



Butchers meet in Jerusalem

Phony peace moves in Near East



Reactionary ultra-Zionist Gush Emmunim have established settlements in Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Egyptian president Anwar Sadat's dramatic 44-hour visit to Israel on 19-20 November has been acclaimed as a great act of peace-making and cursed as a betrayal. Within days Sadat revealed plans for a follow-up conference in Cairo mid-December to include, in addition to Israel, the other Arab states, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), the UN, as well as the "two superpowers". While US president Jimmy Carter lauded the proposed conference as "a very constructive step" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 December), the Soviet Union joined Sadat's enraged erstwhile allies in vowing to boycott it. Meanwhile Syria, Iraq and Libya initiated moves toward a new "Rejection Front" in opposition to the Cairo-Jerusalem connection. Within days of each other, Baghdad and Tripoli called their own conferences of representatives of the PLO and the "hard-line" Arab regimes.

While Cairo crowds cheered the "returning hero of peace", in the Arab countries outside Egypt Sadat is now being reviled as a traitor. Most Arab states have denounced him for breaking a common front, fearing that a separate peace with Egypt would encourage Israel to attack elsewhere

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Vote Labor! Oust the bureaucrats!

Whitlam grovels before bosses

The 1977 election campaign has been even drearier than the run-of-the-mill parliamentary farce. With the weekly "popularity" polls bouncing back and forth, it appears that the bourgeoisie is scarcely more impressed with the sagacity of Fraser's election manoeuvre than they were with his devaluation fiasco or his other political *faux pas*. Significantly, the demagogic issue of union bashing which Fraser had hoped would sweep him into an easy, and early, second term has flopped. With no let up in sight for the recession, more voters are concerned with declining living standards and record unemployment. To make matters worse, shortly after the campaign opened Fraser found himself with a financial scandal at his doorstep: Phil Lynch, the author of the Liberals' austerity (for the workers) budgets, resigned as treasurer following allegations concerning the dealings of his family trust company.

Not that the ALP's bid for office has provided much to get excited about. Whitlam's 17 November campaign opening at the Sydney Opera House was a muted affair. There was "less crusading fervour, nothing about the redistribution of wealth and

the restructuring of society" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 November).

The subdued and chastened style of Labor's election campaign corresponds to its aim: to woo back bourgeois support alienated by the last Whitlam government's failure to adequately control its reformist tinkering or crack down hard enough on the unions. The ALP is playing down its previous meagre attempts at reform to stress the Hayden austerity budget of 1975. On Medibank, Whitlam could only bring himself to snivel that "the task of restoration will be long and difficult" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 November); full wage indexation has simply been ruled out. In fact, Labor's main electoral promise (to "Get Australia working!") is to end company payroll tax and pay for it by scrapping Fraser's planned cuts in personal income tax! Supposedly designed to create more jobs, its real intention is to demonstrate to the bosses the ALP's willingness to re-buff its own working-class base to promote higher profits.

Following the 1975 federal elections which placed Fraser in power, the left resounded with

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Whitlam with Fraser (1975) - now vying for bosses' support.

The bizarre world of SLL slander

Squealing over the rebuff they suffered from LaTrobe Valley power workers at Morwell and doubtless attempting to explicate it to their deluded ranks, the Socialist Labour League (SLL) has launched into yet another tirade of slanders against the Spartacist League (SL). As the SLL's pretensions become increasingly divorced from reality, its hysterical lies take on an ever more bizarre, surreal character. By now the charges of the SLL command about as much credibility as the "revolutionary" credentials and megalomania of the fanatical, murderous dictator of Libya, Colonel Qaddafi, with whom the Healyites have signed a written agreement of fealty (see "More from the messengers of Qaddafi", *Workers Vanguard* no 174, 23 September 1977).

The theme of this latest offering, entitled "Spartacist provocation" (*Workers News*, 17 November), is introduced immediately: "In the context of an election campaign in which 'dirty tricks' inspired by the intelligence forces of the capitalist state are to be expected, the Spartacist League is stepping up its provocations". In other words, the Trotskyists of the SL are cop agents. We note only one fact: Six months ago the SL exposed one Janet Langridge, an ASIO agent who had penetrated our movement, focusing nationwide attention on ASIO's dirty tricks, causing considerable embarrassment to the capitalist state's political police, and reaching millions of Australians with Trotskyist politics. Curiously enough, *Workers News* then carried a lengthy article quoting uncritically from the material we — this group of "dubious provocateurs" — had documented!

Following a fictional account of the Morwell incident, the rest of the piece runs through a series of charges: Our US comrades "published FBI material sent to them anonymously in the 1960's under the infamous 'Cointelpro' program". We have consistently proven to be disruptive when allowed into SLL meetings. We take "copious notes of meetings... with no explanation of who receives this information". We "provided a platform" for rabid anti-communist parliamentarian Billy Wentworth on nationwide television! It almost seems pointless, but for the benefit of naive SLLers we will repeat: The SLL has yet to respond to our full documentation debunking the FBI letter slander when it was first raised two years ago (see *ASp* no 21, July 1975): It has yet to acknowledge that the SL/US was one of sixteen organisations (which did not include the US Healyites) specially targeted for FBI surveillance and harassment under Cointelpro (see "Spartacist League/US on FBI 'hit list'", *ASp* no 44, July 1977). In our entire history we have been allowed into exactly one SLL "public" meeting (in early 1973) where there was of course no disruption (see "What is the SLL afraid of?", *ASp* no 6, March 1974). The note-taking nonsense, suffice it to say, is lifted almost verbatim from the pen of one whom the Healyites have in the past described as a "Stalinist degenerate" — Communist Party member and arch-Pabloite, Denis Freney (see *Tribune*, 29 June 1977). We do not of course expect an explanation from the SLL of the copious notes which prominent SLLer Nick Beams, among others, can often be observed jotting down at meetings — an entirely natural and necessary part of political activity.

As for the last charge, we plead guilty to using the platform of the ABC-TV current affairs program, "This Day Tonight" (9 November), for our comrade to denounce Wentworth as an "enemy of the working class", to attack reformist sham "communists" like Halfpenny who betrayed the power strike, and to insist that a genuine leadership of the working class must have a perspective of overturning the capitalist system!

In the looking-glass world of Healyite slander, Trotsky's guards and comrades become accomplices of his assassins; the FBI's targets become outlets for FBI provocation; those who expose ASIO's dirty tricks become an ASIO front; the call for traditional, militant trade-union tactics to win strikes becomes a cop provocation; denouncing Wentworth becomes promoting him. Behind all these lies is the fundamental lie of the SLL: its false claim to be a revolutionary organisation — treacherous opportunism providing the sole consistency to its erratic political banditry. The increasingly bizarre outpourings testify to the advanced stage of the disease. The future holds nothing for the SLL but further betrayal, scorn and fiasco.

AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST will not appear in January; the next issue will appear in February 1978.

Responsibility for election comment in this issue is taken by Marie Hotschilt, 212 Glebe Point Road, Glebe, NSW.

Page Two AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST December 1977

Power-strike militants reject SLL slanders Revisionists oppose militant strike tactics

With a conscious revolutionary leadership at its helm, the militant LaTrobe Valley power workers' strike could readily have been transformed into a successful full-scale challenge to the indexation wage freeze. In refusing to recognise the necessity for mass picketing to shut down the entire power industry in Victoria or for avoiding any reliance in the "neutrality" of the bosses' Arbitration Commission, the Healyite Socialist Labour League (SLL) and the reformist Socialist Workers Party/Communist League (SWP/CL) demonstrated again how hollow their claim to Trotskyism is.

After being hoodwinked into a 13 October return to work on the promise of a reply from the Arbitration Commission *within four days*, the workers were told by their Communist Party misleaders to remain at work yet another day while the Arbitration Commission dawdled (and then offered nothing). The SWP's advice? Stay at work:

"Initially there was strong opposition to this motion, but most workers came to realise that they had no choice ... having made the decision to return and give the commission three days from the end of the hearing to make its decision, it would have been tactically suicidal to walk out then." (*Direct Action/Militant*, 20 October)

What the SWP/CL found "tactically suicidal" was *not* engendering dangerous illusions in the Arbitration Commission, *not* significantly weakening the fighting position of the strikers (by repairing machinery for one more day), but affronting bourgeois public opinion by defying the *etiquette* of the Arbitration Commission! Little wonder that the SWP/CL could not even bring itself to denounce what was a self-evident *betrayal* and settled instead for a light rap on Halfpenny's knuckles for having "failed to take a lead in broadening the fight" (*Direct Action/Militant*, 3 November).

As for the SLL, the principal "lesson" it adduced from the strike defeat was that the crucially necessary call for mass pickets was a "provocation"! The Spartacist League (SL) is therefore "provocative" and "dubious" because we "issue[d] strident demands for the reinstatement of the picket (after picketing had been successful) and issue[d] the meaningless [?!] call for a 'class struggle leadership'" (*Workers News*, 3 November). Consistency not being one of the SLL's virtues, these cowards had only three weeks earlier vilified the SWP — on the basis of a fabrication — for precisely the opposite reason: urging "that workers should hold back from industrial action so as not to 'provoke' the Liberal Government" (*Workers News* 13 October).

Hearing of the SLL slander, shop steward George Wragg commented to *ASp*: "I fail to see how anyone can say that the role of the Spartacist League in the Valley can be described as 'provocative' or 'dubious' in any way". Fellow strike activist Max Strong denounced the Healyites' scurrilous manoeuvre for what it was: "These tactics I have witnessed before in workers' struggles and they do not do any good to further the working-class movement".

When the Healyites blew into Morwell with a "public" meeting billed as "Lessons of the LaTrobe Valley Strike" on 9 November, Wragg, Strong and several other militants treated them to a first-hand lesson in workers democracy. To console their sheltered ranks, *Workers News* (17 November) simply lies about the incident:

"On Wednesday November 9 some 11 Spartacists, the majority of the Spartacists national membership, and one member of the International Socialists took part in a picket of an SLL public meeting at the town of Morwell...."

To begin with, there was no picket and only eight SL supporters were present. When the Healyites followed their customary procedure of barring our comrades from this "public" meeting,

each and every one of the power workers adamantly refused to legitimise this undemocratic exclusion through their attendance. One militant sensibly responded to the Healyites' pretext of SL "disruption": "Well, if they try to disrupt *we'll* keep order!" Finally the five Healyites were left to conduct their "public meeting" by themselves as everyone else, including six or seven power workers, went off to hold a real discussion on the lessons of the strike elsewhere.

This is not the first time the Healyites have hidden their cowardly opposition to mass pickets beneath the cop-baiting slander of "provocation". They did so during the Fairfax strike last year



Pickets fend off cop/vigilante attack during 1934 Minneapolis general strike. SLL would have denounced Trotskyist strike leaders as "provocateurs".

as well (see *ASp* no 39, February 1977). Well-organised mass pickets are an indispensable weapon in the class struggle. While a picket line spontaneously set up by the power strikers demonstrated the importance of this tactic to the strike's victory by putting a stop to fuel deliveries, the failure to maintain and extend the pickets meant that non-striking unions were allowed to continue operating those power stations which had not fallen into disrepair.

For the SLL — and the SWP/CL — preventing the isolation of the strike meant restraining its militancy, thus setting it up for defeat. Some strike militants, on the other hand, expressed fears that extending the strike by calling out non-striking unions would find the militant strikers swamped by more conservative elements. What was necessary, what we called for, was to *politically transform* the strikers' militant

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End of the road for the Communist League The politics of capitulation



One year after John McCarthy and his rag-tag clique of fellow cynics went over to the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in their rapid plunge toward political extinction, the Communist League (CL) -- the organisation McCarthy founded, led and abandoned -- has followed suit. Nurtured in the Mandelite method of political adaptation and tailism, caught in the "dynamic" of its tendency's rightward motion, unable to confront its legacy of failures, and faced with a virtual ultimatum to merge from its international leaders in the United Secretariat (USec) majority, the CL has given up.

A procession of joint forums, joint interventions and a joint campaign in Sydney municipal council elections in late September has been capped since 20 October by a joint newspaper whose bizarre format symbolises the terms of this new "fusion": the SWP has turned the CL front to back and upside down (as a current Brisbane joke has it). While the front pages of *Direct Action/Militant (DA/M)* brazenly defend the Brisbane SWP's cowardly and legalistic abstention from militant challenges to Bjelke-Petersen's ban on marches (see "Labour must defeat Queensland ban on marches", this issue) the back pages quietly cover up the Brisbane CL's publicly counterposed stance. Well before the 14 January date set for the fusion conference, the fusion is clearly an accomplished fact, and just as clearly on the SWP's terms -- lock, stock and barrel.

A look at the SWP/CL joint federal election manifesto (*DA/M*, 17 November) is enough to prove that. This program to be urged on the ALP misleaders never even rises to a token call for the expropriation of the capitalist class and addresses the question of state power only by demanding constitutional reforms of the parliamentary system. In a few places, such as with regard to the orientation to the women's movement and, in particular, abortion, careful and ambiguous formulations are offered to mask outstanding and major differences between the SWP and CL and, no doubt, to appease restive CLers. It is certain that the SWP leadership will not tolerate such diplomatic "ambiguities" much beyond the official fusion date.

Despite these niceties, this fusion -- like McCarthy's, which the CL last year labelled as "unprincipled" -- is justified on the grounds of agreement on (exclusively) national perspectives, ignoring sharp differences on international issues. Certainly the absence of significant domestic political issues on which the differing historical appetites of the CL and the SWP are sharply counterposed (with the momentary exception of the Brisbane events) facilitated the fusion. But in any event, such a national-parochialist basis for unity is completely anti-Marxist. And it is a fraud to boot. Under a heading phrased in appropriate social-democratic terms, "an anti-imperialist foreign policy", one finds the SWP line on such international questions as South Africa and the SWP's characteristic call for a "democratic secular Palestine".

A second justification advanced, again like last time, is adherence to a common "international". This is more to the point, but it has nothing to do with principles. The CL, quite simply, has been ordered to liquidate into the SWP -- or else. Thus this "fusion" poses in an immediate and graphic way the falsity of the USec's claim to be the Fourth International.

On one hand those in the CL bent on defending the "fusion" simply to stay in the USec will be compelled to bloc with the SWP against the raising of any criticism of the SWP line, even internally, for such criticism will inevitably be seen as interfering with the "fusion process". Its very logic impels a political shift toward

the reformism of the SWP. The glaring contrast between the reticence of the CL ranks and the enthusiasm of their leadership in defending their association with the SWP indicates there must already be a bloc of three inside the SWP/CL -- the SWP leadership, the SWP ranks and the CL leadership -- against any opposition to the union's consummation. And after the rather inept opportunism of the CL, even the relatively unimpressive SWP seems a better deal to the CL leadership than any fight for principles -- perhaps even offering the prospect of bureaucratic posts in the larger, more stable organisation.

Conversely, those who refuse to accept the SWP's politics, and therefore the fusion, will be repudiated by the USec. There is only one conclusion open to CLers who still find the reformist politics of the SWP repulsive: the USec is as unprincipled as the capitulation it is dictating. But to sell out to the SWP just to stay in this rather small-time international opportunist federation is to put a very low price on principle indeed.

Mandelite capitulationism -- from Guevara to Hansen

The USec's ultimatum to the CL is part of a recent rapprochement between the recently dissolved reformist Leninist-Trotskyist Faction (LTF) sponsored by the US SWP and the centrist



Before IMT's right turn -- CL touts Chilean guerrillaist MIR at 1974 demonstration.

International Majority Tendency (IMT) of Ernest Mandel, based on a rightward turn on an international plane by the IMT. The New Left "new vanguard" which it tailed has faded. Now, to accommodate themselves to the new wave of parliamentarist popular fronts in Western Europe, the Mandelites condemn the futile and disastrous guerrillaist/terrorist strategy they mindlessly lauded five years ago. Whereas the CL once echoed the IMT's vehement political defence of even the most indefensible, indiscriminate mass terrorism (such as the kidnapping of Israeli schoolchildren at Ma'alot by Palestinian commandos), today it joins the German pro-IMT Gruppe Internationale Marxisten (GIM) in capitulating to the "anti-terrorist" hysteria in West Germany in the wake of the Schleyer kidnapping. The GIM offers the bourgeoisie a "real" program to fight terrorism, through social reform (see *ASP* no 48, November 1977) -- refusing even to unambiguously defend the petty-bourgeois terrorists of the RAF against bourgeois state repression. This piece of cowardly treachery is tacitly endorsed by a *DA/M* editorial (27 October) and explicitly defended in the French Mandelite paper, *Rouge* (quoted in *Intercontinental Press*, 14 November).

Several years ago, while it was still the IMT's section in Argentina, the openly Guevarist PRT(C) (Revolutionary Workers Party [Combatiente]) carried out "urban guerrilla" actions similar to the Schleyer kidnapping. In a recent "Self-Criticism on Latin America" the IMT grudgingly acknowledges, eight years after the fact, its conscious capitulation to PRT(C) guerrillaism as part of the IMT's project of "becoming integrated" into the Castroist "new vanguard":

"... it is also clear that in reality the [1969 Ninth World Congress] resolution [advocating guerrillaism] was a political compromise aimed at keeping the PRT(C) in the ranks of the International...."

"... what was seriously incorrect (and ineffective to boot!) was to carry this operation out at the cost of political concessions." (US SWP *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, vol xiii no 8, December 1976; emphasis in original)

"At the cost of political concessions"! The experienced, long-time opportunist cadre leading the USec were no misguided babes in the woods. Making rotten "political concessions" for short-term gains has always been the method of the USec's Pabloism.

Mandel's capitulationist modus operandi was pegged as far back as 1951, when he dropped his "Ten Theses", a flawed but nonetheless necessary response to Pablo's revisionism, in order to make an unprincipled bloc with Pablo: "... to cheat with ideas, to consciously make an unprincipled bloc by renouncing defending one's ideas ... is a very serious disorder which calls for the most explicit reservations about the 'leader' who presents symptoms of it" ("Open Letter to Cde. Ernest Germain [Mandel]", *Parti Communiste Internationaliste Internal Bulletin* no 278, July 1951). The history of Pabloism since then is replete with disingenuous "self-criticisms" of opportunist "errors" and "miscalculations" which were in fact conscious, systematic adaptations to non-revolutionary currents.

Today Mandel, dumping the guerrilla line as easily as in the past he repudiated previous failed adaptations, concludes another rotten compromise -- with the SWP. The US SWP is satisfied. It has achieved what it chiefly wanted: to prevent its association with the USec from identifying the SWP with anything as unrespectable in the eyes of the American bourgeoisie as the now repudiated support to guerrillaism. At the same time the SWP brazenly proclaims the principle of its freedom from any kind of international discipline, which it has in any case exercised in practice for years. And while the IMT has drifted rightward the SWP has deepened its own reformism, as illustrated by its abandonment in practice of unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union. Whatever "reservations" and "differences" are expressed, Mandel has made it clear he accepts the SWP's terms for maintaining "unity" in the USec. After all, the new IMT declaration of tendency this year stated categorically that the LTF had not "degenerated" from Trotskyism.

The Communist League: a history of failure

When McCarthy defected to the SWP, the indignant CL asked him rhetorically: Where was his balance sheet on the four years of the CL's existence? Was it all a mistake? Although his action answered "yes" to the latter, McCarthy could scarcely afford to give an open accounting. But the CL could not and cannot answer the questions itself. The same method of rotten compromise which has now led Mandel to order the CL's self-destruction characterised the CL throughout

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EDITOR'S NOTE: *The overthrow of capitalism in Indochina was a historic victory for the world proletariat, a victory achieved in spite of -- and to this day threatened by -- the Stalinist stranglehold over the Indochinese masses. Yet it was not only Maoists and other Stalinists who whitewashed the treacherous anti-proletarian policies of the Indochinese Stalinists -- most singularly evident, as the following article (adapted from Workers Vanguard no 180, 4 November 1977) describes, in the patently anti-Marxist Khmer Rouge leadership.*

The ostensible Trotskyists of the Mandeliste majority wing of the United Secretariat, represented in this country by the soon-to-vanish Communist League (CL), were among the loudest cheerleaders for the Indochinese Stalinists. French Mandeliste and Indochina "expert", Pierre Rousset, labelled the Vietnamese Communist Party "revolutionary" -- "a party capable of playing a determining subjective role in the victory of the national revolutionary process" (International Socialist Review, April 1974; emphasis added). Echoing Rousset, the CL hailed not only the "military advances of the revolutionary forces" in Cambodia and Vietnam, but the "political" ones as well (Militant, April 1975) and uncritically apologised for the ("very well organised") criminal dismemberment of Cambodia's only urban centre (Militant, 27 May 1975). Ironically, in their collapse into reformism the centrist CL is about to join forces with a tendency (the Socialist Workers Party) which still refuses to recognise even that a social overturn was accomplished in Indochina in 1975!

★ ★ ★

When Pol Pot of Democratic Kampuchea -- formerly known as Saloth Sar of the Royal Government of National Union -- surfaced several months ago in Peking, it was revealed to the world (and to his countrymen) that he was not only prime minister of Cambodia but also secretary of the central committee of the Khmer Communist Party. The laconic Chinese announcement of his visit was, moreover, the first official admission of the existence of the Cambodian CP, which was said to be in the midst of celebrating its 17th anniversary (the previous 16 having slipped by unnoticed).

The world bourgeois press promptly seized on this rare public appearance to speculate on rumoured power struggles behind the scenes and tried to fit some new pieces into the "Cambodian puzzle". After the country had been pounded for five years by massive US bombing, the 1975 liberation of the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh from the venal Lon Nol clique provided a shocking spectacle as the victorious Khmer Rouge troops drove out the entire population of 3 million at gunpoint. Even war criminal Henry Kissinger, the architect of the 1970 American-South Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia and of the murderous 1974 Christmas bombing of Hanoi, felt he could get away with condemning the Communists' "inhumanity". It may not be quite the "1984"-style death camp dreamed up by the more fevered reactionary ideologues, but the information that is available and believable indicates that life in Cambodia is indeed quite grim, harsh and terrifying.

This in no way vitiates, but on the contrary verifies, the perspective of proletarian socialist revolution. Unlike the liberals, who now claim they were "duped", and the Stalinists, who simply deny reality, Trotskyists have no need to despair or resort to lies. The Spartacist League hailed the overthrow of capitalist rule in Indochina as a historic conquest, but placed absolutely no confidence in the Stalinist bureaucracies who came to power in the wake of the peasant-guerrilla struggle. The undoubted atrocities perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge, as well as the enforced national isolation and irrational economic destruction they have decreed, underline the need for a proletarian political revolution in the degenerated and deformed workers states to overthrow the Stalinist ruling castes and establish the democratic rule of soviet power.

"Self-reliance", Khmer-style

Like the Albanians, North Koreans and other Stalinist regimes in small, poor countries, the Cambodian CP has made a fetish out of economic "self-reliance". Since coming to power the Khmer Rouge have managed to almost completely cut off Cambodia from the outside world. Wrapping themselves in a hysterical xenophobia directed not only against its capitalist neighbour Thailand, but also against Laos and Vietnam, the rare public statements by the new rulers in Phnom Penh have emphasised the sanctity of Cambodia's borders and glorified ancient Khmer traditions.

The unexpected action of the victorious Khmer Rouge in forcibly depopulating the Cambodian capital had a tremendous impact on bourgeois public opinion. But it came as an even more traumatic shock to the exhausted and starving population of the beleaguered city. When it was all over, Phnom Penh was a ghost town, with only a few abandoned cars standing on the deserted streets, their tyres and bodies often riddled with bullets by the frustrated soldiers unable

to make them function. Young Khmer peasant soldiers broke into the banks, throwing thousands of now-worthless bank notes into the Mekong or burning them in huge bonfires, along with books from the library. (Cambodia today still has no money.) Meanwhile, in the countryside, those who survived the exhausting trek often found themselves clearing forests, without food, clean water or medicine.

Now, in fact, a good part of the misery and suffering of the Cambodian people immediately following the April, 1975 victory of the Khmer Rouge cannot be laid at the Stalinists' doorstep. They inherited a devastated country on which the US imperialists had rained more than half a million tons of bombs, reducing most of the towns to rubble and slaughtering an estimated 600,000 people (out of a total population of 7 million). Phnom Penh had been swollen to five times its pre-war size, and even the American government admitted that the population of the capital could not be maintained without a continuous airlift.

But while denouncing the imperialist butchery, the international Spartacist tendency did not excuse the Stalinist bureaucratic atrocities. We wrote at the time:

"The contradictory character of Stalinism was nowhere more graphically revealed than in the actions of the victorious Cambodian peasant army marching into Phnom Penh not to liberate

graphs (!) of the new society -- all assertions about repression in Democratic Kampuchea are simply CIA-concocted slanders. Why, he writes (*Guardian*, 14 January 1976), the new Khmer constitution "is as Cambodian as 'prahok,' the fish sauce indispensable for any Cambodian meal"! Undoubtedly, the vast majority of the Cambodian people would eagerly exchange "their" constitution for a single bowl of "prahok".

Cambodia: a really deformed workers state

Such utterly cynical Stalinist apologetics are, in their own way, as revolting as the malicious ravings of right-wing journalists, whose nostalgia for the "good old days" of comprador capitalism is packaged in such trashy pulp "exposes" as *Murder of a Gentle Land* (New York, 1977), by two *Reader's Digest* editors, John Barron and Anthony Paul. In their imperialist tourist mythology, Phnom Penh had been "a city of tranquility and orderliness, a city of gentle, laughing people, a city of striking women and good cuisine, a city of easy days and amiable nights". With languid racism they bemoan the crushing of "the Khmer ideal, which is to 'listen to the wind blow, watch the rice grow and make love'".

However, it is not only the open reactionaries such as Barron and Paul who have expressed outrage at the brutality of the Khmer Rouge regime. Even such notable "progressives" as French author

Cambodia: peasant Stalinism run amok



Forced-draft peasant labourers in Cambodia.

the poor and working people but rather to impose an immediate and total depopulation of the city...

"In Cambodia some urban depopulation was indeed called for. The towns had become unmanageably swollen with refugees from the countryside, most driven there by U.S. saturation bombing. But Phnom Penh, which had already discharged its thin layer of capitalists, also contained a stratum of workers and petty bourgeoisie constituting the only developed basis of Cambodia's urban economy. For Marxists it is crucial to preserve this economic infrastructure while beginning an orderly program for the relocation of the peasant refugees. In any case the working and poor population should have itself decided in democratic soviets how to deal with artificially overpopulated cities. Certainly they would not decide to drive out the aged and the infirm, which surely would kill them." (*Indochina: Deformed Revolution*, *Workers Vanguard* no 72, 4 July 1975)

The Cambodian Stalinists' real fear was not the "enemy spy organizations" of retreating US imperialism, as Pol Pot claimed (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 21 October 1977), but that with their small military force they would be unable to control a large urban population. At the time of their victory the Khmer Rouge were estimated to have only 70,000 soldiers and a cadre of roughly 1000 (according to William Shawcross, writing in the 4 March 1976 *New York Review of Books*). Refugees have reported that villages of 750 people are controlled by only a dozen or so soldiers. In addition, the Khmer Rouge army, formed through years of guerrilla fighting in the countryside, was a peasant army whose attitude toward the cities was one of hostility and suspicion. The combination of a successful peasant revolt and an extremely narrow Stalinist layer at the top accounts for the unusually brutal consolidation of the Cambodian deformed workers state.

But, even given the paucity of written material for foreign consumption, the Cambodian Stalinists have their ardent apologists. Notable "Third World" buff Wilfred Burchett, writing from Paris, has explained at length that -- based on his great familiarity with the Khmer people, discussions with "responsible cadres", and photo-

Jean Lacouture, long-time friend of the Viet Minh, have expressed horror and shock at the brutality of the Cambodian Stalinists. Like the liberal American "China hands", Lacouture saw the Khmer Rouge as simple "agrarian reformers" and was dismayed when their Stalinist face showed through. In a review of *Cambodge, arnee zero* by the French Catholic priest Francois Ponchaud, who spent ten years in the country prior to the demise of Lon Nol, Lacouture flatly asserts that in Cambodia "the bloodiest revolution in history is now taking place".

Lacouture's sadder-but-wiser liberal disillusionment ("Here is only madness.") fits right in with the 1950s-style, "God That Failed" rhetoric of 110 former US "peace movement leaders" who last year signed a statement criticising Vietnam for "violations of human rights". But where this was not simply deliberate pro-imperialist propaganda, it only revealed the inability of liberal moralists to understand fundamental social questions such as revolution and counterrevolution.

The truth about Cambodia lies neither with the Stalinist regime and its starry-eyed apologists nor with the bourgeoisie's hired pundits and the incomprehending, horrified liberals. Cambodia, a very backward peasant country ruled by a very weak Stalinist bureaucracy, embodies in heightened form all the contradictions of the deformed workers states. In order to defend Cambodia against imperialism it is not necessary to prettify the real bureaucratic terror and senseless suffering engendered by its present rulers. It is necessary to understand their origins.

Were there massacres? Undoubtedly. There was certainly plenty of killing, as inevitably accompanies the extension of a revolution throughout the country. Moreover, these were intensified because of the extreme youthfulness and small numbers of the nervous Khmer Rouge troops. But while most refugees interviewed by the more objective Western journalists reported seeing dead bodies, actual reports of massacres referred mainly to executions of officers of Lon Nol's puppet army. The *Far Eastern Economic Review* reported:

"Life in Cambodia ... slowly returned to normal in 1976. One sure indicator, which

perhaps also demonstrated increasing Khmer Rouge social control, was the sharp drop in the number of refugees trekking to Thailand.... Unlike the situation in 1975, when refugees reported large-scale killings of officials and soldiers of the former regime, few executions seem to have occurred." (*Asia Yearbook 1977*)

There was and continues to be reported considerable discontent over the regime's collectivisation of agricultural production, which was apparently total and immediate. There are no private plots and the organisation of production is along military lines. The degree of regimentation equals that in China in the heyday of the communes during the Great Leap Forward; the amount of violence used to impose this organisation on a predominantly landowning peasantry recalls the forced-draft collectivisation campaign undertaken by Stalin in 1930-32, when millions died as a result of calculated starvation policies. While collectivisation is an important gain of the revolution, the Stalinists were incapable of carrying this out in any but a bureaucratic fashion, neither gradually nor with the consent of the working population. Moreover, the material-technical basis for a successful collectivisation of agricultural production is totally lacking in Cambodia.

But the truly staggering crime of the Khmer Stalinists was not massacres in general or bureaucratic arbitrariness per se, but the deliberate, murderous and apparently successful destruction of urban life. For a period of months this was evidently near-total in scope, and only now are the cities and towns slowly being repopulated. This was not simply a question of sweeping out prostitutes corrupted with Western ways, but represented a conscious program against industry. Even today:

"Our direction in this field [industry] is to consolidate and perfect [existing] factories, and we have no plans to build other factories," Pol Pot noted.... According to a report by the New China News Agency, about 100 factories and workshops had been put back into operation ... the factories were mostly repair shops or handicraft workshops." (*ibid*)

This "unique social revolution", because of the extreme nationalism and xenophobia of its Stalinist leadership combined with the peasant distrust of the cities has attacked the only economic means by which it could hope to begin to climb out of poverty. And the attack on the productive forces is not simply in material terms: in the course of depopulating the cities, the Cambodian Communist Party literally atomised what tiny proletariat the country possessed, while throwing the valuable skills of petty-bourgeois professionals to the winds.

While this is far from being "the bloodiest revolution in history", it is certainly one of the more irrational of recent Stalinist-led social upheavals. In part this is because the Cambodian case more closely resembles a classical *jacquerie* and the bloody elemental peasant revolts of the pre-capitalist era. These outbursts of suppressed rage at brutal oppression have always left in their wake vast devastation and carnage -- the smouldering ruins of landlords' chateaus, the heads of tax collectors on pikes.

The tremendous repression and seemingly irrational depopulation of Phnom Penh and the Cam-

bodian towns is also an extreme reflection of the consequences of the Stalinist attempt to build "socialism in one country". It is not simply a question of the bizarre lengths to which a penurious, isolated Asian peasant country will go in "self-reliance". Stalinist policy in Soviet Russia as well required the imposition of a brutal bureaucratic police apparatus to seek to isolate the relatively backward country from the

organisation of the rulers before they overran the capitals; but in those few cases where they were successful, the peasants proved incapable of ruling. The wave of enthusiasm for peasant-guerrilla warfare during the 1960s notwithstanding, the peasantry has not changed fundamentally as a class. To be capable of coherent political action in modern times it has required the imposition of military/bureaucratic control



Victorious Khmer Rouge troops enter Phnom Penh (1975).

powerful disintegrating pressures of the world market. Marxists since Marx himself, and the Trotskyists today, have held that socialism -- the abolition of class society through overcoming the socially necessary division of labour as a result of material abundance -- cannot occur in a single country, and that even the dictatorship of the proletariat will be endangered if the revolution is not spread internationally. As Marx wrote in *The German Ideology*:

"... this development of productive forces ... is an absolutely necessary practical premise

from the outside, in the form of a Stalinist apparatus.

And even then, Stalinist-led peasant-based guerrilla armies took power in Indochina only under exceptional historic circumstances, in which US imperialism was unable to continue the exhausting war and the native capitalist class was extremely weak, corrupt and disorganised. If in spite of their best efforts to preserve the integuments of capitalism through forming coalition governments, the Stalinists were finally forced to take power, the resulting regimes -- not only in Cambodia, but also in Vietnam (north and south) and China -- remain *bureaucratically deformed* workers states. Their narrow nationalism and economic backwardness cannot be overcome by a rigidly imposed Operation Bootstrap, but only a workers political revolution to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucrats and extend the revolution internationally.

Lenin occasionally wrote in the early 1920s of a "non-capitalist road of development" for the most backward countries of the East. He and the Communist International always stressed, however, that the key was the tie to the victorious Soviet state. Today this argument is totally distorted by the Kremlin bureaucrats to maintain that Egypt, Ethiopia or even India can develop along "non-capitalist" lines so long as they trade with the USSR. What Lenin and the early Comintern were referring to was something quite different, namely the case of Soviet Central Asia and Mongolia -- peasant and nomadic societies that were absorbed in toto into the Russian economy.

Something like this is today occurring with Laos, which has become a satellite of the economically and culturally far more advanced Vietnamese deformed workers state. Because of the long-standing subordination of the Laotian Stalinists to the Viet Minh and its successors, the degree of friction between the two state bureaucracies is evidently minimal. This, however, is a historical exception. In the Cambodian case, immediately following the victory of the Khmer Rouge, border incidents began multiplying not only with the Thais but also with the Vietnamese. (There are reportedly more Cambodian refugees in Vietnam than in Thailand.) While the Khmer Stalinist regime is certainly marked by extreme xenophobia, its clashes with the Vietnamese are fundamentally no different from the Russian-Chinese border dispute or the festering Albanian-Yugoslav tension.

It is no use counseling the Cambodian people to follow the relatively sensible example of the Laotians, for in any case it could not overcome the strong national animosities between Khmers and Vietnamese. (If it were absorbed under Hanoi's tutelage in a bureaucratically imposed Indochinese federation, Cambodia would doubtless suffer the same sorts of discrimination experienced by the non-Russian nationalities in the Stalinised USSR.) The long history of Vietnamese Stalinist betrayals of their one-time Cambodian comrades -- beginning with the sellout of the Khmer Rouge in the 1954 Geneva Accords -- is convincing proof that real economic integration and a truly democratic soviet federation of Indochina can only come through revolutionary action by the proletariat, above all in Vietnam, to overthrow its bureaucratic oppressors. And for this task the creation of an Indochinese Trotskyist vanguard party is the indispensable condition. ■



Mao Tse-tung (left), Ho Chi Minh -- Stalinist betrayers of Indochinese revolution.

because without it *want* is merely made general, and with *destitution* the struggle for necessities and all the old crap would necessarily be reproduced; and furthermore, because only with this universal development of productive forces is a *universal* intercourse between men established.... Without this, (1) communism could only exist as a local event; (2) the *forces* of intercourse themselves could not have developed as *universal*, hence intolerable powers ...; and (3) each extension of intercourse would abolish local communism." (emphasis in original)

If this was true of western European countries in the nineteenth century and Russia in the twentieth, how much more destructive power does the world market have on "Democratic Kampuchea" which faces the attraction of Japanese cars, motor bikes and pocket radios just across the Thai border. Precisely because of the tremendous power of the capitalist market -- not simply imperialist spies, although these could presumably be bought cheaply -- the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy must tighten its grip even further by building up an even more terrifying repressive apparatus.

In world history, the innumerable peasant rebellions against landlords and autocratic regimes came to naught, for the peasantry was not a progressive class with a clear class interest around which it could mould a new society based on a higher level of productive forces. Usually they were defeated by the superior technology and

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Near East . . .

Continued from page one

(Syria for example). The Palestinians are understandably outraged. Sadat's announcement of his proposed visit coincided with some of the worst Israeli terror-bombing raids on Southern Lebanon in the last two years, as Israeli air strikes massacred over 100 Arab villagers in and around the port of Tyre.

The Egyptian president certainly went out of his way to offend Arab nationalists. In his speech to the Knesset he failed to demand that the PLO be present in any Geneva talks. He kissed the leading rabbi and Golda Meir, and as if that wasn't enough, he went to pray at the Al Aksa Mosque in occupied East Jerusalem (thereby implicitly recognising the Zionist expansionist claims). Damascus declared a "day of mourning", while Libya extended its boycott of Israel to include Egypt. In Cairo Sadat's foreign minister Ismail Fahmy resigned in protest, and his successor stepped down shortly thereafter.

While the Western press has hailed Sadat's "bold initiative", there is general (but guardedly expressed) recognition that his chances for any success are extremely slim. Carter called it the most important peace mission of the decade but also urged Begin not to send the Egyptian leader home "without something significant". For behind Begin's posture of openness lies the reality of an Israeli war machine that has expanded enormously since the 1973 war. More than \$1 billion of US military aid has been allocated for this fiscal year alone; the Israeli arms industry now produces 40 percent of its total arsenal (including tanks, missiles and fighter planes), and Israel's nuclear capacity is an open secret.

In reality Sadat's personal presence in Jerusalem is not a significant step toward peace in the Near East. Nor has Sadat suddenly become a "traitor" to the anti-Zionist cause and Palestinian national rights. Neither Sadat nor Nasser nor Assad nor any Arab head of state has ever stood for the just national rights of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian cause was simply a *pretext* for territorial expansionism; anti-Zionist Arab nationalism has been a vehicle enabling bourgeois rulers, from Nasserite Egypt to Ba'athist Syria, to direct the masses' anger against the *foreign* enemy.

When in 1948 the Zionists (with the bloody Irgun terrorist Menahem Begin leading the pack) drove out the Palestinian Arabs, Egypt, Trans-Jordan and Syria fought to *carve up* the former British mandate for themselves. The 1967 and 1973 conflicts were likewise wars of territorial expansion on both sides. It is conflicting state ambitions, not the Palestinian question, which guarantee war between expansionist Israel and the surrounding Arab states. This does not mean that

a separate peace settlement could not be signed -- already Jordan's Hussein and Lebanese Maronites have more than cordial relations with their Zionist neighbour. But this is based on Israeli military predominance, and should the balance of forces shift then new wars could break out at any moment.

Following the 1973 war Sadat turned from military confrontation, dependent on an alliance with the Soviet Union, to a diplomatic offensive through alliance with US imperialism. Sadat has shown in every way that his regime desires to become a client of the US; his personal visit to Israel is designed to prove to Washington that he really accepts the Zionist state -- he only wants some territorial adjustments. While Begin might eventually make a deal for a large chunk of the Sinai (excepting Gaza and with conditions on the straits of Aqaba), Tel Aviv will defy Washington when it believes its vital national interests are at stake. Sadat's latest diplomatic manoeuvre is based on an illusion shared by Arab nationalists and their international leftist sympathisers, namely that Israel is a US puppet state. Yet since the 1967 war Washington has pressured Israel to pull out of most of the occupied territories -- to no avail.

When confronting Israel the Arab ruling classes seek popular support by claiming to stand for "Palestinian national liberation" and the "Arab Revolution". Fake leftists tail along behind them, supporting one "anti-imperialist" colonel after another. When seeking through diplomacy what they cannot gain in war, the Arab rulers must openly conciliate Zionism, and their cheerleaders of yesterday cry "traitor".

While the Healyite Socialist Labour League slavishly echoes the every whim of Libyan anti-communist butcher Qaddafi, the equally fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) has long been the best builder of illusions in the petty-bourgeois nationalist PLO of Yasir Arafat and in a utopian bourgeois-democratic resolution to the Palestinian question. In a *Direct Action/Militant* (24 November) editorial the reformist SWP and its Communist League (CL) fusion partner echoed the bourgeois Arab regimes in denouncing "Sadat's treachery". Mourning Sadat's default as "a leader of the Arab world", the editorial was politically indistinguishable from any communique that could have come out of Baghdad or Damascus -- there was not so much as a lip-service mention of the existence of the class struggle in the Near East!

The short-term twists and turns imposed on these loyal tailists by their opportunism is truly breathtaking. Syria's Assad, once the outspoken darling of the "Arab Revolution", only became reactionary in the SWP/CL's eyes with his brutal massacres of Palestinian refugee camps during the Lebanese civil war last year. Now the SWP/CL finds itself once again on the same side as Assad and "all supporters of the Palestinian cause" in denouncing "Sadat's treachery", albeit with a hypocritical reminder "that other Arab regimes who now criticise Sadat have also repeatedly betrayed the Palestinian struggle"!

In 1939 the French ambassador to Germany, Coulonde, in his last talk with Hitler said, "I would also have the fear that as a result of the war, there would be only one real victor -- Mr Trotsky". The Nazi dictator accepted as self-evident this prediction of revolutionary upheaval in the wake of a conflagration between the imperialist powers. Today the Iranian Shah is certainly conscious of this danger inherent in a new Near East war and seeks to build up an army which can serve as a praetorian guard over the entire Persian Gulf area. Sadat, with one eye nervously looking over his shoulder at the restive Egyptian working masses, fears the same. The strikes and food riots in Cairo in January 1976 and 1977 shook Sadat's regime to the foundations; his army shot down scores and wounded hundreds of protesters.

And despite the myth of Israel as a solid reactionary mass, even Begin faces tremendous discontent at home over his anti-working-class economic policies and very real war-weariness which doubtless fed into the tumultuous welcome given Sadat. Only three weeks before Sadat's visit, Israel was rocked by a week-long wave of strikes and demonstrations in which well over half a million workers protested against Begin's new austerity program. The work stoppages, at various points, closed the port of Haifa, half the nation's banks and Ben Gurion National Airport; disrupted railway and postal services; and shut down scores of industrial plants from Beersheba in the South to the Galilee in the north. At a demonstration outside the prime minister's office in Jerusalem on 6 November, strikers were joined by hundreds of Arabs from the Jordanian sector of the city who chanted in unison, "Begin Go Home!"

Unlike the left cheerleaders for Arab nationalism, who characterise the Jewish population of Israel as a homogeneous oppressor caste, the Spartacist League has always pointed to the existence of a Hebrew-speaking proletariat which shares the same class interests as the oppressed Arab masses. A class-struggle, internationalist program which recognised the Hebrew

people's claim to a national existence could intersect opportunities such as the above-mentioned demonstration in order to break Israeli workers from Zionist chauvinism. The conflicting national rights of the intermingled Palestinian and Hebrew-speaking peoples cannot be resolved democratically by denying them to the latter, as the SWP/CL's call for a bourgeois "democratic secular Palestine" would.

The road to Palestinian national self-determination does not go through an alliance with the Arab bourgeois states against Israel. It lies in an alliance of the Arab workers and peasants with the Hebrew-speaking proletariat against the Begins, Sadats and Assads.

Israel out of the occupied territories! Down with the reactionary Zionist and Arab nationalist regimes! For the right of self-determination for the Palestinian and Hebrew people, which can be democratically realised only through Arab/Hebrew workers revolution! For a socialist federation of the Near East! ■

(adapted from Workers Vanguard no 183, 25 November 1977)

Election . . .

Continued from page one

cries of "Bring down the Fraser government!" Uniquely on the left, the Spartacist League pointed out at the time that, divorced from any new upsurge in the class struggle, this seemingly militant slogan could mean nothing but a call for new elections and a vote of political confidence in the reformist ALP misleadership of the working class. Now that the long-awaited elections are finally here the actual content of the fake left's anti-Fraser rhetoric is clearer than ever. With "LABOR CAN WIN" hopefully emblazoned across the front pages of almost every "left" publication, each group predicates a Labor victory on the ALP adopting its particular shopping list of reforms.

Leninists are not *obligated* to give electoral support to mass reformist -- ie bourgeois workers -- parties. Critical support is a *tactic* whereby revolutionaries seek to expose the treachery of labour's parliamentarist misleaders and explain the need for a *workers government*, based on workers organisations, as opposed to the parliamentary trappings of capitalist class rule. Revisionists, on the other hand, use the cover of "critical support" to give political support to the administration by Labor in office of the *capitalist state*.

Prominent among these is the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party/Communist League (SWP/CL), which is simply playing the role of "left" propagandists for Labor. After a perfunctory disclaimer of any confidence in the ALP leadership, the SWP/CL declares, "This reactionary, capitalist government must be replaced by a Labor government" (*Direct Action/Militant*, 3 November). Was the Whitlam government any *less* capitalist? Perhaps not -- but it "*could have*" been, according to the SWP/CL! It "*could have*", among other things, "legislated a shorter work-week and nationalisation of firms threatening lay-offs to provide more jobs". Like all reformists, the SWP/CL really believes deep down that the bourgeois state is neutral -- capable of serving as an instrument to systematically reform capitalist society in the workers interests if only the right party is in government.

A number of ostensibly revolutionary organisations are also standing candidates. Communists may sometimes urge a vote for small left-reformist or centrist groupings lacking a significant mass base if the thrust of their election campaign breaks qualitatively with the parliamentarist, reformist road of the ALP on key issues facing the working class. The reformist Communist Party (CPA) and pro-Moscow Stalinist Socialist Party candidates, however, present no

correction

The article "Fraser calls election on union bashing" (*ASP* no 48, November 1977) contains a misleading statement: "However distorted, the ALP is an expression of the political independence of the working class; thus we call for a vote to it against the open parties of the bosses". In fact, the ALP as a mass reformist workers party has a contradictory character; it is *also*, through its reformist leadership and program, the means by which the working class is politically subordinated to the bourgeoisie. Thus there *are* circumstances in which a vote to the ALP could not be an expression, however deformed, of class independence, and would not be advocated by revolutionaries. ■

Defend Barry York

In a blatant act of political victimisation the Victorian Education Department has denied Barry York a full-time teaching post because he is a "political activist". The blacklisting of York is a direct threat to all left-wing teachers and must be resisted. The Technical Teachers Association (TTAV), the Secondary Teachers Association and the Victorian Teachers Union must mobilise their membership to take whatever action -- including industrial action -- is necessary to guarantee York's right to a job.

But this "quiet sort of bloke", as several headmaster character witnesses describe him in a TTAV defence dossier, is a wretched Stalinist hooligan. In 1975 he took part in a vicious assault on several SL supporters at LaTrobe University which led to the hospitalisation of one of our comrades. However unlike the "patriotic" York we understand the need for workers democracy and class solidarity. We denounce York's victimisation and demand his immediate appointment to a teaching post!

Defend anti-Eysenck protestors

Sixteen Sydney University students face expulsion, suspension or fines for allegedly participating in demonstrations against the appearance on campus of the racist apologist Hans Eysenck on 16 and 23 September. The students are to be "tried" by the acting Vice-Chancellor over the summer vacation. The Administration's attempt to rid itself of leftists through this outrageous Star-Chamber procedure must be stopped! All the charges must be dropped!

Though the Sydney University Spartacist Club solidified with the anti-racist thrust of the anti-Eysenck protests, we pointed out that Eysenck is no fascist to be simply driven off campus. His racist, right-wing ideology must be defeated through trenchant materialist criticism linked to the program of social revolution.

such alternative; both, as usual, are standing on explicitly class-collaborationist platforms.

The Healyite Socialist Labour League (SLL), which is standing three candidates, claims to be far to the left of the CPA. But for all its bluster about building the "revolutionary party" to replace the Labor misleaders, the SLL incessantly echoes the reformist plea that the ALP traitors adopt "socialist policies" and is standing only against carefully selected "right-wing" ALP candidates. The SLL's electoral focus on "Victory to the PLO" underlines that a vote to these political bandits would be a vote for their public-relations campaign on behalf of anti-communist Libyan dictator, Muammar Qaddafi. It would be a vote for their opposition to the mass pickets needed to win the recent LaTrobe Valley strike; a vote for their incessant cop-baiting, slander and violence against other tendencies in the workers movement. Such is their real platform -- no vote to the SLL!

The revolutionary program is not a prescription for an ALP electoral victory, nor a device for eliciting reforms from an ALP-administered bosses' government. The ALP is a working-class party enjoying the support of millions of workers. We call for a vote to it on 10 December against the bosses' parties as an expression, however limited and distorted, of the need for an independent working-class alternative to the open political representatives of the bourgeoisie.

But the only real benefit of having the Labor traitors in office is that it offers revolutionaries the opportunity to expose their treachery in practice. We do not, like the revisionists, raise the call, "For a Labor government". We do not for a moment lend any support, however critical, to the ALP's administration in office of the capitalists' affairs. Unlike the revisionists, we seek to destroy the influence of the pro-capitalist ALP misleadership within the working class, to build the Leninist vanguard party in counterposition to it -- not to refurbish it with "socialist policies". Whitlam, Hawke, Uren and their ilk must be ousted and replaced with a revolutionary leadership of the working class committed, not to the bourgeois parliamentary fraud, but to smashing the bourgeois state and fighting for workers power. Vote Labor! Oust the bureaucrats! For a workers government based on workers organisations to expropriate the capitalist class! ■

Power Strike . . .

Continued from page two

defiance of the Arbitration Commission, of the state's strikebreaking ploys, of the wage-indexation system, into a *conscious* struggle to smash indexation and replace it with a full, union-determined cost-of-living escalator, to smash the penal powers and other anti-union legislation. Had such demands been raised non-striking workers could have been won to support of the strike *and* the militant tactics needed to win it. Not the revisionists' cringing concern with offending the bourgeois state or bourgeois public opinion, but the militant class-struggle strategy of a Trotskyist leadership is what was needed to win in the LaTrobe Valley! ■

Communist League . . .

Continued from page three

its history, leaving it no programmatic resistance to giving up the ghost.

From the time it walked out of the SWP disdaining a real political fight to its crawl back in five years later, the CL's whole political outlook was moulded by the illusion that a break from reformism could be accomplished by involvement "in struggle" *without* a political struggle for the revolutionary program. Repulsed by the SWP's methodical, calculating social-democratic tailism, the CL instead sought to "merge" or "integrate" itself into a different set of layers, more immediate and ephemeral. No sooner would one "new vanguard" default than the CL would discover another -- "socialist feminism", black nationalism, the old NSW BLF "green ban" milieus, militant (but by no means revolutionary) shop stewards in various strike situations.

During the 1975 political crisis the SWP's whole tendency was to help the big-time reformists to *hold back* the brief upsurge of spontaneous mass action. The SWP's reformism was so blatant that the CL even refused to support its election campaign. But despite the CL's revolutionary rhetoric, its support for a general strike and its criticism of the Labor misleaders who sought to derail it, the CL too adapted to social democracy by capitulating to spontaneity -- to the democratic, reformist illusions which dominated the spontaneous movement. Postulating

the creation of another "new militant vanguard" in the wake of the political crisis, the CL went one step further with a "mass line" right turn which openly accommodated to illusions in left Laborism with the cry, "Bring down the Fraser government!"

Even the CL's self-lauded intervention into the 1976 Fairfax strike -- where it boasted of going "beyond the war of words" to "revolutionary action" (*Militant*, 7 December 1976) -- ended only in capitulation. Uncritically glorifying reformist shop-floor militancy, the CL posed as an alternative to the bureaucratic treachery of printers union secretary Frank Kelly the "militant leading role" of the avowedly non-revolutionary father of the chapel at Fairfax, Don Paget (*Militant*, 20 January 1977). Less than a year after the strike Kelly sold out, the CL was calling for his re-election against a noxious right-wing candidate (*DA/M*, 20 October)!

Leninist splits vs reformist "unity"

The rapprochement in the USec is conjunctural. With another outbreak of sharp class confrontation, the IMT and the ex-LTF may well find themselves again pursuing their conflicting appetites, as they did in Portugal (as even US SWP leader Barry Sheppard has admitted), from opposite sides of the barricades. But such a prospect leaves little hope for Mandel's (unwanted) followers here. By the time Mandel perhaps decides to do a new "self-criticism" those CLers who enter the SWP will have become housebroken hacks for the Percy apparatus or gone the way of McCarthy and company out of politics.

CLers who cling to the quixotic hope that they can win over the ranks of the SWP are deluding themselves. The SWP has the advantage of a hardened cynical cadre who will ruthlessly suppress any opposition that makes itself troublesome -- just as their American counterparts destroyed the pro-Mandel Internationalist Tendency (with Mandel's tacit acceptance) -- and a membership which is, in the main, if anything to the right of its leadership, recruited as it is to such unabashedly reformist politics as liberal feminism, electoralism and legalist pacifism. But more centrally, the SWP's consistent reformist orientation toward social democracy eventually would have had to win out over the CL's centrism. It is no accident that the far superior, much larger centrist organisations of the 1930s which Trotsky combated in his struggle for the Fourth International have now been relegated by and large to footnotes in his writings. Under the grind of the class struggle, the only tendencies in the workers movement assured of any stability are those which reflect the counterposed interests of one or the other of the two decisive social classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat -- respectively reformism and bolshevism.

Thus, even the bleak prospect of "holding out" inside the SWP begs the central question: the ex-CL has no real program to offer. Unless they break from the IMT's conciliationism dissident CLers will have no argument against the fusion perspective, instead searching for the conditions which would make the fusion "principled". In other words, like the anti-fusion elements in the Canadian Revolutionary Marxist Group (see *ASP* no 48, November 1977), they will be reduced to haggling over the terms of surrender. But in every central political test of t'pday's international class struggle, the SWP consciously betrays the proletariat. At issue is not the abstract desirability of "unity" but the concrete need for a split of the revolutionists from the SWP's reformism and a struggle to the death with it.

In the struggle to build the International Left Opposition and the Fourth International Trotsky encountered all manner of groupings claiming to be "revolutionary" and "Trotskyist". Repeatedly Trotsky insisted on a stringent ideological demarcation and political clarification, putting forward as decisive criteria for evaluating tendencies a series of concrete programmatic points decisive in the international class struggle.

Today Barry Sheppard of the US SWP can wax enthusiastic that:

"Every previous faction struggle of such scope, beginning with the Oehlerites in the US and their co-thinkers in Western Europe in 1934-35 ... ended in splits. This time, although the questions involved were as important, we were able to avoid an international split. That is a great conquest for us all." (*US SWP International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, vol xiv no 8, September 1977)

In one breath Sheppard dismisses the Oehlerite fight, the splits over the POUM, Trotsky's fight against the Shachtman-Burnham opposition, and of course the 1953 split. But Sheppard can do this only because Mandel and company have accepted the same framework -- one which rejects *principled* agreement for rotten "unity", one which would also condemn Lenin's split with the Mensheviks and with the Second International!

For Leninists, organisational unity flows from programmatic agreement. The recent fusion be-

tween the iST and the Chilean Organization Trotskista Revolucionaria was initiated on the basis of an initial thoroughgoing agreement over the key question of the popular front. Nonetheless it required a year-long political struggle for clarification of other principled questions and required a split within the OTR before it could be consummated.

A brief survey of the Australian left quickly reveals the simple truth: aside from the Trotskyism of the Spartacist League there now remains no even apparently credible left alternative to the SWP. There is only the ocker-reformist, third campist International Socialists or the discredited slanderers and press agents for Qaddafi in the Healyite Socialist Labour League. This is of course no accident. The international Spartacist tendency is uniquely committed to uncompromising struggle for the revolutionary proletarian program. Consequently we have had no need to cover up or hypocritically "self-criticise" one betrayal after another.

Unlike Mandel, we do not lightly dismiss the destruction of potentially revolutionary cadre who were falsely attracted to the CL/IMT as an alternative to the SWP's crass class collaborationism. But we also know that revolutionaries are fighters. Revolutions are not made, much less led, by losers. It is necessary to fight against the capitulation; but the fight against reformism requires a program. It can only be a fight for the politics of the international Spartacist tendency and for the rebirth of the Fourth International. ■

Queensland . . .

Continued from page eight

forced to coordinate its activities with the bitterly despised SWP, it could not be relied on as a militant bloc partner.

So heated have tensions between the ostensible fusion partners become that, according to one witness, SWPer Annear sniped at Cler Gary McClennan (at the conclusion of a public talk by leading Cler John Garcia on 7 November): If you call me a coward once again, I'm going to knock your block off! The CL has regularly and openly voted and spoken against the SWP line in the Brisbane campaign. Enthusiastically leading chants of the Stalinist-populist refrain, "The people united will never be defeated", the Brisbane CL has wallowed in the "new vanguard being forged and tested in direct confrontations with the bourgeois State" (*Direct Action/Militant*, 27 October).

The cowardly legalism of the SWP is certainly repulsive; but the warmed-over New Left populism of its fusion partner is no closer to revolutionary politics, merely reflecting a different opportunist appetite. The Brisbane events demonstrate not only the bankrupt politics of the SWP and CL, but of their "fusion" as well. Neither cringing appeals to bourgeois respectability nor filling Bjelke-Petersen's jails with leftists will bring down the reactionary ban on marches, but only *militant, working-class* action. ■

We urge readers to send donations for bail and legal defence costs to Civil Liberties Defence Fund, Dave Lofthouse, c/- AMWSU, Trades Hall, Brisbane, Account No 907-313, Commonwealth Savings Bank, University of Queensland, St Lucia

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SWP preaches "peaceful, legal" cowardice

Labour must defeat Queensland ban on marches

Since 4 September, when Queensland's neanderthal premier, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, imposed a complete ban on (left-wing) political marches, Brisbane has been the scene of numerous massive confrontations between Queensland cops and opponents of the ban. Intent on ruthlessly suppressing any opposition to his anti-democratic edict, Petersen has mobilised fully one fourth of the state's police force to quell anti-ban protests. Over 800 demonstrators have been arrested, 418 on one day alone (at a 22 October anti-uranium rally) -- the largest single mass arrest in Australian history. Another 400 were arrested during rallies on 11 November and 3 December.

Declared on the pretext of preventing anti-uranium mobilisations, the ban is clearly an assault on the democratic rights of all Queensland residents -- particularly the left and labour movement. But active opposition has been organised primarily by a Civil Liberties Co-ordinating Committee (CLCC), a broad-based umbrella group which includes virtually the entire Brisbane left, individual trade unionists and other, disparate, elements. While the CLCC abstractly claims to recognise the necessity for mobilising the trade unions behind this campaign, its perspective has been generally limited to civil-disobedience tactics, laced with the rhetoric of confrontationist reformism characteristic of the New Left.

We solidarise with the personal courage and militancy exhibited by many CLCC activists. But a strategy limited essentially to marching repeatedly into the waiting arms (and batons) of Petersen's cops will ultimately lead only to dissipation and demoralisation. As one militant unionist, Neville Ashe (assistant port secretary in the Marine Stewards Federation, arrested at the 11 November rally told *ASP* shortly after his release from the South Brisbane Watchhouse, "There should have been ten to fifteen thousand trade unionists behind [the marchers]". A massive mobilisation organised through a statewide stopwork called by the Trades and Labour Council (TLC) -- not to surrender peacefully to the waiting cops but to brush them aside -- would make short shrift of Petersen's ban. The TLC would have to put Petersen on notice that in the unlikely event such a march were stopped through large-scale police violence and mass arrests, it would spark a statewide general strike. Yet for three months -- until its recent decision to co-sponsor the 3 December rally -- the TLC has not lifted a finger. Even then, its treacherous failure to mobilise for the action meant there

were as many cops as the 500 marchers.

Revolutionaries would continually hammer away at exposing in every way the ALP/TLC bureaucracy which obstructs this necessary mobilisation of organised labour. Yet when ALP federal senator George Georges confessed at a 10 November CLCC planning meeting that he felt "sensitive about the [12 November state parliamentary] elections" and that he was "under considerable pressure not to participate tomorrow", not one of the speakers there -- including the pseudo-revolutionaries of the so-called Socialist Caucus, which contains, among others, the International Socialists (IS) and the Communist League (CL) -- denounced the electoralist treachery of the ALP. Nor did they at the following day's rally, where in fact Georges succumbed to the ALP state executive's dictate not to speak.

But demanding a strategy which seeks to unleash the power of the labour movement does not mean abstaining from the struggle as it exists. At every step the cravenly reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) has argued against militant actions on the pretext that they would only provide the TLC/ALP tops (not to mention the churches!) "more excuses not to participate", as SWP speaker Peter Annear put it 11 November. Recapitulating the role of its American mentors in the US antiwar movement, where the US SWP regularly countered any sort of militancy with chants of "peaceful, legal", the SWP has earned the undisputed contempt of the Brisbane left for its reprehensible cowardice. While 418 of the 2000 marchers were being dragged off by the cops on 22 October, SWP participants in the rally were sitting in a nearby cafe -- "peacefully, legally" eating -- spied, ironically, by two campaign activists who had gone inside to solicit contributions for an emergency bail fund!



Brisbane cops attack 22 October anti-uranium march, arresting 418.

In an article entitled "Civil liberties and civil disobedience" (*Direct Action/Militant*, 17 November), clearly written to rationalise their despicable behaviour and call to order CLers who may be questioning the CL/SWP fusion as a result, SWPer Renfrey Clarke demonstrates that the SWP is, if anything, to the right of Mahatma Gandhi. Clarke attacks the civil-disobedience tactics of the Queensland campaign as "acts of compulsive martyrdom" which "can deter potential supporters". His alternative? -- "patient political organisation and propaganda work, leading up to mass demonstrations which may at times [!] involve planned, disciplined stand-off [!] confrontations with the police". The SWP's objection to civil disobedience is not that it is pacifist, but that it is not pacifist enough -- even "mass demonstrations" must go no farther than a "stand-off"!

There are circumstances under which revolutionaries will separate their forces from those of a small minority pursuing suicidally adventurist tactics. In any case, we would certainly argue against tactics which involve fruitless confrontations and arrests, as appeared to be the case with most of the relatively small march attempts thus far, where some 800 or less marchers have confronted an almost equal number of cops. But that can only be judged, case by case, on the basis of the relationship of forces. "As a general rule of conduct", as Trotsky noted in a letter urging his supporters to participate in a Stalinist-proposed adventurist action in 1929, revolutionaries "do not, under any circumstances, become separated from the most active section of the working class" ("Necessary Clarifications Concerning the First of August", *Writings*, 1929).

For the still unreconstructed Mandelites of the CL, the SWP's scandalous behaviour in Brisbane has provided a bitter taste of what life after fusion will be like, and it is not pleasant. The fusion and the CL's forced association with the pariahs of the SWP have become the butt of derision among the Brisbane left. When the IS and a number of independents first set up the Socialist Caucus, the fusion was offered as an (ultimately unsuccessful) excuse for the IS's sectarian refusal to open this propaganda bloc up to the CL: since the CL, it was held, would be

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Carrillo scabs for "human rights"

For seven long weeks campus workers at Yale University have been on strike. Even such thoroughly disgusting bourgeois politicians as Zionist butcher Golda Meir and US Democratic Party senator George McGovern have been forced to cancel appearances at Yale in order to maintain their counterfeit "friends of labour" credentials. Not so Santiago Carrillo. On 14 November the general secretary of the Communist Party of Spain (PCE) began a ten-day trip to the US by crossing the Yale picket lines to speak on the situation in Spain. As the smirking, sauntering Carrillo, accompanied by his police escort, crossed the picket line, he was confronted by fifty or more strikers, and several supporters of the Spartacist League/US carrying signs in Spanish and English proclaiming "Yale campus workers on strike - Don't cross!" and "Labor faker Carrillo scabs on Yale strike".

There could be no more graphic demonstration that the "Eurocommunist" leader's talk of "human rights" is simply pandering to the imperialist bourgeoisie. This was Carrillo's big chance to court Jimmy Carter and he wasn't going to blow it by respecting the picket line of an "unimportant" group of workers. Carrillo thus added to his long list of Stalinist credentials the title of scab.



Workers Vanguard