46 a month. Because blacks are regarded as migrants anywhere in South Africa except for the meager 13 percent of the land designated as "tribal homelands", the residents of Soweto cannot own land or the houses in which they live.

Blacks' employment, education, travel, family relations, etc are tightly controlled by the pass books which each must carry. These voluminous document files restrict their daily movements and are minutely scrutinized by white officials. Failure to produce the book at any time can lead to imprisonment, forced labor in private farms or deportation to a "bantustan", and some half a million blacks are arrested every year for "pass offenses".

## Black labour: achilles heel of apartheid

But Soweto is more than a symbol of the agonizing squalor and discrimination that are the lot of non-whites. It also represents the Achilles heel of apartheid -- the ever-growing demand for

black labor to work the factories and mines of the white capitalists. Not even Vorster believes that all 18 million blacks will eventually settle in the "bantustans". "Separate development" is designed to minimize the black population in the economically strategic centers of South Africa. The *only* blacks allowed in "white South Africa" are those who produce profits for their masters.

The township explosions that rocked the Witwatersrand follow close upon a period of labor unrest and escalating militancy among urban blacks. Under the impact of the world capitalist depression, black workers, joined in Natal province by their Indian class brothers, smashed through the near-solid wall of repression that descended upon the country following Sharpeville. A wave of strikes in January and February of 1973 involved 60,000 workers (compared to a mere 6376 workers who took part in recorded strikes throughout 1971-72). The Durban area was nearly paralyzed by the walkout of manufacturing, construction and government workers. These strikes spurred a surge of organization of Africans into trade unions (still only 60,000 out of the 5-million-strong black proletariat of South Africa). Although these unions are not recognized either by the government or the employers, black workers fought to be represented by their own organizations, not by corporatist management/worker committees.

In recent months a new rash of strikes has broken out -- shipyard workers in Durban, factory workers in Germiston -- despite a clear return by the government to hard-line tactics. The Black Metal and Allied Workers Union in Durban has enlisted the support of the British Trades Union Congress in pressing its demands for recognition by the South African subsidiary of Leyland Motors. In Johannesburg this March, a demonstration against the political trial of seven anti-apartheid activists was bolstered by over 1,500 black workers, about to leave for home at the railroad station, who turned it into a militant confrontation with local police.

The system of superexploiting black workers as migrant (and quite often contract) laborers must be destroyed. The key immediate demands of the black workers movement should be abolition of the color bar for all jobs, establishment of multi-racial trade unions, abolition of the pass system and of the compulsory labor contract system. These demands will tend to break down the labor-aristocratic caste status of the white workers.

The concentration and super-exploitation of the black proletariat means that any extension of democratic rights points directly toward workers revolution. This accounts for the bitter-end commitment to massive military terror on the part of the white ruling class. However, the strategic economic position of black workers enables them to force concessions even from hardline Afrikaner reactionaries. The 1973-74 strike wave resulted in the Vorster regime tolerating and even (to a limited degree) bargaining formally with illegal black unions. This important development gives the lie to petty-bourgeois nationalists who deny the power of the proletariat, instead hailing impotent guerrillism.

The South African revolution is more than a simple class question. It is through smashing apartheid that the road will be opened to a black-centered workers and peasants government. A Trotskyist leadership must be forged that can channel the militant plebeian currents in the African "townships" into a class-conscious and disciplined workers movement (whether legal or illegal, open or clandestine), and link the struggles of the black working class for economic gains and elementary democratic rights to the fight for proletarian power. ■

# ACTU . . . .

Continued from page one

ment's hand and dissipate workers' willingness to fight. The Victorian June 30 stoppage and all strike action in defence of Medibank must be broadened to include the whole labour movement. *For national strikes against the attacks on Medibank! Expropriate the private health funds and insurance companies!*

Medibank, a real but limited advance over private health insurance, was full of decisive shortcomings as far as working people's needs were concerned. The absolute general lack of quality health facilities, most noticeably in relation to those such as Aborigines with special needs remained untouched; inequality still prevails -- better facilities continued to be available, as in private hospitals, to those who could pay; coverage was incomplete, neglecting dental and optical care, abortions and contraceptives. Health care was still far from free. With funding dependent on the framework of private profit Medibank could never be more than a token and transient reform; universal quality health care is incompatible with the needs of capitalism.

What workers need is free socialised health care. Immediately this demands the takeover of the private hospitals, the expropriation of the drug companies and the other capitalist parasites in the medical industry and a massive campaign to expand health facilities and train new medical staff.

While Medibank has been anathema to the vast bulk of the medical profession, a privileged section of the middle class, and the private fund leeches, and is resented generally by the bourgeoisie, it is not in itself the key axis in the bourgeoisie's attacks on the working class. Fraser's real concern and the obsession of his class is wage restraint, the need to drive down wages to bolster profit rates. To achieve it he must smash the resistance of the unions or gain the co-operation of the labour bureaucracy.

As Fraser banqueted with Hua Kuo-feng in the People's Republic of China, joining the Peking bureaucrats' chorus of anti-Soviet tirades, the regime of Hua's "favourite world figure" at home was pursuing its anti-working-class austerity program by wooing the ACTU tops. Complementing the Maoists' love-fest with the millionaire grazier in Peking, ACTU President Hawke declared that the ACTU and the federal government have "common objectives", the only difference being the "emphasis in policies" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 June).

At the same time the ruling class is acutely aware of Hawke's continuing need to maintain his authority amongst workers. The government's tactics in attacking the living standards of the workers, while hardly sophisticated, are obligingly calculated to give Hawke an appropriate cover. Once the ruling class's favourite whipping boy, Hawke has now become its working-class hero -- even the virulent anti-labour Murdoch press frankly advised Fraser that Hawke would need more "concessions" if he were to retain his credibility and control over the rank and file (*The Australian*, 16 June).

Hawke's criminal sabotage of national strike action even on a token scale has been Fraser's biggest payoff so far. Earlier following the ACTU-Government talks he spoke of a "trade-off" of wage restraint in return for the *possibility* of tax cuts, holding out the promise of a "wage pause" up until the August budget. In exchange for squelching strike action over Medibank all he is asking from Fraser is more two-bit "concessions" such as *reducing*, not eliminating, the tax levy and clearing some of the red tape in the handling of Medibank accounting (*The Australian*, 23 June)!

In Melbourne, faced with a particularly restive rank and file and the decision of a 6000-strong mass meeting to strike for 24 hours on June 30, the left bureaucrats typified by John Halfpenny of the AMWU have little choice but to go ahead with the strike in Victoria. Outside of Melbourne, the "left" bureaucrats have thrown in the towel even before the fight has started, conveniently forgetting previous militant talk of unilateral action. Only two days before June 30, the AMWU abruptly reversed its decision to strike nationwide on the ridiculous grounds that it would be "divisive", and the few state unions such as the NSW branches of the Federated Engine Drivers' and Firemen's Association and Builders' Labourers' Federation who were to join the AMWU are likely to follow suit.

Hawke's willingness to trade with Fraser has created a furore within the labour bureaucracy. But even those reformists who continue to support a 24-hour general strike only stand for an alternative reformist policy. The bureaucratic differences in reality boil down to a division of labour. Hawke wants to show the ruling class how well he can police the working class, to attract bourgeois approval for

# Letter . . .

Continued from page two

aries can be organised only in propaganda groups with those in which the Bolshevik Party was a real organisation with deep roots in the class.

The artificiality and peripheral nature of the SL's work, be it on campus, in the women's movement, or in the unions, confirm my view. Huge amounts of time, money and energy are expended without changing reality one iota. It now seems to me unlikely an "interventionist" perspective ever will have much effect.

Yours,  
Graeme M. Grassie  
19 June 1976

Spartacist League

Graeme Grassie  
Sydney  
Dear Comrade:

We are in receipt of your letter of 19 June 1976.

We note your expression of a range of political differences with the organisation which you have not previously seen fit to present to us. Before acting on your resignation we would like to urge you to remain as a member for the purpose of engaging in open internal argument with the comrades on your differences.

Comradely,  
Marie Hotschilt  
Organiser, Sydney Local  
19 June 1976

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the ALP. The aim of the lefts, in opposing deals with Fraser and threatening industrial disruption, is to pressure the ruling class to allow the return of a Labor government, saying in effect they will sell out only to a Labor government.

On none of the central issues facing the working class do the "lefts", whether ALP "socialists" like Jim Roulston or Ken Carr or alleged communists like the "independent" Halfpenny and the Moscow-line Pat Clancy, offer any real alternative. They have never lifted a finger to stop unemployment and despite militant talk there has been no real challenge to the indexation guidelines. Even on Medibank their program does not go beyond the return of the inadequate old scheme.

In the absence of a severe political crisis of the bourgeois regime, a *decisive* immediate threat which objectively demands the strongest defensive action, or an overwhelming mass upsurge over the heads of the reformists that demands solidarity, the call for an indefinite general strike is a call for a premature confrontation with the full force of the capitalist state in which workers still lack the organisation, consciousness and leadership to win.

It is clear that an all-out general strike could not be limited to the issue of Medibank without being stillborn. To "save" Medibank, a minimal reform of secondary interest to Fraser and the bosses, while an effective freeze on wages is implemented will result in no gain or a net loss. The upsurge of anger over Medibank cutbacks has stayed or been kept within bounds controllable by the reformists. Halfpenny and company feel confident that a 24-hour general strike would not get out of hand; and Hawke is willing to call it off without much fear that an angry rank and file will rebel against it. However weakened in November last year, the hold of the reformists over the masses has since been renewed. And although its image has been badly tarnished, the bourgeois state has for the time being overcome last year's political crisis and re-stabilised.

But the centrist, fake-Trotskyist Communist League (CL) is calling for an all-out general strike now not over Medibank but to "bring down Fraser". If this is not intended to be a call for insurrection (and it is hardly likely that it is), concretely it can only mean a demand for new elections. In the first place this would not even be regarded as a solution by most people: no one believes a new election now is likely to have a result much different from the one six months ago, and if it did, the hard fact is that the only available alternative right now in the eyes of the masses is another reformist/capitalist Whitlam (or Hawke!) government.

The general hostility towards Fraser among wide layers of working people generated by last October/November is one necessary ingredient in bringing about a new political crisis of the capitalist regime -- but that does not in and of itself produce such a crisis, much less a revolutionary one! The hostility towards Fraser is still expressed in positive form as a faith in ALP reformism, not a consciousness of the need for revolution or for "socialism" other than the Whitlam/Uren variety. It can be transformed into a lever to break the hold of these traitors only when it takes on a new significance in struggle, and Medibank has not done it.

Either the CL believes that the working class can decisively defeat the bourgeois state in revolutionary struggle now, *without the leadership of a Leninist party*, or it believes in revolution by stages, ie that a Whitlam government is qualitatively better than a Fraser government -- a complete capitulation to reformism. It is no accident that even right-wing metal trades bureaucrat Charlie Brown has found it possible to raise the call to "bring down the Fraser government". In either case it is liquidationist, denying the fundamental necessity for a vanguard party, pretending that strong mass action can substitute for the political struggle for revolutionary leadership against the reformists. This semi-syndicalist liquidationism flows directly from the Pabloist method the CL has inherited from Ernest Mandel's bogus "Fourth International". Its programmatic expression is a refusal to fight clearly for a workers government, substituting the wishy-washy call for "an ALP Government pledged to socialist policies" -- in plainer language a left-talking ALP parliamentary government.

The task for which the CL substitutes such tailist gimmicks is the hard struggle to forge an organised opposition to the reformists, who are the main obstacle to defeating Fraser, within the unions, *based on a full transitional program*, the only essentially adequate alternative to all the reformists. Without such a program, any opposition to Halfpenny/Hawke can at best only replace them with more adept traitors. Only through the struggle for the transitional program in the unions can the mass revolutionary workers party be built that can lead workers to final victory. ■

## Italian elections . . .

Continued from page five

But the real guarantee to the ruling class by the Communist Party is its support for a coalition government of all "democratic", "constitutional" or "anti-fascist" parties. Such a popular front need not be limited to the DC, or even necessarily include it (although that is the PCI's clear preference). In presenting the party's candidates, Berlinguer reportedly announced his willingness to join with the PRI, the Social Democrats (PSDI) and even the Liberals (PLI). A top PCI union leader, Lucio Lama of the Metal Workers, responded that if the workers' parties should win a majority of the vote and the other parties reject a coalition, "the new majority, even if it is limited, would have to assume all government responsibilities" (quoted in *Inprecor*, 27 May). However, even in the unlikely event of a PCI/PSI coalition, it is clear from the above that the reformists will seek to make it into the gateway to a popular-front government. A vote for the PCI or PSI is thus a vote for class-collaborationist coalitionism, not working-class independence, and cannot be advocated by Trotskyists.

### Democrazia Proletaria

Faced with the looming danger of the popular front on the horizon, Marxists should seek to run their own candidates against the leading bourgeois workers' parties, demanding that the Communists and Socialists break with bourgeois coalitionism as a precondition for electoral support to their candidates. By way of contrast however, the Party of Proletarian Unity (PDUP), the centrist Vanguardia Operaia (AO -- Workers Vanguard) and the centrist Lotta Continua (LC -- Continuing Struggle) have formed an electoral bloc of all leftist opponents of the "historic compromise". Seeking to pressure the PCI/PSI bureaucracies to the left, the Democrazia Proletaria more or less consciously takes as its model the Portuguese "Revolutionary United Front" (FUR), formed in August 1975 on a program calling for "people's power" and support to the Communist Party-influenced "Fifth Government" of General Vasco Goncalves.

In the tradition of the Spanish POUM in the 1930s, which criticized the popular front while entering it, the Italian centrists and left-reformists betray the desires of their militants to break with the class collaboration of the reformist PCI. Instead, the leading elements of the DP advocate a "government of the lefts" which deliberately leaves the door open to participation of radical bourgeois parties, such as in Allende's Popular Unity in Chile.

Thus the PDUP writes that the purpose of the Democrazia Proletaria is to "construct to the left of the PCI a political and electoral alternative which ... plays a dialectical and unifying role in the predictable likelihood of a government of the lefts". Following the June 15 elections, the PDUP/AO combination has systematically succumbed to the strong pressure of the PCI in the unions and certain left-wing city councils (notably Milan). Moreover, earlier this year the right wing of the PDUP, the former *Manifesto* group led by Lucio Magri and Rossana Rossanda, vehemently tried to prevent the inclusion of Lotta Continua in the DP, due to the strong hostility of the Communist Party to LC.

However, giving in to pressure from the AO and their own left wing, PDUP leaders subsequently reversed themselves and offered to accept Lotta Continua under the most incredibly discriminatory conditions (only 15 percent of the candidates, little television time and no members of the LC leadership on the slate!) ... which were promptly accepted. Meanwhile, the PDUP and AO reserve for themselves the privilege of determining the program. All in all, the bizarre maneuvering around the DP slate was so pronounced that the PCI could denounce it with justification as both "ultra-parliamentarian" and an unprincipled bloc.

Berlinguer and company characterize PDUP as "a group constantly vacillating between presumptuous dogmatism ... and ill-defined libertarianism (*Unita*, 12 May). Toward Lotta Continua, which in the 15 June 1975 elections called for votes to the PCI, they are much harder, denouncing the LC's "short-sighted adventurism" and its "increasingly open role of provocation toward the entire democratic and workers movement".

Following its capitulationist policy toward the PCI in last year's voting, Lotta Continua made a partial left turn. However, this year it not only has entered the Democrazia Proletaria slate, but also joins the PDUP call for a "left government". The LC election platform states: "A government, even a very progressive left-wing one, *such as that which we are struggling for*, will never be able to change the nature of this state ..." (our emphasis). This statement makes crystal clear that the LC explicitly accepts the parliamentary framework of the capitalist state, and the inclusion of bourgeois parties in a "left government". Consistent with these positions, Lotta Continua's propaganda lacks any call upon the PCI and PSI to break with the parties of the bourgeoisie.

### The "Trotskyist" arena

The common denominator among the several fake-Trotskyist groups in Italy is to verbally recognize the class-collaborationist character of a "left government", calling instead for a "government of the workers' parties", while simultaneously capitulating to the popular front. In particular, the Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari (GCR -- Revolutionary Communist Groups), Italian section of the "United Secretariat", has emerged humiliated and politically disarmed from the maneuverist twists and turns and bureaucratic compromises (which it hailed as a victory) accompanying the sealing of an electoral agreement between LC and PDUP/AO. Having trampled on all programmatic considerations for a menial seat at the table of Lotta Continua, to whose candidates they offered full political support, the GCR was reduced to three candidates and no rights at all on the DP ticket!

This year the GCR will call for a vote for the DP, but in 1975 it called for a vote for the PDUP/AO coalition *or the PCI*. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Frazione Marxista Rivoluzionaria (FMR -- Revolutionary Marxist Faction), an offspring of Maitan now linked to the German Spartacusbund should come out for a "red vote" for the DP *and the PCI*. Likewise, the Gruppo Bolscevico-Leninista (GBL -- Bolshevik-Leninist Group) announced last month that it would give "critical support" to the PCI against the DP unless Lotta Continua were included in the "far left" slate ("Bollettino Trotskista", undated). The FMR accuses the GCR of capitulating to the DP, but its own position (and that of the GBL) is even *more* capitulationist -- to the PCI and its "historic compromise" with capitalism.

In contrast to the Pabloist GCR and its by-products, the Nucleo Spartacista d'Italia (NSDI -- Spartacist Nucleus of Italy), sympathizing section of the international Spartacist tendency (iST) issued a position paper on the elections calling for a policy of working-class independence:

"Given Lotta Continua's surreptitious entry into the Democrazia Proletaria slate -- thus laying the basis for an Italian FUR (a "left" support to the popular front) -- and given that no group running in the elections opposes an Italian popular front, the iST cannot give critical support to any list of candidates in the Italian elections of 20-21 June."

The NSDI calls on the reformist workers' parties to break with the bourgeoisie, and gives no support to the Italian FUR.

-- No to the "historic compromise" or a "left government" -- No to the popular front!  
 -- No electoral support to the PCI, PSI or Democrazia Proletaria!  
 -- For the construction of a Trotskyist party in Italy! ■

Australasian

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**For a South African workers republic!**

## Black anger erupts in South Africa

The cold-blooded slaughter of school children in Soweto has caused the smoldering discontent of South Africa's urban black masses to flare into open rebellion. For a few days this week the "African townships" on the Witwatersrand, the mining and industrial heartland surrounding Johannesburg, saw thousands-strong crowds of workers and youth hurl themselves against the symbols of oppression with torches, knives, stones and bare hands. This plebeian revolt illuminates the seething unrest of the subjugated non-white population of the apartheid police state.

On June 16, 10,000 black students surged through the streets of Soweto. The huge township reverberated that morning to the strains of "Nkosi Sikeleli Afrika" ("God Bless Africa"), the black "national anthem". Protestors carried banners denouncing the compulsory use of Afrikaans in their schools. "Afrikaans is a stench" read one placard, expressing the deep revulsion of the African masses for the Dutch dialect spoken by arrogant descendants of the slaveholding Boer settlers.

As the crowd converged on Phefeni Junior Secondary School, ten police cars blocked their path. Thirty police, blacks armed with batons and whites armed with revolvers and submachine guns, emerged from the vehicles. Angry students taunted these hated lackeys of the *Herrenvolk* oppressors. A white policeman hurled a teargas shell. The youths responded with stones and jeers.

The police aimed their weapons and fired without warning. One teenage student fell dead with a slug in his chest. Another, a boy about seven years old, was hit and died on the way to the hospital. As the youths fled this savage onslaught, others were gunned down. A third youth and an elderly bystander died of their wounds.

The police pumped a deadly fusillade of over 300 rounds into the unarmed crowd. The killings were a deliberate act of political terror. Although the government quickly spun a tale of endangered police defending themselves with a carefully controlled show of force, a senior police official on the spot answered a British reporter's query whether warning shots were even fired: "No, we fired into the crowd. It's no good firing over their heads" (*Times* [London], 17 June).

### The rebellion spreads

The plebeian masses crowded into the urban townships around Johannesburg responded to the police atrocities with an elemental outburst of pent-up fury. Two vehicles from the paternalist Bantu Administration Board were overturned, and two white officials killed. A banner reading "Beware Afrikaans, the most dangerous drug for our culture" was draped over one of the bodies. The Board's headquarters were burned to the ground. Vicious police dogs were hacked up and set on fire.

As township after township ignited, government buildings and other institutions of white supremacy were attacked. In Kagiso, a government beer hall, symbol of the prohibition of African home-brew liquor, was put to the torch. In Alexandra, a grim ghetto surrounded by posh white suburbs, a clinic, schools and white-owned shops were gutted by flames. In Kathle-ibong, a post office was stormed. And in every township, scatter-shot police attacks raised the death count higher, surpassing even the 84 killed by police during and immediately after the orgy of blood-letting at Sharpeville township in 1960.

Black college students also erupted. Administrative headquarters and a church at the University of Zululand in Natal were razed to the ground. The University of the North at Turfloop was closed after students set fire to the recreation hall and the language laboratory. These universities have been centers of resistance to the apartheid regime and of solidarity with nationalist struggles in Angola and Mozambique. Nine members of the South African Students Organization (SASO) have been defendants in a months-long trial under the notorious Terrorism Act as the result of a pro-Frelimo rally held at the University of the North in September 1974. In recent months the black universities have been continually swept by dragnet raids to break the back of the militant "black consciousness movement".

Two hundred students from the white Witwatersrand University marching through the streets of

Continued on page six



Black schoolchildren riot in Soweto.

**Down with the Francoist monarchy — for a workers republic!**

## Free all class-war prisoners in Spain!



During his current "Bi-Centennial" visit to the United States, King Juan Carlos of Spain is issuing cynical pronouncements of "authentic democracy" in order to hide the blood-drenched reality of the Francoist dictatorship.

In the major cities the hated "grises" — the grey-coated special riot police — every week launch brutal attacks against workers' strikes and demonstrations for democratic rights. In March, during a general strike at Vitoria in the Basque region the "grises" opened fire on a crowd of 3,000 steel workers and their families leaving a meeting in a church; in the bloodbath four workers were killed and over 100 were wounded. An anguished comrade of one of the slain strikers wrote on the street with the still-fresh blood of the victim a single word, *Justicia*, expressing the powerful urge for freedom of the masses locked in the police state of Francoism for almost 40 years.

Freedom and justice will not prevail in Spain until Juan Carlos and his butchers are swept away by a victorious working-class revolution, replacing the bloody dictatorship of capital with a workers republic!

In addition to draconian suppression of demonstrations, there have been almost daily arrests of militants of left-wing parties throughout the country. Early last month, the Barcelona police issued a press release claiming that it had broken up the district committee of the illegal Partido Obrero Revolucionario de Espana [PORE — Revolutionary Workers Party of Spain] in the zone of Bajo Llobregat, and "arrested its members" (*Noticiero Universal*, 10 May). Those arrested were Karmele Guinea Anasagasti, Jordi Pares Queralt, Juan Jose Borrás, Josep Lluís Moner Tomas, Josep Maria Corbella Rosset and Lluís Bengoa Maldonado.

Another announcement by the office of the chief of police a few days later (*Noticiero Universal*, 13 May) reported that following a fire on May 4 they had found a

print shop and archives of the Organizacion Comunista de Espana-Bandera Roja (OCE-BR — Communist Organisation of Spain-Red Flag). Following this raid, three people were arrested and charged with membership in the OCE-BR: they are Jose Maria Gil Martinez, Jose Vicente Martinez Barcelo and Montserrat Alemany Cortes.

The Spartacist League has sharp political differences with Bandera Roja, which has not broken with popular frontism (a policy which led the majority of its members last year to rejoin the reformist Communist Party, from which the group had split a decade earlier), as well as with the ostensibly Trotskyist PORE, particularly concerning the dubious leader of its international tendency, Michel Varga, and its method of "reconstructing" the Fourth International through such patently fraudulent bombast as the published claim by a PORE leader that it is now "the second largest political force in the country" and in a position to lead the Spanish masses in a revolution. Nevertheless, we urgently demand that these class-war prisoners be immediately freed, along with all other victims of Francoist repression!

— Free Guinea Anasagasti, Pares Queralt, Borrás, Corbella Rosset and Bengoa Maldonado!  
— Free Gil Martinez, Martinez Barcelo and Alemany Cortes!

— For immediate dissolution of the paramilitary and political police! For people's tribunals to try the Francoist butchers!

— Down with the US-Spain pact and NATO! Expel imperialist military bases from Spain!

— For a constituent assembly! For a workers government and a socialist federation of the Iberian peninsula in a socialist united states of Europe!

— Toward the rebirth of the Fourth International!  
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