



What are anti-Kerr liberals after?

Facelift for bosses' "democracy"

**Abolish the Senate and Governor General!
Fight for a workers government!**

When ALP Opposition leader Gough Whitlam, in *The Australian* on 20 October, promised to act "with propriety" if re-elected and not sack Governor-General Sir John Kerr, the bourgeoisie heaved a sigh of relief. The conservative *Sydney Morning Herald* headlined its "Canberra comment" two days later "Welcome Back Mr Whitlam" and congratulated him on ridding himself of "his morbid pre-occupation with November 11". Even Murdoch's editorial writers now extend their chummy advice, previously reserved for ACTU President Hawke, to Whitlam. Whitlam certainly deserves it. Not only has he made a sufficiently obsequious reconciliation with the colonial anachronism that last year so rudely unseated him from office; but by his call for another referendum to empower the federal government to legislate on prices and incomes, in public opposition to Hawke, he made it clear that Labor is back in the market, contending with Fraser for the job of imposing the capitalists' needed austerity drive.

For twelve months Whitlam has "maintained the rage", watching in implicit encouragement the series of boycotts, demonstrations and spontaneous abuse that have dogged Kerr since he used the "reserve powers of the Crown" to sack the Labor Government last November. Whitlam's campaign against Kerr has always been loyally within the framework of ruling-class concern to refurbish popular illusions in "democracy" and Parliament. But Whitlam is a realist and is preparing for an early election which it is speculated Fraser might attempt late next year. So it is not surprising that he recognises bourgeois opinion is united around one thing: Kerr must stay ... at least for the time being. To dismiss Kerr, to question the role of the governor-general, would be to question the legitimacy of the constitutional machinery used in the events of last November.

However Australian capitalists have paid a price for their successful drive at the end of last

year to put a tougher, more predictable regime in power. The obstructionist use of the Senate, the blocking of supply bills and the unprecedented sacking of a government by an unelected, supposedly ceremonial figurehead (obviously in collusion with Fraser and conservative elements in the state apparatus) have produced widespread disillusionment and cynicism amongst workers.

The massive resentment at Kerr's blatantly undemocratic actions has given rise to a widespread but diffuse constitutional reform movement, centred around demands to "sack Kerr" and, more recently, for a new or reformed constitution. It has grouped together elements across the political spectrum - including right-wing liberals like academics Donald Horne and Manning Clarke, former ALP Minister for Labour Senator James ("Diamond Jim") McClelland and Jack Munday, the resident ecologist of the reformist Communist Party of Australia (CPA). A so-called "Committee of Concerned Citizens" organised an overflow "Kerr and the Consequences" meeting at Sydney Town Hall on 20 September and, renamed "Citizens for Democracy", they have laid plans for a similar meeting in Melbourne and "rallies for democracy" in both capitals on 11 November.

Donald Horne and historian Manning Clarke exemplify the class character and constituency of the movement: disillusioned liberal intellectuals distressed that their democratic ideal has been sullied by unscrupulous politicians and fearful that the polarisation of classes will upset their comfortable and privileged lives. Manning Clarke is quite open about his motives for joining the campaign: "The methods used to oppose the Whitlam Government may provoke violent revolution and a People's Government - and I don't want that to happen" (quoted in *The Australian*, 23 September).

Any lingering doubts about the movement's "respectable" bourgeois intentions were quashed

Continued on page seven



Top: the Governor-General reviews the troops. Bottom: cops assault anti-Kerr protesters in Melbourne last June.

**SWP preaches
"free speech
for fascists"**

SEE PAGE FOUR



**Myths of
Kerr's
"coup"**



SEE PAGE SIX

Stalinists slander Munoz defence!

The international campaign to rescue Chilean revolutionary Mario Munoz and his family from the reactionary Argentine military junta came to a successful conclusion 30 September when Munoz's companion, Olga Meneses Ibaseta, and their family arrived in Paris. The Munoz campaign, carried out with scrupulous honesty free from any sectarian motives, stands as a model for the kind of broad-based labour-centred efforts necessary to rescue the thousands of working-class militants still hounded and imprisoned by the blood-stained dictatorships of Videla and Pinochet. It is for this reason that we consider it necessary to deal fully with unsubstantiated and politically motivated allegations raised in two letters printed in the *Socialist*, paper of the pro-Moscow Stalinist Socialist Party of Australia (SPA). Such allegations, if left unanswered, can only engender an atmosphere of distrust and thereby discredit future campaigns upon whose outcome hangs the fate of endangered militants.

A letter by SPA member Gisele Mesnage, printed without comment in the *Socialist* (15 September), made the following charges: (1) The Spartacist League is "a few hundred dollars richer" as a result of the Munoz campaign; (2) The "elusive Mario Munoz" was never endangered ("at no time was he in the hands of his hunters"); (3) "The policy of the Chile Solidarity Committee was that no committee should be formed for any individual political prisoner or refugee" -- only "one of their members" endorsed the campaign and not the Committee as a whole as was claimed in Munoz Defence Committee literature. Elsewhere on this page we reprint in full a letter from Bill Logan on behalf of the Mario Munoz Defence Committee to the *Socialist*, which they refused to print, refuting the slanderous charges. The dishonesty with which the SPA has treated this serious question is clear from the statement by the editor of the *Socialist* in the 27 October issue, which neither confirms nor retracts Mesnage's charges, nor even admits they were made, but only notes Logan's letter and Mesnage's examination of the Defence Committee's financial records as an authorised representative of the SPA. Here is Mesnage's statement as printed in the *Socialist*:

"The record showing that of \$1296 which remained after expenditure. \$1025 was transferred to the American co-sponsor of the international campaign, the Partisan Defence Committee (PDC).

"The political position of the PDC is in direct line with that of the International Spartacist Tendency (Trotskyist International). There remains in my mind a doubt as to the morality of that campaign.

"I personally have little respect for Mario Munoz, a man who tore up his membership card in the Communist Party of Chile because the Party did not support his trade union policies. However I think that Australians should do their utmost to see to the freedom and safety of all political prisoners and refugees from fascism. The money collected from the working people and their organisations to defend Mario Munoz, who was in no obvious danger, could have greatly benefited the campaign to save countless men and women who today are still imprisoned in the torture camps of the fascist juntas of Chile, Argentina and other fascist states."

In addition to Mesnage, the Committee's records were examined by Steve Cooper, AMWU Research Officer and member of the Chile Solidarity Committee, and Rod Webb, an accountant by occupation who was formerly on the financial

committee of the Vietnam Moratorium Campaign and a former elected editor of *Arena*, Macquarie University student paper. Both have attested that the records were completely in order and Cooper described them as "a well kept record ... which compares very favourably with the records of similar appeals made from time to time in the progressive movement". In snidely insinuating that funds were somehow misdirected through the Partisan Defense Committee, an anti-sectarian organisation for class-struggle defence, whose policy is openly in agreement with that of the international Spartacist tendency, Mesnage consciously ignores one fact: the SPA has been explicitly invited to arrange for a representative to inspect the PDC accounts! Needless to say, the SPA has not responded at all to this offer.

The SPA's charge that Munoz' life was never endangered -- echoing, incidentally, the line taken by the bloody Argentine junta's spokesmen -- simply cannot be taken seriously. A statement by Orlando Letelier, a leading figure in the Allende Government who was recently assassinated by Pinochet's DINA secret police in the US, verified Munoz' valiant efforts on behalf of the Chilean working masses, efforts which the blood-thirsty juntas sought to avenge by his torture and execution. Comrade Letelier, who offered valuable assistance to the Munoz defence, described Munoz as "a very active union leader in the Chilean province of Aconcagua. During a period of time Mario MUNOZ Salas was a member of the Socialist Party of Chile. Before the fascist military coup in Chile he was very active in organizing mining workers in the Aconcagua and right after the coup he went to exile to Argentina." On 2 July of this year Munoz and a number of comrades were arrested by the Argentine police and released only because of protests outside the police station and the international pressure brought to bear on the junta as a result of the defence campaign.

The real motive for the Stalinist SPA's refusal to defend Munoz seeps through in Mesnage's letter: he "tore up his membership card in the Communist Party". They have consistently failed to defend left-wing opponents of the treacherous policies of the Allende popular-front government. Revolutionary militants being rounded up and assassinated by the Argentine gestapo would have little patience with Mesnage's "doubt as to the morality" of the Munoz campaign. The *Socialist* did not say one word about the military coup and repression in Argentina for six months ... until it printed Mesnage's slanderous attack on the Munoz campaign's victory against the junta. This is not surprising; after all, the Argentine CP initially congratulated the junta for "its respect for representative democracy, social justice, the reaffirmation of the state's role in controlling society" (quoted in *Intercontinental Press*, 12 April). "Dubious morality" indeed!

The SPA's legalistic formulations ("At this stage we do not concede ...") are more reminiscent of the hypocritical stench of a bourgeois courtroom than the arena of class struggle. We have nothing to hide. Munoz' rescue was a victory not just for the thousands of unionists and others who were mobilised on his behalf but for all those fighting right-wing repression in Argentina and Chile. Two days after Munoz' safe arrival in Vienna, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees announced that several European countries, including Austria, had agreed to receive almost 2000 Latin American refugees from Argentina.

Numerous individual SPA members and trade unionists rendered valuable aid to this victorious blow against the reactionary dictators. But Mesnage's letter stands as a condemnation of the sectarian syphilis which Stalinism has introduced into the international workers movement.

24 September 1976

Letter to the editor,
The Socialist,

The Socialist, 15 September 1976, contains a letter from Gisele Mesnage on the recent successful campaign to save Mario Munoz.

This letter makes the very serious charge that funds of the Mario Munoz Defence Committee have been misappropriated. This charge (for which no evidence can be offered) is completely without foundation. Representatives of organisations of the workers movement are welcome to inspect the Committee's financial records.

The letter also contains less serious departures from the truth:

(1.) It is not true that an individual member of the Chile Solidarity Committee (CSC) endorsed the Munoz campaign against the policy of the CSC. In fact the individual signed on behalf of the CSC

following its decision at its 29 April meeting to endorse the campaign.

(2.) It is not true of Mario Munoz that "at no time was he in the hands of his hunters".

Bill Logan

for the Mario Munoz
Defence Committee

cc: Gisele Mesnage

5 October 1976

The Secretary,
Mario Munoz Defence Committee

Dear Friend,

We have received and read with care a letter from your Committee, signed by Bill Logan for the Mario Munoz Defence Committee, and dated 24th September, 1976.

We have noted your complaints, and in particular your allegation that the letter we published in "The Socialist" over the name of Gisele Mesnage, implied misappropriation of funds.

At this stage we do not concede validity of that allegation, but we note that you invite "Representatives of organisations of the workers' movement...to inspect the Committee's financial records".

Before dealing with this matter any further we have decided to accept that invitation and this letter will authorise Gisele Mesnage to make such an inspection on our behalf.

When we are in receipt of the outcome of that inspection we will again consider your letter of September 24th and advise you of our intentions.

We assure you that there will be no delay on this matter on our part.

Yours fraternally,

L.J. McPhillips,
National Organiser,
SOCIALIST PARTY OF
AUSTRALIA

7.10.76

Mario Munoz Defence Committee

The Secretary,

Following your letter dated 24.9.76 which objected to certain allegations I made in *The Socialist* (15.9.76), I feel entitled to look at your finance records as an individual before making any retractions. The Socialist Party will be under no obligations to comment on the matter since the 'Letters to the Editor' column does not necessarily reflect the views of the Editors of 'The Socialist'.

G. Mesnage

26 October 1976

The Editor
The Socialist

Dear Comrade,

A correspondent in your 15 September edition makes the very serious charge that a political organisation has derived financial benefit from the misfortunes of an international revolutionist. The seriousness of this charge is amplified by your publication of the letter without any prior attempt at verification.

Gisele Mesnage claims in her letter that the Spartacist League is a "few hundred dollars richer" because Mario Munoz -- in whose defence the Spartacists organised a financial appeal -- is now safely away from his would-be persecutors.

I responded to the public invitation to inspect the books of account of the Mario Munoz Defence Committee. I am no stranger to the accounts of both political mass movements and capitalist companies, and I have no hesitation in stating that the books of the Mario Munoz Defence Committee were in every respect adequate to the requirements of a political defence campaign and that their maintenance was nothing short of immaculate.

This is not to say that one could not disagree with the particular tactics employed by the Spartacists in their organisation of a political defence campaign, but that there are two ways to criticise the methods of a Left political organisation: one method involves principled debate and the other involves vile, unsubstantiated slander.

I am not surprised that you and your correspondent have chosen the latter course.

Yours fraternally,

Rod Webb

a monthly organ of revolutionary Marxism for the rebirth 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

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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.

Class war not communal terror

Neither camp progressive in Lebanon

When the Palestinian Trotskyists in 1948 called on the Jewish and Arab workers to turn their "guns against the instigators of murder in both camps" during the first Arab-Israeli war, they warned that the nationalist conflict was "apt to obscure the class antagonisms and to open the gate for nationalist excesses" (*Kol Ham'amad* -- reprinted in *Fourth International*, May 1948). The nationalist excesses which are a heritage of the imperialist-engineered Balkanisation of the Middle East have indeed reaped a harvest of blood in the three decades since, most recently in the inter-communal conflict in Lebanon. Latter-day pretenders to Trotskyism like the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), in supporting the nationalist Palestine Liberation Organisation and the communalist "Muslim-leftist alliance" are themselves politically culpable for the continuing genocidal bloodbath.

Cemented to the framework of a bourgeois "democratic secular" resolution to the Lebanese strife, the reformist SWP in a recent polemic cynically dismisses the Spartacist League's Trotskyist position that the interests of the Lebanese and Palestinian masses can be served only by a revolutionary mobilisation that cuts across the communal and national divisions. Instead they claim that the current confessional slaughter in which the Palestinian militias are embroiled is a social struggle between "the Moslem leftists who are fighting against the caste system which so heavily discriminates against them, and the Christian rightists who are fighting to protect their privileges" (*Direct Action*, 30 September). While themselves defending the senseless slaughter of innocent Christians by the forces of the "Muslim-leftist alliance", the SWP falsely and maliciously insinuates that we do not defend Palestinian refugee camps like Tel Zaatar from right-wing massacre. The SWP well knows that we have consistently called for defence of "workers' quarters and refugee camps against a bloodbath" at the hands of either side (*ASP*, July 1976).

Until his recent shift from backing the Muslim-Palestinian forces to bombarding them, Syrian Ba'athist leader Hafez Assad was the outspoken darling of the "Arab revolution". Thus the slanderous charge made in the *Direct Action* article that the Spartacist League is "in the camp of Assad, Phalangists" stinks of hypocrisy. All the more so since it actually quotes our position that all camps in this inter-communal slaughter "are sordid and no side is worthy of any support". The SWP charge is reminiscent of the Stalinist slander that Trotskyists were in the camp of German fascism during World War II for refusing to support the "progressive" US/British imperialists. In fact, the SWP is no longer in the camp of Assad solely by grace of Assad's treachery, while we have continuously warned the Palestinian commandos against their fatal reliance on the Arab regimes -- be it Assad, Sadat or Hussein.

When, as in last year's war in Angola, there was actually a class line separating the opposing camps, the SWP's eagerness to take sides vanished. After the three-cornered civil war between the qualitatively similar Angolan petty-bourgeois nationalist formations was transformed into a war between racist, mini-imperialist South Africa and the Cuban deformed workers state by the South African invasion, Marxists were obliged to offer unconditional military support to the Cuban/MPLA forces arrayed against the imperialist-led onslaught. At that time, the SWP justified its cowardly, opportunist neutrality with the spurious rationale that it could not sully itself by supporting ... a petty-bourgeois nationalist formation.

But the *Palestinian* petty-bourgeois nationalist forces are in fact not engaged in a struggle against imperialism in Lebanon today. (As a matter of fact, it is Muslim leader Kamal Jumblat who most recently called for French imperialist intervention.) And even a representative of the SWP-affiliated Revolutionary Communist Group of Lebanon exposes the SWP's myth of a "fight against the caste system":

"At first they tried to mobilise around democratic issues like giving equal representation to the Muslims [within the "confessional" system].... Recently they have abandoned even these demands. You don't hear about this anymore" (quoted in *Direct Action*, 5 August).

No less an advocate of indefensible indiscriminate terrorism than the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) concedes that the fighting assumed a sectarian character early on. In an interview in Beirut last October, PFLP spokesman Yusif al-Haytham stated:

"When the battles resumed in August [1975], they took on a different character: they were primarily of a confessional nature.... The battles started as a fight between reactionary and progressive forces and ended up as a fight between Muslims and Christians, principally Maronites. Whether or not we like to admit it, it is a fact. The battles ended up on the street, among the ordinary people of Lebanon, between Christian and Muslim" (*MERIP Reports* no 44).

The SWP's smug "armchair strategists" condone Muslim atrocities against Christian communities on the basis of "military-tactical" considerations. But Yusif al-Haytham soberly explains how "the situation deteriorated into one between Muslim and Christian. The battle was dominated by rocket fire.... A bomb cannot differentiate between a progressive and a reactionary Christian."

It is true that in the past the Palestinian cause has provided a rallying point for the masses of poor and dispossessed Lebanese, opening

which forsake cross-national anti-capitalist mobilisations for protective arrangements with the OPEC sheiks and the Ba'athist colonels.

Did Lenin, as the SWP asserts against the "sectarian" Spartacists, consider "full support" to the "nationalism of the oppressed" a "basic Marxist tenet"? This is what Lenin told the SWPers of his day: "Marxism cannot be reconciled with nationalism, be it even of the 'most just', 'purest', most refined and civilised brand" ("Critical Remarks on the National Question", *Collected Works*, vol 20, p 32). The Leninist program of complete national equality stands in sharp contrast to the moralistic petty-bourgeois political world-view which attempts to resolve inter-communal conflicts into a "reactionary" side and a "progressive" side within the framework of the imperialist status quo. While the "nationalism of the oppressed" reflects, in part, a response to oppression and injustice, the Lebanese civil war demonstrates once again that all nationalism in this epoch of imperialist decay ultimately leads to reactionary consequences. Particularly in the case of intermingled peoples -- Palestine, Lebanon, Ulster, Cyprus -- where two national/ethnic groupings justifiably lay claim to the same territory must Leninists make it absolutely clear that the proletariat has no interest in reversing the terms of oppression against the former oppressor population, as occurred most recently with the Turkish invasion of Cyprus.

The Spartacist League has always supported the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination -- in denying this the SWP knowingly lies. But unlike the SWP and its PLO friends, we recognise that this right must not be achieved at the expense of the Hebrew workers. The PLO/SWP slogan of a "democratic, secular Palestine" denies a national existence to the Hebrew-speaking people of Palestine. While the modern Hebrew nation, like most bourgeois nation-states, was compacted through brutal expulsions, vicious terror and the theft of the Palestinian people's own right to nationhood, the sins of the Zionist nation-builders must not be visited on the Hebrew proletariat.

There can be no bourgeois-democratic solution to the myriad of conflicting national claims in the Middle East. Only on the basis of a revolutionary proletarian program which includes the assurance that their national rights will be respected can the Hebrew workers be won to a common struggle with their Arab class brothers and sisters -- Christian as well as Muslim -- against the entire cabal of Zionist butchers, feudal sheiks and Bonapartist colonels; only then can the right of national self-determination for both the Palestinian Arabs and the Hebrew-speaking people be democratically and equitably realised. It is on this basis which Middle Eastern sections of a reborn Fourth International will be forged. Members of the SWP who truly wish to commit themselves to the struggle for international revolution would do well to note the words of the Palestinian Fourth Internationalists of 1948:

"In this burning hell of chauvinism we have to hold up the banner of international brotherhood.... Make this war between Jews and Arabs, which serves the end of imperialism, the common war of both nations against imperialism!" ■



SWP "solution" maintains bourgeois rule in Middle East.

up the possibility of a joint struggle to smash the oppressive "confessional" caste system. However such struggles have been betrayed by the very nationalist leaders -- like Fatah chief Yasir Arafat -- whom the SWP so slavishly tails. When Lebanese attacks on Palestinian refugee camps sparked massive Muslim anti-government demonstrations and strikes in 1973, the Palestinian militias refused to aid the demonstrators who were subjected to army attacks. Under the Cairo Agreement signed in 1969 to end a previous round of fighting between the Lebanese army and the commandos, the Fatah-dominated PLO agreed to subordinate the militia to the army and to police the refugee camps. Similarly it was Fatah's slogan of "non-interference in the internal affairs of the Arab states" which led to the failure to mobilise the Jordanian -- and Palestinian -- masses against Jordanian monarch Hussein prior to the Black September massacre of 1970.

Under the cover of giving "full support" to the so-called "Arab revolution", the SWP has for years lauded "the revolutionary youth of the national liberation movements like Al Fatah" (*International Socialist Review*, March-April 1969), thus condoning the treacherous PLO/Fatah policies



Anti-Dayan protest in Sydney: SWP lyingly accuses SL of not supporting Palestinians' right to self-determination.

SWP preaches "free speech for fascists"

It has long been a battle cry of crusading civil libertarians that the working-class movement should recognize and respect "freedom of speech and assembly" for all, including fascist demagogues.

But this misguided liberalism also finds an echo on the American left among opportunist tendencies eager to demonstrate their "respectability". Most vociferous in its repudiation of any intention to deny "democratic rights" for fascists has been the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and its youth appendage, the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA). For some time the SWP/YSA has capitulated to the civil-libertarian fetish of defending the so-called "right" of fascists to spew their inflammatory filth and rally forces for racist terror.

Yet the SWP/YSA has been increasingly hard put to defend this despicable line. Over the last few years fascist gangs such as the Nazis and Ku Klux Klan, even though they are still isolated and generally despised sects, have been able to exploit festering situations of racial polarization, becoming more emboldened in their racist provocations and vicious attacks.

During the past several months, for example, the Nazis in Chicago have given the working people and black masses a glimpse of the threat posed by their exercise of "free speech and assembly". In Marquette Park, a predominantly Lithuanian ethnic community which has been a citadel of fierce racist opposition to residential desegregation, the Nazis have inflamed the long-simmering segregationist mood into hysteria and have been able to spearhead mob violence against black people in neighborhoods across the white "Maginot Line" (see "Racist Assaults Escalate in Chicago", *Workers Vanguard*, 11 June 1976).

A recent issue of the New York *Village Voice* (23 August) carried a front-page feature story covering the Nazi organizing drive in Marquette Park. Despite its petty-bourgeois admiration for the tenacious "cultural cohesion" of the Lithuanian community, the article provides a vivid description of how the Nazi thugs, having been ignored for years, now are tolerated and even respected by many as the voice and muscle of "white power". According to the *Village Voice*, these uniformed fascists today can draw crowds of lumpen white youth to their open-air meetings in Marquette Park, where these would-be stormtroopers rant about race war and distribute large numbers of T-shirts emblazoned with swastikas.

The prevailing mood in Marquette Park was tersely summed up by a 23-year-old resident, who described himself as more liberal than most of his neighbors. He told the *Village Voice* reporter, "I don't want to join the Nazi party, but I'm coming to the point where I think we need them to help us."

Grovelling before liberalism

To be sure, the SWP/YSA did not embrace the position favoring "free speech for fascists" as a result of ignorance about the menace which even small fascist gangs represent to black people, as well as ostensibly socialist organizations. More than a few times the SWP/YSA has been the target of vicious fascist attacks, especially in Los Angeles.

Nor does the SWP/YSA respect "democratic rights" for fascists simply as a maneuver to reach the few working-class elements misled by "radical" fascist demagogy. The SWP/YSA has not yet tried to link its line with the only conceivable parallel in the early history of the Comintern: the German Communist Party (KPD) of 1923 and its dubious "Schlageter line" on fascists.

At that time the revolutionary KPD, in an attempt to intersect the masses of pauperized petty bourgeois attracted to the Nazi Party on the basis of its opposition to French revanchism and Entente capital, pursued debates with the fascists and even addressed nationalist rallies on common platforms with Nazis. Nevertheless, at no time during this short-lived but controversial maneuver did the KPD suggest that the proletariat was bound to respect the "democratic rights" of the Nazis and Freikorps bands; on the contrary, Karl Radek, for example, called for militant action "to defend the proletariat with armed force against the Fascists and, if necessary, to attack them".



Nazis attack anti-apartheid demonstrators, Mascot, 1970.

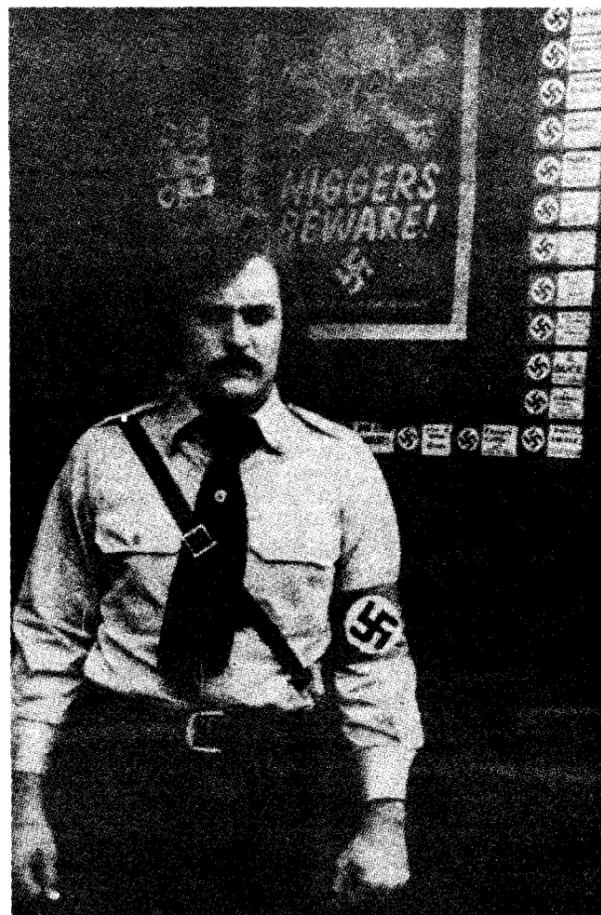
Rather, the SWP/YSA today pledges never to infringe upon the alleged "rights" of the fascists above all because of its appetite for liberal "respectability". Having abandoned a revolutionary program and perspective more than a decade ago, the SWP/YSA today shares with the liberals their illusions of isolating and thwarting the fascists simply through the "democratic process".

At bottom, the SWP/YSA is content to spout liberal pacifism and grant the fascists their alleged "rights" because, like the liberals, these ex-Trotskyists operate within the political perspective of reforming capitalism to "work" in the interests of the oppressed and against the fascist thugs. While revolutionaries maintain that only the destruction of the capitalist system can ensure the final defeat of the fascist threat, the SWP/YSA reformists offer as their "solution" to crisis-ridden capitalism a panacea (the "Bill of Rights for Working People") so innocuous and legalist that not very long ago the staff director of the Democratic Party platform committee actually suggested that "we adopt this. It all looks perfectly reasonable" (quoted in the [US] *Militant*, 14 November 1975).

Likewise, while Trotskyists call for labor/black defense against racist and fascist terror, the SWP/YSA has championed (even more vociferously than the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) [a liberal civil-rights organisation] and black Democrats) the demand for federal troops and more cops to be sent to Boston to "protect" black people from the anti-busing racist offensive. It is this confidence in reformist pressure politics which the SWP/YSA today expresses in its demand that fascists be allowed their "right" to organize.

Flabby reformists wrestle with revolutionary criticism

The SWP/YSA has also been compelled to defend its line on fascism from the polemics of the Spartacus Youth League (SYL) and Spartacist League. Several months ago the SWP/YSA issued an "Education for Socialists" bulletin entitled *The Fight Against Fascism in the USA*, which was an attempt to answer the program and practice of the SYL regarding the struggle against fascist threats. *Young Spartacus* has already published



Recent recruit for Nazi scum, Marquette Park, Chicago.

two articles exposing this small-scale monument of obfuscation and deceit (see "Why We Do Not Recognize 'Free Speech for Fascists'", *Young Spartacus*, May and June 1976).

Within the last several weeks, however, the SWP/YSA has churned out yet two more such "educational" bulletins on anti-fascism, entitled *Counter-mobilization* and *What is American Fascism?* Like *The Fight Against Fascism in the USA*, *Counter-mobilization* is devoted to defending "free speech for fascists" and to attacking the Trotskyist politics of the SYL.

According to its introductory note, *Counter-mobilization* reproduces a discussion by the SWP and YSA leaders that was "sparked by an incident at San Francisco State University" in March, 1975. This so-called "incident" happens to be the united-front picket-line demonstration against Nazi speakers at San Francisco State that was initiated by the SYL (see "No Platform for Fascist Scum! SYL Builds Anti-Nazi Demonstration", *Young Spartacus*, April 1975). It should be added that this "incident" also "sparked" the first SWP/YSA bulletin on anti-fascism.

As *Young Spartacus* detailed at the time, the YSA played an utterly despicable role at San Francisco State. From the outset the YSA refused to endorse or in any way support the anti-fascist protest. Why?

The YSA whined that the united-front slogan -- "No Platform for Fascists!" -- denied "free speech" for these degenerate thugs! Thus, while the slogan was endorsed by the campus workers' union and several Bay Area militant trade-union caucuses, the YSA refused to participate in the allegedly "ultraleft" demonstration, surfacing on campus only after the protest, and then only to *denounce* the militant demonstration as a "disruption" to the campus press.

Repudiating the "Excesses" of liberalism

Unlike the first bulletin, which smears the San Francisco State protest, *Counter-mobilization* repudiates the political line adopted by the YSA on campus. Perhaps the SWP/YSA has reconsidered its conservative opposition to the slogan "No Platform for Fascists"? Absolutely not!

On the contrary, *Counter-mobilization* declares that in the anti-fascist struggles of the New Deal period, when the then-revolutionary SWP and its youth section campaigned with slogans like "No Platform for Fascists", the Trotskyist movement allegedly committed a grave "error" by "declaring that the 'rights' of the fascists must be 'taken away' by the workers" and by "describ[ing] the objective of anti-fascist counter-mobilizations as preventing the fascists from

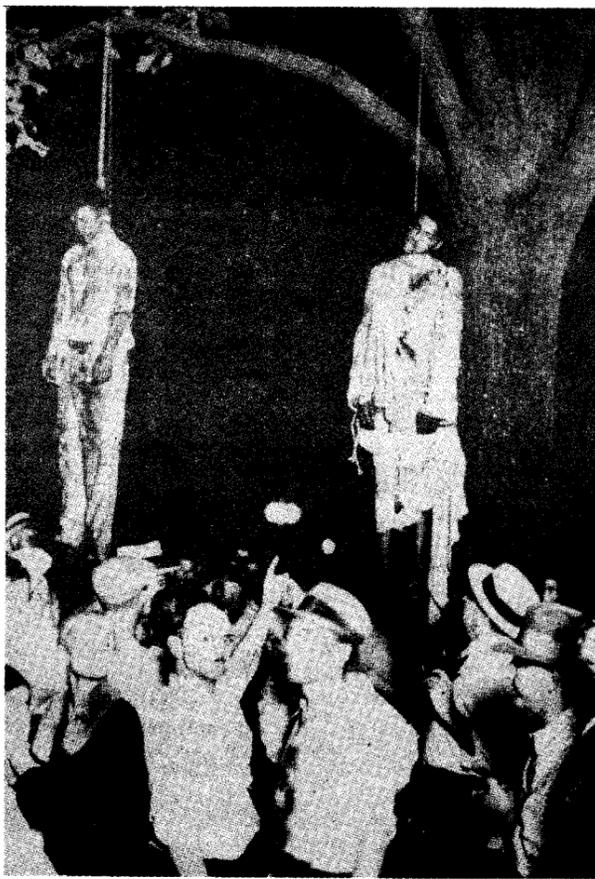
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A Spartacus Youth League Pamphlet 75c



Ku Klux Klan lynching: fascist "free speech" in action.

'assembling and spreading their insidious program'. Thus, in no uncertain terms the SWP/YSA repudiates revolutionary propaganda indicating the need to stop the fascists from mobilizing for their anti-labor, racist attacks.

Moreover, even the mealy-mouthed, simpering line of the YSA calling for an "educational campaign" at San Francisco State to convince the "campus majority" of the need "to stop the fascists from speaking" proved to be too much for the SWP/YSA leadership. Says SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes in *Counter-mobilization*:

"I think the YSA's only mistake [at San Francisco State] was the one statement opposing the fascists' right to speak on campus. That was unnecessary. In one sense, of course, these murdering goons have no right to breathe air. But that sentence could be interpreted as meaning that radical groups are taking it upon themselves to decide that these individuals have no Bill of Rights protection. We don't say that."

At last an honest statement! Barnes and company serve notice that the SWP/YSA has no intention of building a movement that would ever "prevent the Nazis from speaking", even when such action has been prepared by an "education campaign" and has the support of the "campus majority".

This repudiation of the YSA line as applied at San Francisco State actually exposes all the arguments rattled off by the SWP/YSA leaders in *Counter-mobilization*. The SWP/YSA seeks to justify its capitulation to civil libertarianism with the rationalization that granting the fascists the "right" to organize is simply a clever "tactic" which "helps you to mobilize young people and win over civil libertarians. You build up the forces that will be able to deal with the fascists when the reality of the conflict between fascists and anti-fascists manifests itself in a more physical form." But the SWP/YSA in fact preaches that anti-fascists must always respect the "rights" of fascists, no matter how many liberal-minded students and civil libertarians have been "mobilized" on the basis of pacifist slogans. *Counter-mobilization* deflates like a balloon filled with hot air.

Where's the working class?

Counter-mobilization argues that granting the fascists their "rights" is absolutely necessary to lure liberals -- the "forces that will be able to deal with the fascists". But these petty-bourgeois radicals "forget" to even consider the working class, the *only force* with the class interest and social power to effectively "deal with" the fascists when the struggle "manifests itself in a more physical form". As Trotsky argued so forcefully in *Whither France?*, the only effective means to rally the vacillating middle class to the struggle against a serious fascist threat is through demonstrating the power and resolve of the proletariat, mobilized in workers defense guards. History has demonstrated that "flabby pacifism" on the part of the working-class movement can only encourage the frustrated petty bourgeoisie to turn in despair to the fascists for a "radical" solution to the social crisis.

So hardened in reformism is the SWP/YSA that it cannot even conceive of the *working class* ever suppressing the fascists through defense guards based on the organizations of the working class

and black community. Rather, the SWP/YSA can only conceive of the *capitalist state* as the force to beat back the fascists in the name of "democracy". Thus, in the course of the discussion as recorded in *Counter-mobilization* the YSA leadership declares: "It's basically self-contradictory to say that we don't call upon the state or campus administration to ban these fascist groups and at the same time say that they have no right to speak."

It's the SWP/YSA line that in fact is blatantly contradictory. If the capitalist state really can be "pressured" by "mass action" to defeat the racist offensive in Boston and defend the struggle of black people, then the SWP/YSA should logically conclude that the bourgeois state likewise could be "forced" to suppress the fascist bands and defend the left and labor movement.

Yet *Counter-mobilization* maintains that "Anything the government might do to interfere with the exercise of democratic rights by the fascists, they will at the same time apply to the left, to the anti-fascists". Quite true! And for the same reason the capitalist state will deploy troops and cops in Boston only to restore effort "law and order", smashing any self-defense efforts of the black people.

In the past the SWP/YSA has not openly supported liberal demands for the state to ban the fascists. While the SWP/YSA is prepared to demand troops to Boston, which would gravely imperil the lives of black people fighting for black equality, it is not yet prepared to call for government suppression of fascist organizations, which would indeed jeopardize the SWP/YSA's democratic rights. The manifest contradiction in the SWP/YSA line reeks of the most rank opportunism.

"Ultra-leftism" and all that

In *Counter-mobilization* the YSA leaders confess that arguing in favor of "free speech for fascists" is certainly not popular with many black students and other radicals who "don't have any civil libertarian hangups". With chagrin they relate how at several anti-fascist demonstrations black students in particular have become so outraged by the filth spewed by a fascist demagogue that "Fifty or sixty Black students just went inside and started shouting down the racist."

What is the response of the SWP/YSA to such spontaneous protests against the fascists? Not only does the SWP/YSA defend the so-called "right" of the fascists to appear on campus in the first place, but when these fascists provoke anti-fascists to vocally express their indignation and outrage *Counter-mobilization* condemns such protest -- even mere heckling! -- as "ultra-leftism"! Just listen:

"The problem is ultra-leftism. In this case [simply the heckling of a fascist speaker on campus], it is ultra-leftism on the part of Black students ... You can begin with an entirely justified gut reaction, but its reflection on the level of tactics, strategy and action in these cases is ultra-leftism. The ultra-lefts in the Black student movement don't know the time of day any more than the Spartacists. There's no difference on that level at all."

Fight fascist provocations through labor/black defense!

Despite all the slick arguments and double-talk of the SWP/YSA leaders, their "counter-mobilization" strategy has been proven bankrupt in the struggle for desegregation in Boston. For the last two years the SWP/YSA has intervened in Boston to rally pro-desegregation forces behind the treacherous demand for federal troops and more cops. For two years these reformists have ridiculed the call raised by the SL/SYL for labor/black defense, lecturing that "on the level of tactics" a "gut-level" opposition to troops was "sectarianism". And for two years the SWP/YSA has prattled that its annual Sunday "counter-mobilizations" dominated by liberal slogans had and would continue to "set back" and "demoralize" the racist forces.

But in the face of the renewed racist offensive last spring the SWP/YSA "discovered" that it could not rely on its liberal "allies" to support, or the Boston cops to "protect", the planned April 24 March on Boston. The SWP/YSA strategy is incapable of organizationally and politically preparing the pro-desegregation forces to effectively defend the struggle for black equality when the racists turn from *their* "counter-mobilizations" to *their* mob violence and well-planned terror attacks.

As revolutionary socialists our first task must be to champion the call for labor/black defense against racist attacks and fascist provocations. Any attempt by ultra-legalist reformists like the SWP/YSA to denigrate or obscure this crucial political struggle through pleas for "Bill of Rights protection" for the fascists must be brushed aside with the contempt such sniveling civil libertarianism so justly deserves. ■

(reprinted from *Young Spartacus* no 46, September 1976)

Trotskyism vs SWP

"Only militant counter-action can nip American fascism in the bud."
-*Militant*, 14 July 1945

"A fascist movement cannot be 'nipped in the bud' no matter how many of their meetings are disrupted."
-*Militant*, 1 August 1975

"The experience of all countries, including the United States, proves beyond any doubt whatever that the agencies of the bourgeois democratic state will not and cannot carry out this defense (against the fascists); but that on the contrary, reliance upon these agencies guarantees the smashing of the workers and the victory of the fascists. Only the workers themselves, relying on their own means and strength, can defend their own organizations and life and liberties. The only possible form of defense against the fascists is the Workers Defense Guard.... Advocacy and support of the Guard is an integral and decisive part of the political program of our party and a political weapon of the utmost importance."

"You (the Trotskyist SL/SYL) say that bringing federal troops to Boston would necessarily lead to the suppression of both Black and white workers. That's not true.... The call for trade-union defense guards isn't realistic right now.... It's not a serious proposal. It has nothing to do with meeting the needs of the Black community today."

-*Militant*, 1 November 1974

-*Socialist Appeal*, 7 July 1939

"As revolutionaries we distinguished ourselves from the liberals by qualifying our interpretation of civil rights. We aim to deny these rights to our enemies.... WE REFUSE TO STRUGGLE FOR OR DEFEND THE CIVIL LIBERTIES OF THOSE MOVEMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS WHICH AIM TO DENY US (the working class) CIVIL LIBERTIES AND RIGHTS (Fascists)."

"... an effective struggle against reactionary ideas and violence cannot be carried out if one begins by placing qualifications on democratic rights in the case of fascists.... Because of the importance of democratic rights to the oppressed, the denial of this right to racists or fascists can only backfire."

-*Militant*, 1 August 1975

-*New Militant*, 20 July 1935

"In addition, (at a picket-line protest demonstration against fascist Gerald L K Smith in Los Angeles) many hundreds entered the hall, booing the speakers, applauding lustily at the wrong places, and finally making a demonstrative exit as Smith himself took the microphone.... In Sacramento his meeting was picketed from the outside and met with heckling from the majority of the audience inside."

"Many of these Black students don't have any civil-libertarian hangups.... A couple of them will sometimes go into the meeting and hear what this guy is spewing out. They bring it back to the demonstrators. Several times the SWP/YSA) picket-line monitors have lost control of the demonstrations because of this. Fifty or sixty Black students just went inside and started shouting down the racist.... The problem is ultra-leftism. In this case, it is ultra-leftism on the part of Black students.... The ultra-lefts in the Black student movement don't know the time of day any more than the Spartacists."

-*Militant*, 10 November 1945

-*Counter-mobilization*

"The wailing and weeping about the Nazi's 'rights' can safely be left to the prissy liberals and the phony democrats. The self-preservation of the working class demands that it cut through all abstract chatter and smash the Fascist gangs by decisive and relentless action."

"If you demand that the government suppress the freedom of speech of the fascists or declare your intention of suppressing it, you automatically put the civil libertarians on the other side.... If you are insisting that fascists can't speak, you risk antagonizing students."

-*Socialist Appeal*, 3 March 1939

-*Counter-mobilization*

(*New Militant*, *Socialist Appeal* -- former names of *Militant*)

Conspiracy theories and "democratic" illusions

Myths of Kerr's "coup"

It is now a year since the sacking of the Whitlam government by the governor-general generated a political crisis of historical proportions. Since then the November 11 "coup" has been surrounded and draped in the shrouds of myths concocted by the various interested parties. The myth of Fraser as fascist or dictator cannot be rationally maintained by anyone now. More persistent and perverse are the myths equating workers' struggles against Fraser with the preservation of bourgeois democracy, or, appealing to national chauvinism, that the sacking of Whitlam was the result of conspiracies directed by sinister "outside" forces such as the CIA rather than the product of the needs and political tactics of Australia's own capitalist class.

The Spartacist League was unique on the left in assessing the true character of Fraser's bid for power and "Kerr's coup": the preparations by the bourgeois state for an austerity drive and stronger line against the unions to be carried out through its parliamentary institutions. While fighting against the illusions represented by the "save democracy" sentiments permeating the

REVIEW:

The Canberra Coup! Workers News

labour movement's opposition to the sacking of Whitlam, we posed a fighting way forward for the working class: the call for a defensive general strike to keep the Liberal union-bashers out and to maintain/restore the Labor Government; the need to smash Labor's indexation "guidelines" wage freeze and institute an immediate 35-hour week with no loss in pay to combat unemployment; the need to break from the ALP misleaders in order to fight not to "save (capitalist) democracy" but for a workers government, pointing out that that task required a revolutionary party at the head of the great majority of workers.

The equation of Fraser -- as against Whitlam -- with the "end of democracy" and Bonapartist dictatorship, far from exposing the fraud of bourgeois democracy, made a qualitative distinction between what were in fact merely two different bourgeois-democratic regimes, paving the way for a bloc with the liberal wing of the ruling class. Not accidentally it fully coincided with the reformist myth that a capitalist state run by the ALP is somehow less a capitalist state than one run by Fraser.

The most left-wing attempt to give credence to the myths of November 11 has been by the ostensibly Trotskyist Socialist Labour League (SLL) in a slick book called *The Canberra Coup!*. A pretentious affair, its message conveyed largely through pictures, the book builds a case that the dismissal of Whitlam and everything leading up to it was the product of a grand conspiracy of capitalists, the CIA, international finance capital, government bureaucrats, Juni Morosi, shonky financiers like Tirath Khemlani, etc etc. The book is also a systematic cover-up for the gross

Defend printers' strike!

After a year of fruitless negotiations the Printing and Kindred Industries Union (PKIU), along with eight other unions at John Fairfax (publishers of the *The Sun*, *Sydney Morning Herald*), have been forced out on strike over their joint log of claims since 21 October. Police attacked a picket-line five days later and arrested seven strikers. Now the company is seeking a court order and fines of up to \$4000 a day against the unions involved.

The company is clearly intent on smashing the unions to facilitate mass retrenchments when new technology is brought into use. Staff are being used as scab labour and although production has been slowed paper deliveries are continuing. Despite the arrests the PKIU leadership has taken a passive attitude to the picketing, placing illusory hopes on starving the company out through union bans. With Fairfax on the offensive what is immediately necessary is militant mass picketing to shut Fairfax down tight! Spread the strike! Defend the arrested pickets! Support the boycott of Fairfax papers! Victory to the strike! Send financial aid to: The Combined Unions Committee, C/- PKIU, 12-26 Regent St, Sydney.

opportunism and extreme disorientation displayed by the SLL during the political crisis itself.

The ruling class is quite capable of entering into deadly conspiracies to smash the working class. Thus it is important to expose lesser conspiracies and ruling-class intrigue which move in that direction. But to substitute conspiracy theories of great historical events for a Marxist analysis of class forces is to defraud the working class. And the opportunists' attempts to concoct such theories to excuse or cover up their betrayals must also be exposed.

Everything just doesn't "fall into place"

Canberra Coup pulls its grandiose conspiracy schema together around the role of the former US ambassador to Australia, Marshall Green, who is painted as the sinister mastermind of everything from the ascension of Fraser to the Liberal Party leadership in March to the loans scandal, to the sacking of Whitlam. Certainly the reactionary Green would have had every sympathy for these events. But neither *Canberra Coup* nor anyone else has presented the slightest real evidence that he played any *decisive* role in the events.

The SLL points out that Green had played a central role in several *real* coups in sensitive areas of the US empire -- for example South Korea and Indonesia. From this they conclude that his dispatch to Australia after Labor's election in 1972 was part of a conspiracy from the start to overthrow Whitlam. In fact Green's appointment represented a combination of factors, of which the Labor Government was only one, and the most important was Australia's more strategic position after the defeat of US imperialism in Vietnam. Everyone, including the American imperialists, knew that Whitlam posed no threat to Australian capitalism or the American alliance.

The other item of "proof" that Green was the "coupmaster" is presented by way of ominous insinuation as follows:

"On March 13, 1975 ... Green was quoted as saying that there would be a fresh general election in Australia within a few months brought about by a refusal of the Liberal Opposition to pass Supply in the Senate... Green's 'prediction' was 100 per cent accurate."

Did Green already know as early as March Whitlam was going to be sacked? In fact he was referring to a possible election in May not November/December. Speculation was rife at that time that the Liberals under *Snedden's* leadership would block the money supply bills in the Senate and force an election on the Medibank appropriation (see Paul Kelly, *The Unmaking of Gough*, p 126). As we all know there was no May election; Green's "prediction" was "100 per cent" wrong.

The record of US imperialism and its sinister undercover agencies like the CIA throughout the world makes it necessary to take charges of their intervention seriously. The labour movement has an immediate internationalist interest in struggling to expose and expel the CIA and imperialist military installations. But the SLL, for the sake of cheap sensationalism, obscures what is important for the working class: to understand the real motives, interests, strategy and tactics of this enemy. Theirs is a form of demonology that yields no realistic counter-measures, that lulls people's sensibilities to real CIA plotting in the future.

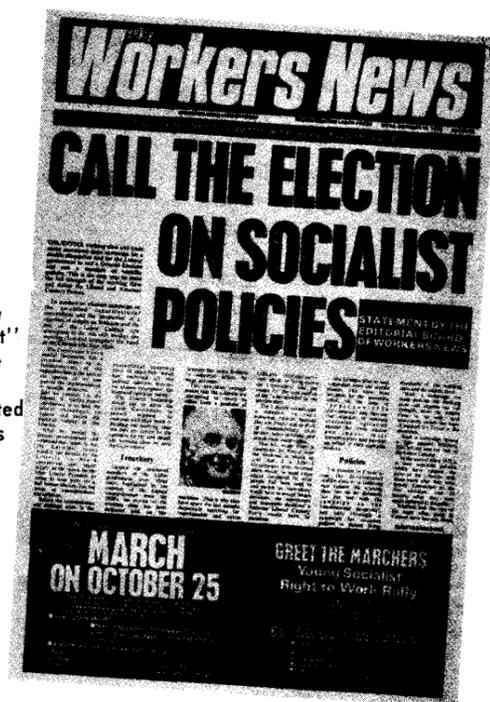
The CIA is also alleged to have been behind the Arab money "loans scandal", another key element in the Healyites' grand conspiracy. Their central proposition is that the "loans affair" in its entirety was the product of CIA "dirty tricks" whose innocent victim was the naive Labor Government. The sole *concrete* evidence of substantial CIA involvement presented consists of three elements: vague allegations by reformist hangers-on whose shady dealings had been exposed, such as Philip Cairns; the cryptic business figure (and business associate of Philip Cairns) Eric Sear Cows who forged telexes and then publicly skited of his alleged former employment by the CIA and British Intelligence; and perhaps most incredible of all, the attempt to make out that Cairns's controversial aide Juni Morosi was a CIA plant.

As for Cows, who is indeed suspicious, it nevertheless remains to be explained by the SLL why he blew his cover if he was a CIA agent all along -- *after* publicly admitting his forgeries. Apart from this, *Canberra Coup's* attempt to construct the case that Morosi was responsible for the notorious letter Cairns forgot he signed

rests on an outright lie. It was actually another secretary of Cairns's, Katherine Stegmar, who typed the letter and gave it to Cairns to sign; Morosi played no role at all (see Paul Kelly, *op cit*, p 224). And the SLL omits to mention the fact that Cairns was warned to repudiate the same letter, later used to engineer his sacking, by the permanent head of the Treasury, Sir Frederick Wheeler -- another alleged conspirator -- *less than a month after it was written and two months before the Liberals raised the question in Parliament* (see Kelly, *op cit*, p 226).

But whatever the verdict on the historical details, some of which have yet to be clarified, the *Canberra Coup* conspiracy case rests on a cheap gimmick, a "method" which can prove anything. Everything "falls into place" in this conspiracy ... if you construct the conspiracy to fit the facts and add a little distortion and a few falsifications. It is necessary only to ask

The headline *The Canberra Coup!* "forgot" to print. Like the Liberals, the SLL wanted new elections when supply was blocked.



a series of obvious questions to deflate the whole structure. Did Fraser *need* Green or the CIA to dump Snedden? Scarcely. Did he *need* them to exploit the loans scandal? No -- the blunders of the reformists would have given him plenty of ammunition in any case. Did Kerr *need* the CIA to sack Whitlam? Hardly. Is it likely that US imperialism would go to such expense and take considerable political risks when they knew that someone else would do the job anyway -- and just to replace Whitlam with Fraser? It would be a qualitative distortion of the character of the Whitlam government and/or the strategic interests of US imperialism to believe so.

From "democracy" to "dictatorship" and back

Why has the SLL bothered to go to such lengths to concoct a mythical grand conspiracy? As *Canberra Coup* makes quite clear, it is all intended to justify the conclusion that the political crisis was a struggle of the working class to preserve bourgeois democracy against Bonapartist dictatorship.

"The ruling class conspirators who carried out the Remembrance Day coup had no intention of allowing the Labor Government to come back to power after having thrown it out of office so dramatically. The elections which followed on December 13 were therefore held under unprecedented [!] conditions in which powerful sections of the ruling class had decided that the facade of bourgeois parliamentary democracy had to be done away with *if necessary*. That, after all, was what November 11 was all about; *a step in the transition from parliamentary democracy to political dictatorship.*" (p 95 -- emphasis added)

When *Canberra Coup* was published in March, the spectre of impending fascism or dictatorship was no longer convincing, and some fast footwork and cautious phrasing were needed to cover the SLL's original position, ie, "The illegal Fraser Government is not a caretaker administration but a political dictatorship" (*Workers News*, 17 November 1975).

In reality Kerr's "coup" was the result of the attempt to force an election through the blocking of the budget and Whitlam's refusal to call a double dissolution, in circumstances where the

overwhelming likelihood and general belief was that the Liberals were sure to win. There is no need to postulate an elaborate conspiracy to explain why the ALP was so unpopular. It had presided over the onset of the most severe economic slump since World War II. It had alienated not only "big business" by failing to adequately contain labour ranks but also angered large groups by reneging on promised reforms. Kerr's action, breaking convention but perfectly within the spirit and, by one plausible bourgeois reading, the letter of the Constitution, was taken to force an election in order to end a *parliamentary* crisis. The constitutional framework was stretched, but not to the breaking point -- something the ruling class *did not want*.

As a substitute the SLL seizes on the reports, undoubtedly substantially true, that Kerr met with top army staff immediately following the sacking of Whitlam and discussed contingency plans to meet a possible general strike. In *Canberra Coup* (p 100) this becomes, without the slightest evidence, a planning meeting to discuss the closing down of newspapers, television and radio stations (practically all sympathetic to Fraser anyway) and the indefinite postponement of the elections.

But elsewhere the SLL itself is forced to admit that Fraser really only wanted an election:

"The great question which occupied the minds of Fraser, Kerr and their backers was that their plans for the removal of the Labor Government and the installation of the Liberals at an election would be disrupted by the working class." (p 95 -- emphasis added)

The idea that the issue was democracy versus dictatorship stands reality on its head. For any moves by Fraser to mobilise the army to crush mass action would not have been directed at undermining or destroying bourgeois democracy but at *defending* and *enforcing* it. What Fraser legitimately feared was the prospect of a political general strike which would have meant in essence the *workers* bypassing the elections, stepping outside the framework of bourgeois democracy.

A pacifist general strike?

It is hard to tell how much the cynical SLL leadership actually believed its talk of imminent military dictatorship. In the very middle of the crisis they sent a large delegation of 45 members and supporters of the SLL overseas to a youth jamboree in London! In any event, the program they presented to meet it amounted to a betrayal of the working class. The prospect of a Chile-style coup would demand of revolutionaries immediate agitation for the need to arm workers and for organising workers' militias based on the trade unions. Of this the SLL said *not a word*. Instead they responded to mounting press hysteria about "violence" by preaching pacifism and called for -- an election! To quote *Workers News* again (17 November 1975):

"The Socialist Labour League ... has not at any time advocated violence in the fight against the Fraser dictatorship. [!!!]
"We call openly and publicly in the pages of *Workers News* for a General Strike to kick out the dictatorship and for the Labor Party to go to an election with a socialist programme.... The victory that Labor could win on this programme would not only smash the Liberal Party [!], it would make it impossible [!!] to ever stage another such coup."

Throughout the whole political crisis the SLL was fixated on the thought of a "socialist" ALP election campaign. Their first response to the Liberals' blocking of supply was "Call the Elections on Socialist Policies" (*Workers News*, 16 October 1975) -- a banner headline that was pointedly *not* reproduced in *Canberra Coup* -- and it was not until *two weeks later* that they first raised the call for a general strike. And even then their general strike call turned out to be merely their own variation of the "parliamentary road to socialism", based on the crackpot notion that bourgeois elections can be held on "workers' terms". In the end the SLL only had tactical differences with the reformists of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) -- on how best to get Labor re-elected "on socialist policies". The SWP thought mass rallies was the best way; the disoriented SLL went for a pacifist general strike.

In line with the opportunist appetites of the SLL *Canberra Coup* throws out the window any pretence to Marxist analysis in favour of a series of distortions and downright falsifications pasted together with the shoddy, sensationalist, melodramatic journalism borrowed from the gutter bourgeois press. Its real aim is to appeal to the outraged petty-bourgeois elements who had their democratic illusions trampled underfoot last year, and to validate the reformists' conclusion that at issue in "Kerr's coup" was a concerted attack on bourgeois democracy. The SLL claims it published *Canberra Coup* as part of the fight to build a revolutionary party. It stands as a manifest testimony of their utter incapacity to do so and their role as a centrist obstacle to the carrying out of that task. ■

Facelift . . .

Continued from page one

by McClelland. Charged with being a "fellow traveller" of "communist" Munday he boasted of his record as legal advocate for the court-based attack on left-wing unions by Santamaria's Groupers in the fifties and his attacks on militant unions while minister for labour, categorising himself and his liberal colleagues as "notorious non-communists". A week later Munday came to the defence of his anti-communist friends, crowing that he was "proud to share the platform with other democratic Australians" (!), that he didn't like Russia either and that a new constitution was needed to "guarantee [!] democracy" (*The Australian*, 11 October).

The chance of Munday's liberal hopes ever reaching the light of day, at least without the near-unanimous support of the bourgeoisie, was demonstrated by the constitutional convention farce that began in Tasmania last month (the fourth in as many years). The Queensland delegation, led by states-rights neanderthal Joh Bjelke-Petersen, voted against everything that came up, including extending the right for electors in the ACT and the Northern Territory to vote in referendums! The convention itself is powerless and any constitutional change can only come through a referendum which requires a majority of the voters both in Australia as a whole and in a majority of the states, a guarantee that any change is bound to be trivial.

Sacking Kerr (presumably to replace him with Prince Charles or some other ruling-class parasite) will achieve nothing -- except perhaps to assuage the hurt feelings of a few reformists and liberals. Communists demand that bourgeois law be exercised against its executors when they commit acts of venal corruption or excesses against the oppressed which formally violate bourgeois law. This is not to lend any credence to the supposed "neutrality" of the law but on the contrary to expose its class bias by demanding that the ruling class and its agents not be granted privileged exemptions. However nothing can be gained by demanding that Kerr be sacked for allegedly violating the Constitution. Kerr's action was certainly undemocratic, even by bourgeois-democratic standards, but it was very much in the spirit of the "founding fathers" who quite consciously wanted, through the Senate and the governor-general, strong institutional checks to maintain the status quo.

Constitutional "guarantees" and "democracy" will be quite expendable to the bourgeoisie when its existence is seriously threatened. Nevertheless Marxists support constitutional reforms which expand democratic rights for the masses and eliminate repressive institutions or repressive laws. The office of governor-general and the Senate must be abolished. The events of last November demonstrate the obstructionist role of the Senate and the Bonapartist potential of the governor-general. But in no way are either fundamental questions for the labour movement nor would their abolition change the nature of Parliament as an instrument of bourgeois class rule.

Liberals who concentrate their fire on the Bonapartist potential of Kerr's office ignore the quite explicit and far more dangerous provisions for Bonapartist rule that are built into the "democratic" parliamentary system. While a move to *outright* Bonapartist rule by the bourgeoisie signifies a qualitative break from the norms of bourgeois democracy and will reflect the inability of capitalism to any longer contain the class struggle by normal "democratic" means, some elements of Bonapartism exist in all bourgeois democracies. This is certainly true of the prime-ministerial system. Furthermore Australia already has various defence and civil emergency laws which effectively empower the prime minister to declare a state of emergency, suspend democratic rights and rule by decree. Such legislation not only facilitates attacks on democratic rights but allows for the move to full-fledged Bonapartist rule to be shrouded in its incipient

stages in the respectability of established law -- it must be abolished!

One year ago Whitlam and Hawke's stale platitudes of classless democracy were able to pacify and divert workers' rage at Labor's sacking into the safe channels of parliamentarism, paving the way for Fraser. Their ability to do so flowed from the adaptation of virtually the entire left to the illusion that what was at issue was not a ruling-class attack against the working class but the preservation of bourgeois democracy. The aim of the anti-Kerr movement, the child of that opportunism, is to give a facelift to the tarnished parliamentary facade, to divert militant workers from finding their way to a revolutionary perspective. No matter how consistent, bourgeois democracy can offer no guarantee against repression to the working masses. That can only come by taking state power from the bourgeoisie through the struggle for a workers government led by a new, revolutionary leadership of the labour movement. ■

SLL . . .

Continued from page eight

Cop-baiting and violence are serious obstacles to debate and political clarification within the workers movement -- obstacles the SLL gangsters welcome. But we can assure Mulgrew, Healy and their gang of gutter-"socialists" of one thing: their gangsterist tactics will not prevent their exposure as frauds nor the struggle of the Spartacist League for the rebirth of the Fourth International. ■

A STATEMENT AGAINST VIOLATIONS OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT

Reports have come to our attention that Socialist Labour League (SLL) members have used physical violence against members of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Spartacist League (SL). It has been reported that several members of the SWP and the SL were set upon and severely beaten in a completely unprovoked attack outside the Sydney Trades Hall on October 17. Other reports of intimidation of sellers of *Tribune*, *Direct Action*, *Australasian Spartacist* and *The Socialist* in the past months and the disruption of SWP public meetings have also disturbed us.

These incidents lead us to make this statement in favor of the free exchange of differing views within the labor movement without fear of physical reprisal from anyone. Taking such a stand certainly does not mean repudiating the

right of self-defence against violent attacks. It means making clear that differences among those fighting for social justice cannot be resolved by fists or other weapons. Any attempt to do so simply provides openings for police and other enemies of the workers movement to tear us apart.

Further, it certainly does not help us oppose the Government's use of violence against us if some of us use it against people who may not agree with our points of view. These attacks must stop and we must respect each other's democratic rights if we are to have an environment where there can be progress in the struggles of the oppressed.

We call on all individuals and organisations of the labor and radical movements to support this stand and add their signature to this statement.

Signatures so far include: J Fraser, Vic State Sec Australian Railways Union; J J Goddard, Sec Liquor Industry Union; Edith Turnewitsch; E Tripp, Sec Vic Labour College; John McCarthy for the CL; Eric Aarons, Joe Palmado, Mavis Robertson, joint National Secs, CPA; Libby Barratt; Tas Ockenden, Pres AUS; Merv Nixon, Sec South Coast Labour Council; Tom O'Lincoln (IS); Anthony Marin, Sec Friends of Palestine. Those who would like to sign the statement and/or wish further information should write to GPO Box 3473, Sydney, NSW 2001.

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Stop gangsterism, defend workers democracy!

SLL thugs bash leftists

The escalating campaign of gangsterism and slander-mongering by the Healyite Socialist Labour League (SLL) reached a crescendo when a gang of SLL thugs attacked members and supporters of the Spartacist League (SL) and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) outside Sydney Trades Hall 17 October. SLL National Secretary Jim Mulgrew personally directed his toughs to launch two brutal and premeditated assaults outside a "public" SLL forum. SL members were there to protest the Healyites' exclusionist practices and to sell literature to forum attendants, while SWPers distributed a statement replying to the Healyite slander campaign directed against American SWP leaders Joseph Hansen and George Novack. By the time the second attack, which turned into a running street melee, had ceased several supporters of the SL and SWP had been bruised and bloodied, with one SWPer requiring hospital treatment after numerous kicks and punches to the head and body.

Healyite gangsterism is no news to the workers movement. But these latest attacks indicated a deliberate attempt to maim members, and leading members in particular, of opponent tendencies. Recognising the dangerous possibility of serious injury, gang-war violence and the invitation to repression by the bourgeois state which this poses for the left and workers movement, the Spartacist League has joined with the SWP in initiating a campaign within the left and labour movement to condemn the SLL attacks and repudiate the suppression of workers' democracy. That the Healyites' cowardly gangsterism can be stopped was demonstrated the following Saturday in Melbourne at a similar forum there when a 59-strong united-front defence guard composed of supporters of the SL, SWP, Communist League and International Socialists and other individuals protested the SLL's latest violation of workers' democracy and distributed statements on the Sydney violence.

The series of incidents on 17 October began immediately as a group of Spartacists approached Trades Hall, when Mulgrew started threatening and physically harassing the photographer for *Australasian Spartacist*. Why Mulgrew wanted no photographers present was made clear an instant later as, with SWPers looking on, he directed several of his thugs to jump Spartacist League National Chairman Bill Logan, yelling "Get Logan, get Logan!", covered with the blatant lie that Spartacists were obstructing the Trades Hall entrance. SL supporters who sprang to Logan's defence were slugged and pummelled, one receiving a bloody nose, but warded off the attack and were not budged. While the SL and SWP photographers were constantly harassed -- at one point, trying to stop the SL photographer from photographing an injured SL supporter, Mulgrew told SLL heavy Greg Adler, "If he takes any more pictures, smash his camera and then smash his face in" -- SLLer Nick Beams pranced about flamboyantly photographing individual SL and SWP members.

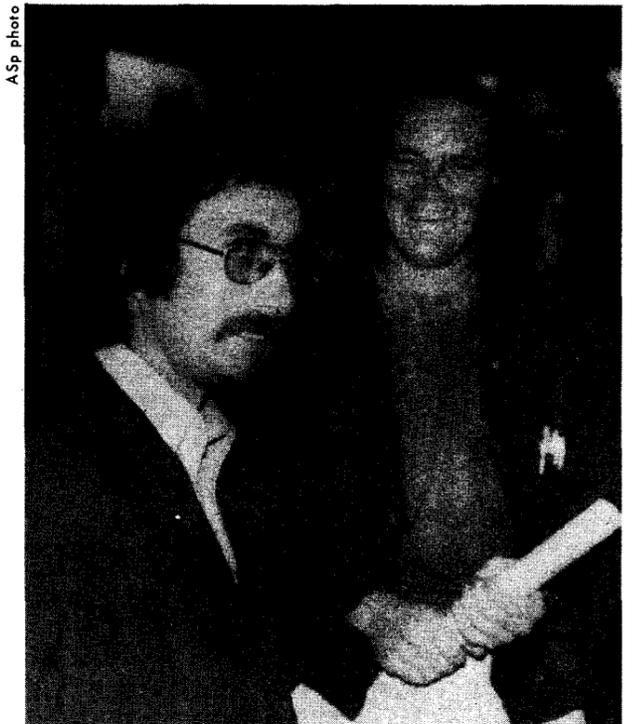
Once they had shepherded their youth inside, the Healyites set about deliberately instigating a brawl. Unable to set upon the tightly-knit and disciplined Spartacist contingent without simply blatantly pouncing upon it, they instead shoved and jostled an SWP member as he attempted to hand a paper to people on their way into the forum. When SWP leader and *Direct Action* editor John Percy began photographing the harassment, Mulgrew and his goons surrounded him, Mulgrew smacked him in the face and his gang began indiscriminately assaulting SLers and SWPers who came to Percy's defence. As their "fearless leader" retreated to his usual position of safe spectator, the Healyites launched a rampage of kicking and punching in the middle of the street. Moments before the fighting broke out, Greg Adler had been seen placing a key ring over his finger and closing his fist around a set of keys. SWP youth leader Dave Deutschmann, who had loudly protested the previous assault against the SL, was singled out, punched to the ground and punched and kicked as he lay there. An SLer received a severe blow to the head.

The SLL justifies its brutal assaults by openly cop-baiting the Spartacist League and crying "provocation". What was the "provo-

cation"? -- "The first incident was provoked by the Spartacist League who had brought a camera to the meeting with the intention of causing a provocation" (*Workers News*, 28 October)! Using Healyite logic Nick Beams should have been bashed as well! The seriousness of their justification is evident from the fact that the entire incident was not even mentioned in the original (21 October) *Workers News* account of the forum; only after the statement repudiating their violence began circulating in the labour movement did they bother to fabricate a pathetic excuse. In any case, we are, of course, fully prepared to submit this incident to the scrutiny of a workers' commission of inquiry.

Healyite violence against the Trotskyist Spartacist League has a long history. SL supporters were subjected to a similar, though less brutal attack at the same site a year ago when Healy himself came through on a speaking tour. But their thuggery has become more widespread and characteristic since the initiation of their campaign against Hansen and Novack and their growing self-isolation due to their almost pathological fear of political criticism.

In July a gang of Healyites disrupted a Sydney forum by American SWP vice-presidential hopeful Willie Mae Reid, shouting, waving their "indict-



Top: SLL National Secretary Jim Mulgrew (left) and Adler excluding Spartacists from "public" forum last year.
Bottom: Adler and other SLL goons following assault on Spartacists, SWP, 17 October.

ments" of Hansen/Novack and preventing Reid from speaking during the question time. The reformist SWP did nothing to stop the disrupters but used the incident as an excuse to ban SLL attendance at all public SWP forums. While organisations have the right to eject disrupters from their political events and to temporarily exclude groups who are clearly intent on violent disruption, ongoing bans serve the same function as disruption in restricting open debate and clarification.

For revolutionaries, workers' democracy is a necessary weapon in the fight to advance the revolutionary program, necessarily opposed to bourgeois intervention in the workers movement or bureaucratic suppression of political debate. The SWP's reformism does not allow them to consistently defend workers' democracy. Their "classless" conception of democracy is not, in principle or in practice, opposed to the use of the bourgeois state against sections of the workers movement. And it is quite prepared to defend its reformist perspective from exposure by revolutionaries through bureaucratic suppression. A longstanding ban on SL attendance at *Direct Action* forums -- though the SL has never engaged in disruptive acts at SWP forums (see *Australasian Spartacist* no 9, June 1974) -- was rescinded only last week. Similar bans have been implemented at various times by their American

co-thinkers against the SL/US and several trade unionists sympathetic to the Spartacist League were physically assaulted at an SWP forum in San Francisco last year (see *Workers Vanguard* no 69, 23 May 1975). In defence of their attempts to tie the Vietnam anti-war movement to the liberal bourgeoisie the American SWP also carried out a brutal attack against Spartacists and supporters of the Stalinist Progressive Labor Party at a 1971 anti-war conference when they protested against the presence of capitalist politician Vance Hartke, a leading spokesman for the very same Democratic Party which was pursuing the war.

The Healyites' self-proclaimed concern with police infiltration in the workers movement stands in startling contradiction to their own practice. From the Tate affair in 1966, when the British Healyites brought libel charges against several left papers for publishing United Secretariat supporter Ernest Tate's account of the brutal bashing he received at the hands of Healy's thugs, to the present day these political bandits have had no compunction in using the bourgeois cops and courts against their opponents in the workers movement. At the recent Trades Hall incident Mulgrew was heard to boast, "If the police come we'll get them to arrest you all."

Continued on page seven