



Moro kidnapping: PCI demands witchhunt of far left

Anti-terrorist hysteria in Italy

The 16 March kidnapping of former Italian premier Aldo Moro on the streets of Rome amidst a hail of machine-gun bullets was not just another terrorist action in a country where assassinations and abductions have become commonplace. The most dramatic act of individual terrorism in post-war Europe, this elaborate operation carried out by the anarcho-Maoist "Red Brigades" (BR) with military-like efficiency was widely contrasted to the notorious incompetence of the Italian state machinery. But although it further discredited the regime, in its wake the BR attack evoked an unaccustomed delirium of "national unity" against terrorism which has been translated into decrees granting police the most sweeping powers of repression since the fall of Mussolini.

Rome was put under virtual military occupation as over 50,000 police and troops blocked all roads and conducted a house-to-house dragnet looking for Moro, to no avail. Even the Roman underworld joined the manhunt in order to hurry up a return to normality. Ruling Christian Democrats were thrown into a panic at the prospect that the five-time premier might be "induced to speak in a manner that could be disagreeable and dangerous in certain circumstances" (letter from Moro, quoted in *New York Times*, 30 March) and air the past 30 years of governmental dirty laundry.

With consummate cynicism, the government denounced the kidnapers' "terrorism" but refused to accede to Moro's own bitter and anguished pleas that it accept the BR's demand for the release of 13 imprisoned BR members, including its 33-year-old-leader, Renato Curcio. In response to a seven-page handwritten letter from Moro denouncing the party of which he was president for betraying him in the crisis of his life, the governing Christian Democratic Party replied that an exchange of prisoners would be "against respect owed to victims of terrorism and against the legal system of the republic" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 April).

Yet the most outspoken voice clamouring for "law and order" is none other than the Communist

Party (PCI), which for the first time in 30 years has now formally joined the government majority in parliament. Offering themselves up as the most fervent protector of the bourgeois order, the PCI demanded expansion of the state secret police and more vigorous suppression of "political criminality". The pro-Socialist news magazine *L'Espresso* (2 April) entitled its lead editorial, "From now on the duel is between the BR and the PCI. And the PCI cannot afford to lose".

Immediately following news of Moro's abduction, the unitary labour federation (CGIL-CISL-UIL) issued a call for a general strike against terrorism. (This was ironic since the unions had been threatening for months to call a general strike against the government's austerity policies, but always kept postponing it.) Hundreds of thousands throughout Italy attended mass demonstrations as the red banners of the PCI intermingled with the white flags of the Christian Democracy (DC) for the first time in decades. Even northern factories which had been considered strongholds of "far left" syndicalists joined in the general strike.

Moro - popular martyr for reaction

Prostrate before this massive outcry for capitalist law and order, most of the Italian far left has either retreated into timid neutrality or echoed the PCI's charges that the BR action was a rightist provocation (or the work of unnamed foreign intelligence agencies). When bourgeois hysteria wins popular support these inveterate tailists, who cheer on urban guerilla warfare (so long as it occurs elsewhere), abandon the duty of revolutionists to defend those who attack the symbols or representatives of the capitalist class.

But the BR's kidnapping of Moro was indeed extraordinarily stupid. Rather than accomplish its stated intention to "mobilize the most vast and unified armed initiative for the further growth of class war for communism" (BR communique, quoted in *Corriere della Sera*, 19 March), their action succeeded only in mobilising the most vast and unified outpouring of support for the bourgeois state and its repressive apparatus. The leading contender for Italian presidency next December, Moro is not a widely hated figure. Unlike many of his Christian Democratic cohorts, he was not a former fascist. He is best known as the architect of the DC's "opening toward the left" -- the coalition with the Socialists (PSI) in the 1960s -- and was the main protagonist within the DC of bringing the Commu-

nists into the parliamentary majority during the recent cabinet crisis.

The BR has supplied a popular martyr for what may well become one of the more reactionary popular fronts in history, if the PCI has its way. Following the kidnapping, a "state of peril" was proclaimed in Rome, under a Mussolini-era law according to which anyone may be arrested without constitutional guarantees "if necessary to re-establish or preserve public order" (*L'Espresso*, 26 March). In line with demands by PCI and Socialist senators, the army was called in to conduct the investigation. And the "anti-terrorist" decree issued by Prime Minister Andreotti two days after the Moro kidnapping includes mandatory life sentences for kidnappings where a death results, legalised wiretapping, detention without a warrant and interrogation without an attorney present.

The PCI has lent enthusiastic support to these

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While troops man roadblock near Rome (top), Stalinists demonstrate with Christian Democrats for "law and order".



From waving NLF flags
to burning them?

Maoists repudiate
Vietnam

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Italy . . .

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repressive measures. In open solidarity with the police, they mourned the death of Moro's *carabinieri* bodyguards killed in the assault: a wall poster signed by the PCI, Socialists and other major parties proclaims "Moro Abducted, Five Comrades Slain". As part of their active drive to organise a police union, they demand reinforcement of the "anti-terrorist" intelligence force of the secret police -- the future Italian Pinochets.

Not content to limit their treachery to calls for repression of the Red Brigades, they demand similar measures against their far left opponents in the *autonomia operaia* (workers autonomy): "Certain components of the workers autonomy constitute the logistical base, the point of support for the clandestine groups... These nuclei must be hunted down, the chains of solidarity broken", declared Communist deputy Ugo Pecchioli, the PCI's "shadow minister" of the interior (quoted in *Corriere della Sera*, 18 March).

The inevitable consequence of such measures -- moves toward a bonapartist "strong state" -- will be bourgeois terror aimed at the left and workers movement. Despite its loyal support for capitalist rule, the PCI will not be spared the bloody suppression it demands for others on the left. The PCI should recall the fate of the German social democrats, who relied on the Prussian police to protect them from the fascists.

Red Brigades: New Left Maoist anarcho-terrorism

The turn toward terrorism as a political weapon is in large part a reaction to the PCI's complete abandonment of even a pretence of class-struggle politics. The PCI, which kept the minority Christian Democrat government in power over the last months by abstaining on key issues in parliament, now actively backs the new DC government in exchange for a formal role in shaping legislation. The popular front has now been formally constituted; the PCI has passed from the antechamber of the "historic compromise" to the reception hall. In return the PCI is expected to deliver the unions for the austerity program which it itself supports: cuts in pensions, holding down wages, reducing imports, higher taxes.

The Italian bourgeoisie has been unable to deal with one of the worst unemployment rates in the industrialised West, particularly among the youth. A combative working class has wrested significant concessions, managing to keep pace with the soaring cost of living. In the political vacuum left by the reformists' open betrayals, terrorism and political nihilism has flourished among the semi-lumpenised young proletarians and students.

The bourgeois and PCI press is filled with speculation about sinister rightist forces and foreign spy agencies mixed up in the Moro kidnapping. These "hypotheses" -- whether advanced by the PCI or by the "far left" (including the French LCR's *Rouge* of 21 March) -- are simply an excuse to join in or capitulate to the bourgeois "anti-terrorist" outcry. The action was clearly timed to coincide with the opening of the much-postponed Red Brigades trial in Torino. As for the politics of the Red Brigades, they are clearly of New Left origins, expressed in a sociologese reminiscent of C Wright Mills, infused with despair of the working class:

"They know there will be no imminent mass uprising in Italy, no storming of the Bastille, so they have chosen urban guerrilla warfare as a means to promote revolution." (BR lawyer di Giovanni, quoted in *New York Times*, 30 March)

The Red Brigades' first actions were closely

tied to northern Italian factories where there has been a history of sharp clashes between a hated management and the rebellious workforce. Thus from 1969 to 1978 at the SIT-Siemens factory in Milano there have been four managers kidnapped, two armed actions, 18 automobiles of management personnel destroyed, four shootings and a colossal fire. Other factories where there have been fires and kidnappings claimed by the BR include Alfa Romeo (Milano) and Magneti Marelli (Genova). The Brigades have also executed several ultra-rightist and fascist thugs.

The targets of the Red Brigades have been the property, leading personnel and armed guards of the bourgeoisie. Although they call for international coordination among the "Fighting Communist Organizations", presumably including the likes of the German RAF, the BR have not been visibly tied with nationalist terrorists such as the Palestinian PFLP, nor have they taken credit for criminal acts of indiscriminate terror (such as the hijacking of a Lufthansa airliner in connection with the RAF's Schleyer kidnapping).

The Communist Party, however, seeks to lump the autonomos, anarchist-Maoist terrorists and the nihilistic "metropolitan Indians" together with the fascists as "criminals" and "enemies of the democratic state". Aside from the PCI's slanderous equation of leftists with ultra-reactionaries and its inveterate obscuring of the class line (between the violence of groups linked to the workers movement and the violence of the bourgeoisie), there are fundamental distinctions between anti-PCI New Leftism and nihilistic rage.

Both the Red Brigades and the diverse organisations and groupings loosely associated as "workers autonomy" can rightly be considered the products of the "class of '69". Born of a hatred of the slick class collaboration of the PCI, which frustrated the mass upsurge of the "hot autumn" of 1969, these groups represent the evolution of New Leftism in the absence of a renewed working-class rebellion. The BR, who trace their origins to the sociology department of the University of Trento and the radicalised Catholic youth movement, turned to terrorist attacks on representatives of the bourgeoisie out of frustration at the seemingly unshakable Stalinist stranglehold on the Italian working class.

Similarly the *autonomia operaia* groups grew out of the inability to consolidate a revolutionary opposition to the PCI in the trade unions, thus producing anti-trade-union workerism and a penchant for adventurist street confrontations with the police. The "metropolitan Indians", on the other hand, represent the total decomposition of the New Left into violent anti-working-class lumpen rage. The failure of any of the "far left" groups to oppose the PCI's popular frontism allowed these potentially dangerous anti-political nihilists access to masses of students and Italy's hundreds of thousands of perennially unemployed youth. A year ago we commented on the ominous potential of this decomposed New Leftism:

"With their anti-union impulses, petty-bourgeois rage and glorification of lumpenism the "Metropolitan Indians" quite conceivably could spawn significant recruits for the fascists, even though at present a blood line separates them." ("Italy rocked by student strikes", *ASP* no 42, May 1977)

The most notable effect of the BR's actions



Red Brigades prisoners in cage during trial in Turin. Renato Curcio on right.

has been stabilising and unifying the government and providing it with the pretext for vicious repression of the left. Under the pressure of bourgeois hysteria, most of the "far left" has buckled under. Some have equivocated, like Lotta Continua, coming out "... against fear, against the blackmail of the Red Brigades and that of the State". Unable to take sides between the capitalist state and the unpopular terrorists, they denounced both:

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letter

Melbourne

Dear comrades,

The article "Indonesia: twelve years after the bloodbath" in the last issue of *Australasian Spartacist* correctly locates the present situation in Indonesia within the context of the 1965 massacre. As the article points out, it is indicative of the dimensions of the disaster that so few signs of popular mass unrest have accompanied the protests of the students and the criticisms of the "Sick at Heart Brigade". It should be noted that the latter are not simply disgruntled generals dissatisfied with their current role but as well are representative of elements still actively and centrally involved in the "New Order", yet would like to clean things up a little. Ranging down from the general who has ice cream flown in from Manila by special plane whenever his children have a party to the petty tradings of the minor official, corruption is pervasive. In 1975 the state-owned oil corporation, Pertamina, collapsed -- almost bankrupting the whole economy. Yet, in a real sense the instability of the regime exists within a vacuum, the masses still stunned by the 1965 bloodbath.

There are several observations which are useful in understanding the situation in Indonesia today. The character of the student unrest described in the article bears a superficial parallel to the student demonstrations which played a key role in the fall of the Thanom Kittikachorn dictatorship in Thailand in 1973. The key difference is that the Thai student unrest was preceded by and took place within the context of working-class unrest, and the students who were initially predominantly monarchist split in the face of the social struggle into reactionary elements (who assisted in the lynchings of leftist student leaders in 1976) and an ostensibly revolutionary wing which developed ties with the underground Communist Party.

The absence of such pulls on the presently pro-junta student activists in Indonesia today, is part of the legacy of the PKI's betrayal.

Many of the surviving former supporters and cadre of the PKI must simply have decided to "wait and see". But what can be said of a party which adopts as its central slogan for land reform the call for a "6 to 4" rent reduction: "at least 60 percent of the produce should go to the peasants who till the land while the landowners at most should receive 40 percent" (Aidit, *The Indonesian Revolution*).

In backward countries the problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, including land reform, can only be solved as a "by-product" of workers socialist revolution. In parts of Java, given the overpopulation and pressure on the land, to talk of redistributing land equitably among the tillers would be meaningless, resulting only in the tiniest, uneconomical holdings. This situation adds a particular and graphic content to the Trotskyist strategy of permanent revolution.

The bankruptcy of the PKI's two-stage revolution strategy is highlighted all the more when it is remembered that Indonesia had already passed through its bourgeois revolution -- the Independence War against the Dutch colonialists. The history of Indonesia since testifies yet again that in the epoch of imperialist decay the bourgeoisie in the ex-colonial world is absolutely incapable of resolutely carrying through even the most elementary tasks, which are historically associated with the bourgeois-democratic revolutions in the period of ascendant capitalism.

Comradely,
D Strachan

ASP replies: Cde Strachan's letter offers valuable additions to the article. It should also be noted that the article contained a typographical error, mis-spelling "gotong royong" ("national unity") in one place. As well it had a possibly ambiguous reference to the "1965 coup", by which we meant the Suharto bloodbath and not the earlier action by the leftist officers' "September 30 Movement".

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The Aurukun affair:

Land rights and mining money

The real issues in the month-long Aurukun controversy which broke out in March -- bauxite, uranium, and even "states rights" -- were, of course, much more tangible than the hardly believable battle between Malcolm Fraser and Joh Bjelke-Petersen over who was the best friend of Australia's downtrodden Aborigines. And after the last demagogic manoeuvre and rotten compromise, the Aborigines were, as usual, the only losers.

The 800 Aborigines at Aurukun, a mission run for decades by the Presbyterian Church (now part of the Uniting Church), were allowed to stay there in the first place only because that remote swampland region on Cape York was completely useless to whites. Useless, that is, until rich bauxite (aluminium ore) deposits were discovered at the neighbouring Presbyterian missions of Mapoon and Weipa in the 1950s. Aborigines at Mapoon who refused to leave their traditional tribal land were forcibly evacuated and the buildings burned down by Queensland cops in 1963. The Aborigines whose land was being mined received virtually no direct compensation -- the government impounded a trifling 3 percent of net profits ostensibly for the "benefit" of Queensland blacks in general.

When bauxite was discovered at Aurukun in the late 1960s, Petersen and the mining companies hoped to offer the same deal there. But having witnessed the despoilation of their neighbours, Aurukun blacks were determined to resist, demanding, among other things, a renegotiated agreement guaranteeing a percentage of royalties rather than net mining profits (the latter easily manipulated in the books of the mining monopolies). The church, which had abetted the takeover of Weipa and Mapoon and for years before that ran the missions with harsh paternalistic discipline, was finally struck with a "revelation" of guilt and aided the blacks' legal battle. But after Petersen won an appeal to the Privy Council (!), he announced on 13 March the state would take over control of Aurukun, as well as Mornington Island, another Uniting Church mission.

The Aurukun council appealed to the federal government and on 22 March Fraser declared that he would take over the two reserves, in order to allow "self-determination" for their inhabitants. After much bluster by Petersen and one abortive compromise, Fraser pushed through legislation ostensibly placing the missions under federal control and "self-management". It was widely foreseen that Petersen would be able to circumvent it simply by revoking the reserve status of Aurukun and Mornington Island, and so he did. Finally, on 11 April a final face-saving compromise -- which Aurukun residents have rejected -- gave the reserves' councils a highly dubious local government status, effectively transferring their jurisdiction from one Petersen minister to another.

It was not the bauxite deposit at Aurukun



Aboriginal humpies -- shocking living conditions won't be solved by land rights.

which loomed largest to Petersen, but the precedent threatening both all future mining profits and the state's elaborate system of legal repression of blacks, embodied in the notorious Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Acts and associated regulations and by-laws. So atrocious is this feudal system -- which provides state reserve managers such arbitrary powers as the right to requisition labour, virtually unlimited entry into houses, effective control over entry and exit, and power to expel "troublemakers" -- that it has become an embarrassment to the bourgeoisie at a national level.

Fraser's break with the Liberal Party's his-

torical opposition to any form of land rights, like his official attacks on the racist South African and Rhodesian regimes, does not, of course, reflect a more "progressive" outlook than Petersen's. It is in the first place part of the price of admission to US imperialism's fraudulent, anti-Soviet "human rights" crusade. As one irate Queensland official put it,

"He's got to appear a goodie overseas. It's the same on Rhodesia and South Africa. But he's got no right to force his cosmetic necessities on us." (quoted in the *Bulletin*, 11 April)

Fraser's own "human rights" crusade

Cosmetics is the word for it. Fraser's recent tour through the Northern Territory (NT) to express pious outrage at the wretched condition of housing on the reserves and to solemnly promise to respect sacred sites just happened to coincide with preparations for work to begin soon at uranium sites. The immediate aim of Fraser's own "human rights" crusade is to clear a way for minerals mining on Aboriginal land -- and in particular the high-grade NT uranium deposits -- with a minimum of embarrassment, by offering some limited but important concessions. Thus Fraser's 1976 "land rights" law for the NT vested freehold title of NT reserve and other traditional lands -- totalling some 20 percent of the territory's area -- in trust of Aboriginal land councils empowered to negotiate terms with prospective mining companies (though a loophole clause provides for overriding them in the "national interest").

An alarmed mining cartel has lobbied hard against the law, spurred on by demands from the NT's Northern Land Council for up to one-third royalties from the Ranger and Nabarlek projects. The council stands to get millions; however the main beneficiaries of this Aboriginal capitalism will not be the vast majority of Aborigines, but a new "black elite" (in the words of the *Financial Review*, 3 February) -- a type already represented by the head of the Northern Land Council, Galarrwuy Yunupingu.

For most of Australia's blacks, long since forced to abandon the tribal mode of living, white capitalist society offers systematic discrimination, extreme poverty and an infant mortality rate until recently up to 11 times that of whites. By 1939 their numbers had been reduced by disease and slaughter to a low point of nearly 20 percent of the estimated pre-colonial population. Today most subsist on the outskirts of suburbs and rural towns, or in lumpenised inner-city ghettos like Redfern in Sydney.

Only with the 1960s did the "forgotten people" suddenly become fashionable in liberal circles. Part of the "Whitlamisation" of the ALP was the superimposition of this new stirring of the trendy liberal conscience over the traditional racism of the labour movement. But despite some marginal improvements under Whitlam, by and large the humpies, disease and illiteracy have remained as before. And despite the Labor opposition's criticism of Fraser's "sellout" at Aurukun, Labor policy differs little in essence from Fraser's. The only thing that impoverished blacks have got in generous supply from both parties is hypocrisy.

For much of the ostensibly revolutionary left, hypocrisy is combined with condescending paternalism, expressed in its romanticising of stone-age culture -- from a comfortable distance -- under the guise of Aboriginal "self-determination". With the despised Fraser now echoing their program, and offered a choice between the "lesser" of two evils, most of them flocked to Fraser's side in the confrontation with Petersen, as exemplified by the banner headline in the Socialist Party's *Socialist* (5 April): "Joh versus Australia".

So committed is the "Trotskyist" Socialist Workers Party (SWP) to the preservation of traditional culture with its primitive worship of

the untouched land that for NT blacks even to enter into negotiations is a self-betrayal: "the starting position of the negotiations is surrender of the Aboriginal position (!) of total rejection of mining", and blacks should prefer to live in pristine, barbaric poverty rather than allow mining companies "to destroy the culture of an oppressed race" (*Direct Action*, 30 March). Will the SWP also oppose modern housing, sanitation, medicine and education, which equally destroy traditional Aboriginal ways of life?

Fellow-travelling Maoist academic Humphrey McQueen, together with Maoists Barry York and Fergus Robinson in their recent book *The Black Resistance*, express such liberal romanticism at its most absurd. The book's attempt to describe hopeless Aboriginal resistance to the British "people's war" by the "first Australian patriot" reduces Maoist patriotism to the unavoidable conclusion that York and McQueen are part of the enemy occupation forces and should demand their own deportation back to Europe forthwith. And in order to preserve for his moral satisfaction a "living culture", preventing "cultural genocide",



Aboriginal protest in Northern Territory.

"Marxist" McQueen finds it necessary that at least some blacks continue to live in the Stone Age (see McQueen, *Aborigines, Race and Racism*).

When the British came white disease and guns quickly dispatched what resistance there was. But more important in the long term than sheer military strength in destroying Aboriginal society was the confrontation with a capitalist social organisation advanced beyond the comprehension of a stone-age culture. Nomadic hunters and gatherers, knowing neither herding nor cultivation, Australia's Aborigines were among the most primitive of many similar aboriginal, pre-class-society groups in other countries.

Relatively more numerous, and with a more highly developed pre-class society, the Maoris in New Zealand were in fact able to unite and mount large military forces which fought colonists to a standstill in pitched battles. As a result the British signed treaties giving Maoris control of large areas which, for a period, the whites could not break with impunity -- until the balances of forces shifted, inexorably, in their favour. In Australia, there were not even any treaties to break. Nevertheless Maori society has been no less a casualty of a superior social system.

Faced with the kind of "assimilation" represented by the Queensland acts, it is not surprising that many blacks on the reserves want a partial return to tribal communities and tribal ways, at least holding out the hope of a greater sense of dignity. The trend was set and encouraged by the Gurindji in northern Australia, who moved off the extensive Wave Hill cattle station in 1965 to occupy tribal homeland on part of the station property at Wattie Creek. At Aurukun, six of the clans have moved away from the central mission settlement to outstations on or near the land they traditionally occupied. What this

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REVOLUTIONARY LITERATURE

Brezhnev, Castro prop up prisonhouse of peoples

Turmoil in the Horn of Africa

Over the last few years the power balance in the Horn of Africa has shifted about as unpredictably as the sands of its desert wastelands. Once dominating the blistering East African region through its client Ethiopia, US imperialism was frozen out by the "Marxist-Leninist" military dictatorship which came to power after the collapse of the imperial monarchy of emperor Haile Selassie. For nearly two decades having its toehold in black Africa restricted to "Islamic socialist" Somalia, the Soviet Union

sub-Saharan Africa are composed of more than one tribal people or ethnic group (and more often than not of a crazy-quilt patchwork). Since the European colonialists drew their borders with an eye to "divide and rule", a single tribe or people often has been dismembered and divided between more than one country, while two or more historically antagonistic tribes have often been forced together in a single state.

Recrudescence of tribalism and secessionism have been the legacy of the colonial division of

cynically label and re-label entire peoples as "progressive" or "reactionary". For years after its independence in 1960, "progressive" Somalia was the Soviet Union's main ally and showpiece in Africa. It was only when Somalia evicted the Soviets for continuing arms sales to the Derg that the USSR and its loyal supporters "discovered" that Somalia's "past socialist orientation" had been "deflected into nationalist ambitions". This "discovery" has compelled the Soviet Union to bomb the Somali and Eritrean guerrillas (now "reactionary rebels") to whom they once gave aid, while the Ethiopians are now called "progressives", "patriots" and "revolutionaries".

If the pro-Peking Stalinists' political contortions seem even more capricious than those of their pro-Moscow comrades, it is probably because the Chinese have had less to lose. Without a foothold in either Somalia or Ethiopia, the Chinese have been willing to support whoever happened to be opposing the "main enemy" -- the Soviet Union. Having once hailed His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie of Ethiopia as an "anti-imperialist friend of China" and then hailed the military junta which overthrew him, the Maoists now laud "the Somali people's indomitable spirit of defying brute force and daring to struggle. Justice belongs to the Somali people; victory belongs to the Somali people!" ("Somali People's New Awakening", *Peking Review* no 48, 25 November 1977)

Such cynical games have nothing in common with Leninism. Especially now, Marxists must champion the elementary democratic right of the oppressed tribes and peoples of Ethiopia to *political secession*. As long as Ethiopia remains a "prisonhouse of peoples" (as Lenin dubbed the czarist empire), the development of proletarian and socialist consciousness among the toilers will be poisoned by chauvinism on the part of the oppressor Amharas and petty-bourgeois nationalism among the multiplicity of oppressed peoples. Thus, we call for the military victory of the anti-junta forces fighting in Eritrea and the Ogaden against the Ethiopian army. Although the latter is spearheaded by Russian and Cuban units, this fact is not central.

At the same time, however, Marxists warn against placing the slightest political confi-



Anti-Soviet demonstration in Mogadishu, Somalia.

quickly jumped into Ethiopia. But the grand scheme of the Kremlin to extend its diplomatic influence over the entire Horn of Africa ran into trouble last year when Somalia gave its 6000 Russian advisers the boot, in protest against Soviet refusal to back its attempt to annex the Ogaden, the Somali-populated region under the domination of its historic foe Ethiopia.

Convulsed by bloody internal power struggles and resting on an often mutinous military, the Ethiopian junta (the "Derg") headed by that latter-day Chiang Kai-shek, Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, has had to contend with secessionist guerrilla forces fighting to throw off the imperial rule of the dominant Amharic people over the multiplicity of national and tribal minorities which have been forcibly subjugated in this prisonhouse of peoples. After sixteen years of waging a bitter guerrilla war, nationalist insurgents in Eritrea have captured virtually all of this strategic coastal province, keeping the remaining demoralised Ethiopian military units pinned down in the capital city of Asmara and the port of Massawa. Addis Ababa became effectively landlocked when its only open port, Djibouti, was closed after the tiny territory was granted independence by the French last year. Forced to fight three separate guerrilla groups in the northern provinces of Tigre and Belemdir with a lingering "peasant army", the Ethiopian junta also lost the southern province of Bale to the Ogaden Liberation Front and then the Ogaden to the Somali army.

When the Ethiopian army proved too demoralised to be reliably used to effectively stop the Somali seizure of the Ogaden (the once elite Third Division mutinied in September and allowed the key town of Jijiga to be taken without a fight), the Kremlin decided that if its Ethiopian sphere of influence was to be much of a sphere at all, then a massive military intervention would be necessary. On 22 January, while even Western intelligence sources were debating the significance of the Soviet arms buildup in Ethiopia, Russian and Cuban units spearheaded a tightly coordinated Ethiopian counteroffensive aimed at regaining the Ogaden. Though the Ogaden rebels still continue to carry on guerrilla activity, the battle over the Ogaden effectively came to an end on 8 March. After three days of brutal pounding by a vastly superior Cuban/Ethiopian assault to retake Jijiga, Somali president Muhammad Siad Barre announced that all regular Somali forces were being withdrawn.

Among the black African states absolutely no sympathy exists for the Somalis. Regardless of their sometimes differing views about the "danger of Soviet penetration", the member states of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in their majority regarded Somalia as the "aggressor" in Ethiopia. If the members of the OAU can agree on nothing else, they stand as one on the "principle" of the "inviolability of borders".

Unlike Somalia, which is ethnically homogeneous, *all* (!) other black-ruled countries in

Africa. But the bonapartist regimes which have emerged in the process of "decolonialisation" are incapable of solving the elementary bourgeois-democratic tasks of national integration and the harmonious and just resolution of intercommunal or tribal conflicts. No matter how irrational or unjust, these borders are enshrined as sacred by this OAU.

Following the Russian/Cuban military intervention, Barre sought to internationalise the conflict, wooing support from the pro-Western Arab states, Iran and US imperialism. But given the deep-seated opposition of the OAU to the Somali claims over the eastern third of Ethiopia, the northern province of Kenya and Djibouti, the Carter administration refrained from openly providing Somalia with any military aid. Adding insult to injury, Carter declared the day after the Somali withdrawal that no US aid, economic or military, would be forthcoming without a complete renunciation by Somalia of its territorial claims -- claims which are written into the Somali constitution. Barre, who had been led to expect US aid as a palliative reward for the humiliating surrender, angrily demanded clarification from the flustered US embassy in Mogadishu and began hinting about a rapprochement with the Soviet Union.

For Marxists the massive Soviet military intervention on the side of its blood-stained clients in Addis Ababa does not alter in the least the fundamentally reactionary character of the Derg and its brutal policies of national oppression. On the contrary, by rushing military aid to the Ethiopian army the Russian and Cuban forces in Ethiopia become its direct ally in grinding the rebellious oppressed minority peoples into bloody submission.

Not only did the Soviet military intervention enable the Ethiopian air force to intensify its truly genocidal terror bombing of civilian sites in Eritrea, but since the Somali surrender Cuban troops have reportedly been used to reinforce the Ethiopian garrison in Asmara *against the Castroite-influenced guerrillas*. With the renewal of Ethiopian air attacks on 1 January, thousands more of Eritrean civilians have been forced to flee their razed villages and smouldering huts and trek to the safety of the South Sudan, where *one million* Eritrean refugees (one third of the population!) now live in squalid camps.

To satisfy the dictates of their narrowly nationalistic, counterrevolutionary foreign policies, the Stalinist bureaucracies (and their hangers-on, like the pro-Moscow Socialist Party of Australia and the pro-Peking Communist Party of Australia [Marxist-Leninist]) habitually and



Ethiopian militiamen in Addis Ababa.

dence in any of these nationalist, tribalist or feudalist insurgent forces. In Eritrea, which is the most cultured and economically advanced province of Ethiopia, each of the three rival guerrilla groups aspires to political power with an outlook not qualitatively different from that of Idi Amin in the period of his rise to power. It is not difficult to imagine what kind of "people's democracy" these parties would bring to Eritrea. They are akin to the Ethiopian junta out of power, but they are Eritrean.

The Somalis of the Ogaden region were incorporated into the Ethiopian empire in 1896. The British ceded that section of their Somali protectorate to the Emperor Menelik in return for his promise not to aid the Mahdist rebellion in the Sudan. Thus, unlike the Eritreans, the Somali people of the Ogaden historically have fought not to form an independent state in the Ogaden but rather to merge with the Somali republic. As a result of successive partitions and annexations imposed by the Italian and British colonialists, the Somali people today are divided

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From waving NLF flags to burning them? Maoists repudiate Vietnam



In April 1975, about the same time as the imperialists and their local puppets were being finally thrown out of Indochina, a Vietnamese women's delegation visited Australia. It was an occasion to celebrate the heroic struggle of the Indochinese masses and, for most of the Australian left, including supporters of the pro-Chinese Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) (CPA [ML]), to engage in fulsome and uncritical praise of the Stalinist leadership, most notably the Provisional Revolutionary Government and Democratic Republic of Vietnam. In the face of right-wing threats during the delegation's visit to Melbourne, leftists including the Maoists and the Spartacist League (SL) mobilised to defend their public meetings. If that same delegation were to visit today, merely three years later, there is a good chance that those remaining loyal supporters of the CPA (ML) would find themselves, following Peking's current line on the squalid nationalist war between Vietnam and Democratic Kampuchea (Cambodia), demonstrating along with right-wing anti-communist forces (including Thieu/Ky officials) against the Vietnamese.

The Spartacist League greeted the historic victory over US imperialism in 1975 but warned that the Stalinist leaderships which took power in Indochina could create only *deformed* workers states. The parasitic nationalist bureaucracies in Hanoi, Vientiane and Phnom Penh could only act as roadblocks to the struggle for socialism. That Hanoi and Phnom Penh should, within two years of the victory, hurl the Vietnamese and Cambodian workers and peasants at each other's throats in a savage and bloody struggle over scraps of "sacred national territory", is a stark confirmation of the counterrevolutionary nature of these Stalinist regimes. Communists must oppose *both* sides in this nationalist slaughter.

Long the chief patron of the Khmer Rouge and irritated by Hanoi's close links to Moscow, Peking has aligned itself unmistakably with Kampuchea. While *Peking Review* at first printed the statements of both sides, it has since turned to vague references to Cambodia's "just cause", its success in defending its territorial integrity, and to accusations that Moscow was behind the conflict. In turn, Hanoi has denounced China for supplying Cambodia with the long-range artillery which the Khmer Rouge is utilising to bombard Vietnamese border towns (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 21 April).

China's support for Kampuchea has not a little to do with increasing tension on its own long-disputed border with Vietnam and their competing claims to the South China Sea Islands, particularly the Spratley group partly occupied by Vietnam. According to Hoang Tung, a full member of the Vietnamese Communist Party Central Committee and political director of the party daily *Nhan Dan*: "The situation at the northern fron-

tier has been tense for a long time, not just since January this year. The border problem has been with us for the whole of the 1970s". The tension was caused by "massive presence of soldiers and a loudspeaker war" (Ibid). According to the same article "informed sources" in Hanoi have revealed that border tension has already spilled over into armed conflict on two occasions recently. Do any of the Australian Maoists who made the pilgrimage to "People's" China in the 1960s now remember Chou En-lai's oft-repeated remark to touring "friends of China" that the solidarity between Vietnam and China

was as close and permanent as "gums and teeth"? will be long until the Maoists are muttering about 'mercenaries at the service of the New Czars' and the 'dark social fascists' ruling over Hanoi and Saigon" (*ASP* no 30, April 1976).

Won to Maoism by Ho Chi Minh

The leading figures in the REM and its more public manifestation, the Movement for Independence and Socialism (MIS), are survivors of the generation of radicalised youth who went over to Maoism precisely over identification with the Vietnamese Revolution and its Stalinist leadership. Many were associated with the Monash Uni-



Maoist contingent in Vietnam Moratorium, Melbourne, May 1970.

was as close and permanent as "gums and teeth"?

Like one of Pavlov's dogs the ever-servile CPA (ML) has denounced "the war of aggression by Vietnam" and "wholeheartedly" supported Kampuchea's "victories" -- a line whose vehemence goes somewhat beyond even Peking's official position. But party leader EF Hill hasn't got his lines crossed. He was in Peking at the time of the announcement of hostilities. For Hill, a veteran Stalinist sycophant, the only important thing is hanging onto the Peking franchise at any cost. But in the aftermath of the death of Mao and the purge of the so-called "Gang of Four" the Australian Maoist milieu, mirroring its counterparts internationally, is very far from united. Since early in 1977 an opposition grouping calling itself the Red Eureka Movement (REM) has emerged to challenge Hill as the sole "orthodox" upholders of "Marxism-Leninism-Mao-Tse-tung Thought". The REM denounces the CPA (ML) as a "Society For Warmly Hailing Anything That Comes Out Of China" (*The Rebel!* vol 2, no 2, [April 1978]) and the party leaders as "puffed up hens". At a 29 April Maoist debate in Melbourne on the situation in China Albert Langer, a leader of the REM, solidarised with the fallen "Gang of Four" arguing that although China was still "socialist", "capitalist roaders" were now in power.

Rather than representing an authentically Marxist-Leninist current in the Chinese leadership -- as Langer would have it -- the "Gang of Four" clique shared with their rivals a fundamental commitment to pursue at all times the Chinese bureaucracy's narrow national interests, and their attitude toward Vietnam would in no way have differed from Peking's present line. Indeed, it was in the period of the ascendancy of the "Gang" -- and at a time when the present supporters of the REM were still basking in the reflected glory of Vietnam's defeat of the US -- that the competing nationalist aspirations of Peking and Hanoi collided over the Spratley Islands. At the time we wrote that "it will not

iversity Labor Club, which first earned prominence in its 1967 campaign to send aid to the NLF (leading among other things to a special act of Parliament, "For the Protection of the Defence Forces in respect to its Operations in or near Vietnam"). During the period of the anti-Vietnam war protests it was the Maoists' willingness to identify with the NLF and to call for the victory of the Vietnamese Revolution which won the support of many leftist youths repelled by the timid and legalistic reformism of the Socialist Left in the Labor Party, the Communist Party and the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Youth Alliance (today the youth group of the Socialist Workers Party).

The REM as "Gang of Four" loyalists not only uphold the need for a bloc with "patriotic" Australian capitalists but agree with Hill that the number one enemy of the "world's people" is "Soviet social-imperialism", only demurring that it is not now the main enemy in Australia and that the "main blow" should still be directed at US imperialism and the multi-nationals. The REM, in response to Hill's charge that "they are soft on Soviet social imperialism", proudly claims that "we were not put off from burning a Soviet flag at a July 4 demonstration, along with the Stars and Stripes, when some of today's Anti-Soviet heroes opposed this" (*The Rebel!*, 24 October 1977). But the prospect of burning their long-cherished NLF flags outside the US consulate in Melbourne this upcoming July 4 should sicken all but the most cynical and demoralised hand-raisers in the REM.

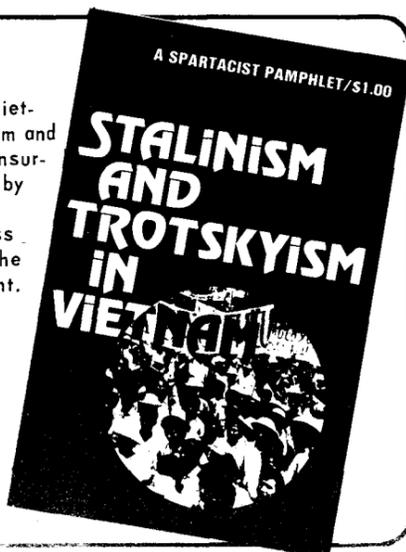
But the Maoists' reactionary offensive against the Soviet workers state is but one aspect of an all-round, thoroughly reactionary foreign policy. Peking showered praise and offered financial support to the Ceylonese Bandaranaike regime while it was butchering the youth of the JVP in 1971. When worker militants were seeking refuge from the bullets of Pinochet's shock troops during the 1973 coup in Chile, the Chinese consulate had the

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Part one of this article (reprinted from Workers Vanguard no 162, 17 June 1977), based on an educational presentation by Comrade Seymour, appeared in the March issue of ASp. The first part provided a general theoretical analysis of workers control, explaining the difference between workers control and workers management and how the call for workers control is not applicable in all situations -- for example, during the 1968 French general strike.

Part 2

The Bolshevik Revolution and Spanish civil war witnessed the most profound workers control struggles and the only experiences of widespread workers self-management. Therefore the assimilation of these two historic experiences is essential to understand our programmatic positions on the question.

Unlike the Russian revolution of 1905, 1917 was not marked by mass strikes. The workers knew that the war had severely damaged and dislocated the Russian economy, industry was on the verge of collapse due to breakdowns and shortages, and the urban population was threatened by famine. Workers control arose primarily to counter capitalist neglect and sabotage, rather than to extract economic concessions. Lenin's strong support for workers control in this period was motivated by a conservative economic purpose. In a major article, significantly entitled "The Impending Catastrophe and How To Fight It" (September 1917), he states:

"Control, supervision and accounting are the prime prerequisites for combatting catastrophe and famine. This is indisputable and universally recognised. And it is just what *is not being done* from fear of encroaching on the supremacy of the landowners and capitalists, on their immense, fantastic and scandalous profits..." (emphasis in original)

Shortly after coming to power, the Bolshevik government issued two decrees (14 November and 13 December) designed to institutionalize the dual power already existing within Russian factories. The second decree details the powers of the control commissions:

"The control commission of each enterprise is to establish the amount of materials, fuel, equipment, workers and technicians, etc., required for production, the actual stock in hand and labor available; to estimate the prospects of carrying on or closing down; to maintain labor discipline; to check whether buying and selling conform to state regulations; to watch over productivity, and assist in ascertaining production costs, etc. "Decisions of the control commission designed to secure the conditions for its operation are binding on the owner." (our emphasis)

It also stipulates that direct management remains in the owners' hands and that the control commission has no right to expropriate the enterprises on its own:

"The owner retains his managerial rights over the administration and operation of the enterprise. The control commission does not take part in the administration of the enterprise and is not responsible for its operation... The control commission may, through its higher authorities, raise the question of sequestration of an enterprise or any other compulsory measure with the economic state organs, but it has no right itself to seize and administer an enterprise." (reproduced in Margaret Dewar, *Labour Policy in the USSR 1917-1928*; 1956)

Why did Lenin put forth a policy he later described as a "contradictory and incomplete measure"? Lenin's position on workers control is incomprehensible unless one realizes that he was opposed to the nationalization of industry in the

short term. He defended this policy as late as spring 1918 against left communist opponents (Bukharin, Radek, Ossinsky). The Bolshevik government did not have available the technical/managerial apparatus capable of administering a socialized, planned economy. Lenin believed that through a combination of concessions and pressure Russia's capitalists could be made to serve the new Soviet state. Workers control commissions were projected as the lowest level of state economic administration. Secondly, Lenin considered workers control a school to train a proletarian managerial cadre, who could take over the administration of a socialized economy in a gradual, orderly and efficient way.

The Bolshevik attempt to institutionalize workers control broke down almost immediately.

that Lenin had earlier opposed general nationalization remained. The Bolshevik government did not have an apparatus capable of administering a nationalized, centralized industry. So it turned to the one politically loyal organization which had a hierarchy conforming to the industrial structure -- the trade unions. The economy under "war communism" was administered by the trade unions, not by a separate state body. Industrial management by the trade unions, traditional workers organizations, had the further advantage of allaying syndicalist prejudices against the new soviet state power.

The threat of white terror strengthened the loyalty of the workers to Bolshevik rule and generated a spirit of self-sacrifice. Economic administration by the unions worked fairly well. A

Leninism and workers control

by Joseph Seymour

Capitalists hostile to soviet power abandoned their factories for counterrevolutionary intrigue. Workers, in turn hostile and distrustful toward their employers, drove them out and took over the factories. Frequently instructions from the Supreme Council of the National Economy (VSNKh) not to expropriate an enterprise were met with the response that it had already been done. In the months following the October Revolution, workers control gave way to workers self-management imposed from below.

The instructions of VSNKh to the individual factory committees concerning production and distribution were frequently disregarded. The factory committees sought to maximize enterprise income through unbridled competition for supplies and markets. A Bolshevik leader of the Metal Workers Union, writing in late 1917, described the situation as follows:

"Another proprietor came, who was equally an individualist and anti-social as the former one, and the name of the new proprietor was the control committee. In the Donetz area, the metal works and mines refused to supply each other with coal and iron on credit, selling the iron to the peasants without regard for the needs of the State." (quoted in Maurice Dobb, *Soviet Economic Development Since 1917*; 1943)

Another Bolshevik trade unionist in November 1917 summarizes the situation thus:

"Workers control by itself is an anarchistic attempt to achieve socialism in one enterprise, and actually leads to clashes among the workers themselves and to the refusal of fuel, metal, etc. to one another." (quoted in Paul Avrich, *The Russian Revolution and Factory Committees* -- unpublished doctoral dissertation, 1961)

These quotes are somewhat one-sided. The recourse of the factory committees to unrestrained atomized competition did not primarily express either parochial self-centeredness or anarcho-syndicalist prejudices, though both were present. Rather the economic situation reflected the new Bolshevik government's lack of authority and organization amid the anarchic turmoil of revolution. The workers in the mass supported Lenin's government to one degree or another, but questioned its viability and permanence. It was understandable for individual factory committees to refuse to sell on credit to a government they believed would not be around long enough to pay.

The disastrous effect of workers self-management and the exigencies of the looming civil war convinced most workers of the need for centralized economic direction. The institution of "war communism" met with general support and little resistance.

The onset of full-scale civil war in mid-1918 led to wholesale nationalization and the subordination of the factory committees to centralized economic direction. However, the main reason

policy originally undertaken as a practical expedient was accepted as a programmatic norm for a workers state. The new Bolshevik program adopted at the Eighth Party Congress in March 1919 stipulated the trade unions would be the basic organ of economic administration. Point 5 of the section entitled "In the sphere of economics" states:

"The organizing apparatus of socialized industry must first of all rest upon the trade



Collectivised bus company, Barcelona, during Spanish Civil War.

unions. The latter must free themselves from the narrow guild outlook and transform themselves into large productive combinations comprising the majority, and gradually all the workers of a given branch of production." (Robert H McNeal, ed, *Decisions and Resolutions of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*; 1974)

This programmatic statement would cause much trouble a few years later.

Bolsheviks and workers control after the civil war

The overwhelming economic exigencies of the civil war suppressed any differences within the Bolshevik party over the optimal organization of a workers state, of the relations between the government administration, the trade unions and other workers organizations. Such differences exploded with the end of the civil war in early 1921 amid a mass reaction against the severe austerity and commandism of "war communism".

The Tenth Party Congress in March 1921 saw the semi-syndicalist Workers Opposition advocate the administration of the economy by *autonomous* trade unions. Trotsky, short-sightedly concerned with rehabilitating the economy as speedily as possible, advocated the total statification of the unions, liquidating them as autonomous, internally democratic bodies. Lenin, whose views prevailed, occupied a middle position. He insisted on the direct administration of the economy of the state. He also supported autonomous trade

Къ Гражданамъ Россіи.

Временное Правительство низложено. Государственная власть перешла въ руки органа Петроградскаго Съѣзда Рабочихъ и Солдатскихъ Депутатовъ Военно-Революціоннаго Комитета, стоящаго во главѣ Петроградскаго пролетаріата и гарнизона. Дѣло, за которое боролся народъ: немедленное предложеіе демократическаго мира, отмена помѣщичьей собственности на землю, рабочей контроль надъ производствомъ, созаніе Съѣздскаго Правительства -- это дѣло обозначено. Да здравствуетъ революція Рабочихъ, Солдатъ и Крестьянъ!

Petrograd Soviet proclamation of the overthrow of Kerensky.

unions to represent the interests of specific groups of workers vis-a-vis the government administration hierarchy, which was capable of bureaucratic abuses as well as errors.

Only with the institution of the New Economic Policy in 1921 did the Bolshevik government acquire its own distinct organs of economic administration. This freed the unions to defend the consumerist interests of specific groups of workers. The Labor Code of 1922 stipulated that wages and working conditions be determined by collective bargaining between the unions and state employers.

The early 1920s also saw the introduction of a new form of workers control as an authoritative consultative voice designed to increase productivity. Production conferences of the entire work force elected standing control commissions to oversee that their recommendations were carried out. The Stalinist political counterrevolution eroded and eventually suppressed the control commissions, as it did the trade unions and all other independent proletarian bodies.

The Trotskyist Left Opposition in its 1927 "Platform" calls attention to the atrophy of workers control and the growing indifference of the workers toward productivity:

"The production conferences are gradually being reduced to nothing. The majority of the practical proposals adopted by the workers are never carried out. Among many of these workers a distaste for these production conferences is nourished by the fact that the improvements which they do succeed in introducing often result in a reduction of the number of workers."

The "Platform of the Joint Opposition" called for strengthening the control commissions:

"The functions of the control commissions of the production councils must be extended to include supervising the execution of their decisions and investigating their success in protecting the workers' interests."

The 1938 Transitional Program incorporated workers control in the consultative sense as a programmatic norm in a workers state, an integral part of proletarian democracy and rational economic planning.

Workers management in the Spanish Civil War

While workers management in the Bolshevik revolution was a short-lived, anarchic episode, workers management was a central element in the Spanish revolution and civil war. Following the defeated military coup of July 1936 most of Spain's capitalists either fled or were driven out into the areas controlled by Franco's army. Workers management became widespread throughout Spain and dominant in Catalonia (which then accounted for 70 percent of Spanish industry), where the labor movement was dominated by the anarcho-syndicalists through their trade-union federation, the Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo (CNT). Workers management was legalized by the Collectivization Decree of October 1936.

The anarchist masses did not look upon workers management as a temporary situation or expedient caused by the civil war, but as the realization of their ideal program. They believed the libertarian millennium had arrived. Despite this very different political attitude, the initial experience of workers management in Spain resembled that of Russia in 1917-18. The anarchist-managed



Anarchist poster from Spanish Civil War; "The revolution and the war are inseparable".

collectives acted like competing producer cooperatives. In those collectives which inherited ample material and financial reserves, which had new equipment and enjoyed favourable market demand, the workers' incomes were relatively high. In those collectives without these advantages, the workers suffered accordingly. The situation is well described by Gaston Leval, a French anarchist and prominent CNT militant at the time:

"Too often in Barcelona and Valencia, workers in each undertaking took over the factory, the works, or the workshop, the machines, raw materials, and taking advantage of the continuation of the money system and normal capitalist commercial relations, organised production on their own account, selling for their own benefit the produce of their labour...."

"There was not, therefore, true socialisation, but a workers' neo-capitalism, a self-management straddling capitalism and socialism, which we maintain would not have occurred had the Revolution been able to extend itself fully under the direction of our Syndicates." (*Collectives in the Spanish Revolution*; 1975)

The anarcho-syndicalist cadre, like Leval, were dismayed that the "libertarian" collectives reproduced the irrationality and inequality of the capitalist market, a situation which also impeded the war against Franco. The CNT hierarchy more-or-less successfully countered the anarchic parochialism of the collectives and imposed some centralized economic direction. In general, the anarcho-syndicalist workers regarded the enterprises as belonging to the CNT as a whole, not to the individual collectives. Through the CNT, the Spanish workers achieved miracles of economic organization. In Catalonia, which had no metal-working industry, the CNT collectives built a munitions industry from the ground up. The Spanish proletariat displayed outstanding labor discipline, self-sacrifice and ingenuity. This is one of the factors that caused Trotsky, in arguing for the unique significance of the Bolshevik Party, to state that in their mass consciousness the Spanish proletariat stood higher, not lower, than the Russian workers of 1917-18.

The CNT attempted, with mixed success, to combine the individual enterprises into vertically-integrated industrial syndicates (eg, textiles, wood products). However, all the CNT collectives -- individual factories, multi-enterprise industrial syndicates (like the light textile syndicate in Alcoy), transport and utilities -- had to relate to the rest of the economy through capitalist commercial methods.

Were the CNT collectives economically viable? Those collectives which had a relatively self-contained production process, supplied a localised market, enjoyed a monopolistic position and a large, regular cash flow were generally "profitable". The pride of the CNT industrial collectives was the Barcelona tramways syndicate, a localized monopoly supplying an essential service for immediate cash payment. But those collectives which were part of a long chain of production, imported raw materials, sold on long-term credits or to the government (eg, the munitions industry) were not economically viable without state support and cooperation. Such collectives were critically dependent upon state credit and, therefore, on parties hostile to workers management and the anarcho-syndicalist masses. One justification the anarchist leaders advanced for entering the central Popular Front government was to secure state finance for the CNT collectives.

The collectives were naturally the most resolute defenders of workers management. Despite the attitudes of the workers and given the absence of a planned, socialized economy, the collectives had an organic tendency to become competing producer cooperatives.

The CNT bureaucracy administered the collectives partly in the interests of what it considered economic rationality and partly to carry out the bidding of its Popular Front partners. The CNT did on behalf of the bourgeois Popular Front government what the Russian trade unions did on behalf of the Bolshevik government; it disciplined the anarchic, localist tendencies of the collectives in the interests of the government's economic objectives.

The "expanded economic plenum" of the CNT in January 1938 adopted a series of measures resem-



Red flag unfurled in Moscow after October insurrection.

bling "war communism". These measures, of course, grossly violated anarcho-syndicalist principles. An inspectorate was created to "put forward the expected norms which will effectively orientate the different industrial units with a view to improving their economy and administration ..." (quoted in Vernon Richards, *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution* [1972]). These inspectors had the right to sanction the elected factory committees. The plenum also empowered managers to dismiss workers for lateness, absence and failure to meet work norms, as well as those labelled "troublemakers" who "create dissensions between the workers and the managers or the trade union representatives".

The Popular Front government, with the Stalinists in the vanguard, recognized in the factory committees and workers management a locus of independent proletarian power capable of challenging its authority. Therefore the basic policy of the Popular Front was to liquidate workers management and satisfy the CNT collectives. The CNT was too powerful to achieve this end by direct administrative/military action, so the government resorted to economic sabotage. Capital equipment was requisitioned from the collectives on the pretext that it was needed for the war effort. Leval recounts an incident where the War Ministry requisitioned two modern milling machines from the Barcelona tramways syndicate. Later it was discovered the ministry had a secret cache of some 40 comparable machines.

The primary method by which the Popular Front sabotaged workers management was through its control of finances. The government literally starved the workers in the CNT collectives. Leval describes how this was done:

"And when, in Catalonia, the Communist leader Comorera became Minister of Finance after the May Days, the means of struggle he adopted were original. It was clear that it was quite impossible to destroy the outstanding influence of the Syndicates of the C.N.T. To attempt to do so would have paralysed production overnight. So, Comorera had recourse to two complementary procedures; on the one hand he deprived the factories of raw materials or deliveries did not arrive on time, thus resulting in production delays which were knowingly criticised; on the other hand they paid for deliveries of cloth, clothing, arms, etc., with a delay which affected the workers' own budgets. As the wages were distributed under the supervision of the Syndicates, it was against the delegates of the C.N.T. and

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Vietnam . . .

Continued from page five

doors locked. And in 1975 it was in a military bloc with the CIA/South African invasion of Angola. These were the policies of the "Gang of Four" no less than Hua. And these are the policies which Langer supports when he proclaimed at the Melbourne debate that the REM had "not done a back flip" on China's foreign policy.

Was Ho Chi Minh a chauvinist?

In the two issues of *The Rebel!* which have come out since the fighting gained worldwide attention the REM has maintained a shamefaced silence on the border war. But last year they did register an initial hostility to the developing official position on Vietnam: "It should be pointed out that it is quite out of order for responsible senior 'open' communists to publicly claim that the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is a satellite of social imperialism" ("The K-K-Kautskyism of the C-C-Conservative Communists"; *The Rebel!*, 24 October 1977). At the Melbourne debate, in direct response to a question by an SL supporter, Langer put forward a confused, implicitly pro-Cambodian position, stating he did "not support the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia" because of "the growth of Russian influence in Vietnam". This is nonsensical. There is absolutely no evidence that Russian influence has grown appreciably in Vietnam beyond what it was throughout the 1950s and 1960s -- let alone to suggest that Pham Van Dong and Le Duan have become Kremlin agents. Hanoi's relations with Moscow are explained by Vietnam's need for Russian arms supplies (as parsimonious as they were compared to what was lavished on capitalist Egypt) to fight the US imperialists and on Vietnam's traditional suspicions toward its ancient foe, China.

But if, as Peking claims and Langer apparently agrees, Vietnam is expansionist and an agent of Brezhnev then it raises a question that the REM can evade only by political suicide. Vietnam was the contemporary equivalent of the Third Chinese Revolution and the embodiment in the consciousness of the REM cadre of the Maoist strategy of "peoples war". What happened? What went wrong?

In retrospectively justifying his current position, Hill ends up saying that the Vietnamese Stalinists were always rotten chauvinists:

"Vietnam is historically an expansionist power. Since 1930 the constitution and programme of the Communist (Workers) Party of Vietnam envisaged an Indo-Chinese Federation composed of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia with Vietnam the dominant power." (*Vanguard*, 6 April)

Naturally Hill makes no mention of the Khmer Rouge's own "expansionist" claims on Vietnamese territory, its brutal treatment of the Vietnamese minority or for that matter the historical Chinese expansionism directed against Vietnam. We would also remind Hill that it was the *Indo-Chinese Communist Party*, whose leading figure was Nguyen Ai Quoc (Ho Chi Minh), which was founded in 1930. At that time Ho was a trusted and senior representative in Asia of Stalin's Comintern. If Ho and his comrades were chauvinist, what of Stalin and the Comintern who were giving the orders.

Since the Maoist Hill apparently regards the call for an Indochinese federation as an unmitigated evil, what would he make of Lenin and the Bolsheviks who not only called for but *established* a Soviet federation out of that "prison-house of peoples", the former czarist empire? In fact the entire area along the Mekong river is necessarily, closely linked economically, and to a Marxist it is indisputable that the socialist development of Indochina requires the greatest possible integration and cooperation of the various countries. And with workers democracy under genuine Leninist leadership the natural leading role of Vietnam, the most economically developed, would not entail the slightest

national oppression. But Hill and his Stalinist idols, committed to bureaucratic nationalism under the guise of "socialism in one country", can conceive of a soviet federation only as a coercive, oppressive operation involving the dominance of one national group over others.

This would of course be the case given the land grabbing, narrow nationalism and ethnic-hatred policies of the competing Stalinist regimes in Indochina today. The national question in Indochina -- involving as it does not only Khmers, Laotians and Vietnamese, but also sizeable minorities of Chinese and various primitive mountain tribes in both Vietnam and Laos -- is complex and requires careful resolution. In the context of an Indochinese socialist federation Trotskyists, following Lenin, would elaborate a broad program respecting the needs and rights of the minority nationalities of the region. But this can only be accomplished through the overthrow of the nationalist bureaucracies by a workers political revolution.

The history of the Indochinese liberation struggle is full of the disastrous consequences of the Stalinists' separate pursuit of their respective policies of "socialism in one country". More often than not the Cambodian Communist Party has been on the receiving end, not because they are any less nationalist and committed to the two-stage strategy, but because they are the



Spartacist League banners at US anti-war march.

weakest. In 1954 the Soviet Union and Mao pressured the Vietminh into giving half of Vietnam back to the imperialists and dropping claims that the Khmer Rouge should be represented at the Geneva talks. Then Ho (who called the whole sordid business at Geneva a "great victory") joined Mao in persuading the Khmer Rouge to disband and allow the feudal prince Sihanouk to return. Even Pol Pot now talks of the gains "being dissolved into thin air through the 1954 Geneva Agreement" (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 21 October 1977).

The only leftists to denounce the Geneva agreement for the betrayal it was were the Trotskyists. The Spartacist League was frequently attacked throughout the period of the anti-war movement for daring to warn of a possible repeat performance by the Chinese and Vietnamese bureaucrats. Indeed, the Paris "peace accords" of 1973 which the USSR, China and the DRV applauded left the US free to bomb the Cambodians at will. And when the Americans escalated the bombing the Peking leadership remained silent. Instead Nixon visited Peking in February 1972, and while the B-52s carpet-bombed Indochina the Peoples Liberation Army band serenaded the murderer-in-chief with "Home on the Range".

Yet Langer, in an attack on the SL at the 29 April debate, boasted "We shut up and got on with the job" of defending the Vietnamese revolution while the "Trotskyites" criticised the leadership. In other words, to completely fail to foresee anything and thereby, even from his own standpoint, to contribute to a disaster for the masses, is a virtue! Yes -- our comrades of the Spartacist League/US consistently warned the Indochinese masses to place no trust in the NLF/DRV leadership, with its sellout deals and class collaboration; and *at the same time collected funds for the NLF* as early as 1965, in the face of widespread pacifist and legalist objections on the left.

Tito a "comrade" in Peking

In contrast to Vietnam's fall from grace in Peking is the case of Yugoslavia. In the late 1950s Yugoslavia was the archetypical Maoist example of a country on the "capitalist road". Peking demonstratively read Tito out of the "Communist" -- ie Stalinist -- movement. Now much to the chagrin of the "anti-revisionist" REM, Tito is once more a good "comrade" of the Peking rulers and the Chinese press fulsomely praises the "tremendous successes" of the Yugoslav League of Communists (*Hsinhua*, 20 November 1977). There has been no fundamental change in Yugoslavia between 1960 and 1977, the country was and remains a deformed workers state. All that has changed are the exigencies of China's anti-Soviet policies. This rapprochement was well under way when

Chiang Ching and her colleagues were still riding high. And Albania's denunciation of Peking's "Three Worlds Theory" is the direct result of Enver Hoxha's dismay at Peking's warm relationship with Tito's Yugoslavia, whose "mini-superpower" ambitions he has good reason to fear.

China, like Russia under Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev, has always sought "security" not through international proletarian revolution or even cooperation with other workers states but by seeking an alliance with imperialism -- at the expense of the international proletariat. This counterrevolutionary policy flows from the material interests of a privileged nationalist bureaucracy. Led by a party committed to and forged through systematic class collaboration, and lacking any organs of democratic proletarian rule, the Chinese revolution was deformed from its inception when in 1949 capitalist rule was smashed by petty-bourgeois, peasant-based guerrilla armies. Armed with the Stalinist doctrine of "socialism in one country", the Chinese bureaucrats fear nothing so much as authentic workers revolution internationally -- which would mortally threaten their own privileged rule.

In the last decade the counterrevolutionary character of the Peking bureaucracy, under both Mao and his successors, has become abundantly clear for all those prepared to see. If in the sixties the Chinese leaders could attempt to justify their anti-Soviet line as a necessity in the struggle against "revisionism", obscuring the root cause of conflicting nationalist interests, now even this charade is gone. No attempt is made to explain why the once "capitalist" Tito is now a good comrade. No attempt is made to explain how Cambodia's politics are in any way superior to Vietnam's. No attempt is made at a materialist explanation of how or why Vietnam ended up expansionist.

Stalinism is a world outlook whose professed principles and aims so condemn its practice that its adherents must suffer periodic crises of faith. At some point, in order to remain loyal, the cadre must abandon the values and attitudes that first drew them to revolutionary politics. If there are any supporters of the REM who today maintain the commitment to socialist revolution which was expressed in their original solidarity with the struggle of the Indochinese masses, they must look to the authentic Trotskyism of the Spartacist League. Only Trotskyism can provide a materialist explanation for the egregious crimes of the Peking bureaucracy and for the bloody war between the Vietnamese and Cambodian deformed workers states. Only Trotskyism steadfastly and unconditionally defends *all* the deformed workers states -- China, Russia, Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia and the rest -- against imperialism. Only we stand for proletarian political revolution to oust the parasitic bureaucracies and establish workers democracy. Because, unlike the assorted varieties of Stalinism, only Trotskyism embodies the program of Marx and Lenin -- the program of international proletarian revolution. ■

Horn of Africa . . .

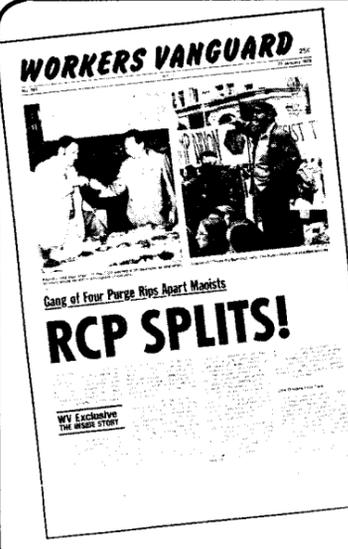
Continued from page four

between four distinct state entities. In addition to the Democratic Republic, the eastern third of Ethiopia (comprising the provinces of Ogaden, Bale, Sidamo and Arussi) and the Northern Frontier District of Kenya together hold more than half of the Somali people, while about half of the population of the tiny former French territory of Djibouti is populated by a Somali-related people, the Issas.

In the aftermath of last year's Somali invasion of Ethiopia, we wrote of the war, in part as follows:

"Marxists support the democratic right of the Somali people in Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti to reunite with Somalia. However, in the recent fighting (in which the efficient Russian-trained Somali army has effectively taken the Ogaden) this issue is subordinated to the reality of a war over territory between two equally reactionary capitalist states." ("Marcy and Mengistu", *Workers Vanguard* no 180, 4 November 1977)

In that article we incorrectly viewed the conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia as a border war ("a war over territory") not fundamentally different in kind from the war between India and Pakistan over the disputed territories of Kashmir or the series of wars in the Maghreb (Morocco vs Algeria, Libya vs Egypt). While it is true that the nationalist regime in Mogadishu was more than eager to settle scores with its historic foe Ethiopia, this position ignores the fact that the immediate aim of the Somali "invasion" of the Ogaden was elimination of the yoke of Amharic domination over a section of the Somali people. One can make an analogy with the struggle of the oppressed peoples of czarist Russia against the Great Russian domination. Before World War I Poland was divided between czarist Russia,



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Hapsburg Austro-Hungary and Wilhelminian Germany. Thus the national unification of the Polish people required secession from three separate states. Had the Polish parts of Germany and Austro-Hungary won independence and merged at the time of the Russian revolution of 1905, such an independent Polish state might indeed have invaded Russian Poland to liberate its oppressed people by force of arms. Such a war would have been a legitimate struggle for national liberation, no less so than an insurrection limited to Russian Poland.

As Marxists we support the right of all Somalis to combine in one state entity no less than the Eritreans. To deny that right to the Somalis of the Ogaden just because imperialism drew a border through the living body of this people, one section of which achieved statehood, would be to legitimise and accept the imperialist-imposed boundaries of Africa.

Another Angola?

Some defenders of the Soviet bloc's support to Mengistu's Ethiopia may draw a parallel with the Angolan war of 1975-76, where the Cuban army undeniably played a progressive role in defeating the South African invasion. But the mere presence of armed Cubans in Africa does not a progressive war make. There are fundamental differences between the war over Ogaden today and the Angolan conflict two years ago.

The defeat and withdrawal of the Portuguese colonialists set the stage for fighting among three Angolan bourgeois-nationalist groups in August of 1975. While Holden Roberto's National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) was based on the Bakongo people and Jonas Savimbi's UNITA on the Ovimbundu, both these groups, as well as the more urban-based People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), which also had a tribalist component, were fighting for state power over the entirety of the territory formally ruled as a Portuguese colony.

Thus a victory for any of the three groups would necessarily have resulted in the oppression of one or another of the peoples of Angola. As Leninists, and not Stalinists or New Leftists, we did not accept the MPLA's "socialist" rhetoric and diplomatic ties to the Soviet bloc as a license for tribal oppression. In the first phase of the Angolan war, we therefore took a defeatist position on all sides of the intra-nationalist conflict, while defending all the nationalist groups against the Portuguese colonialists and army (see "Civil War in Angola", *Young Spartacus* no 35, September 1975).

By the time the Portuguese pulled out, no effective state existed in Angola. Thus with the South African invasion in November 1975 and the Cuban counterthrust the Angolan conflict became essentially internationalised. South Africa is both an ally of US imperialism and a local imperialist power in its own right. At stake was the threat of a transformation of Angola into a de facto South African colony and a bastion of the American sphere of influence in Africa. The tribalist interests of Roberto's FNLA and Savimbi's UNITA had become subordinated to the imperialist conquest of Angola and Angola had become the arena of a proxy war between US imperialism and the Soviet degenerated workers state. With this fundamental change in the character of the war, our position became one of military support to the Cuban/MPLA forces against the American-backed South African offensive (see "Stop Imperialist Drive on Luanda!" *Workers Vanguard* no 87, 28 November 1975).

The war over Ogaden was fundamentally different from both the first and second phases of the Angola conflict. Somalia is not seeking to conquer the Ethiopian state and dominate the Amharic people, and is in any case totally incapable of doing so. Its goal was limited to detaching its own national territory, Ogaden, from the oppressor Ethiopian state. This defines the Somalis' struggle as a just war of national liberation.

In Angola the Soviet-backed Cuban army opposed an imperialist assault. Today Brezhnev and Castro are in effect supplying mercenaries for the bloody butcher Mengistu so he can keep Ethiopia a prisonhouse of peoples. Had the US or even a sub-imperialist power such as Iran, decisively intervened on the Somali side politically and militarily however, thereby fundamentally internationalising the conflict, then its essential character would accordingly have changed and the Somalis' just aspirations for national liberation become a subordinate element.

While recognising the right of all the Somali people to self-determination, we do not support the concept of "Greater Somalia" advocated by Mogadishu. Rather the Leninist approach to the national question is fundamentally *negative*: opposition to every manifestation of national privilege or oppression. "Greater Somalia" will inevitably be a vehicle for national injustices and reactionary irredentism.

Most graphic is the claim which the Somali regime makes over the "lost territory" of Djibouti. Only about one-half of the population of this territory is ethnically related to the

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Reformists capitulate to attacks on student left Government hands off AUS!

Every month sees the noose tightening more around the neck of the Australian Union of Students (AUS). Particularly over the past year and a half, a concerted campaign has been waged against this national "student union" because of its association with radical causes and the predominance of leftists of various stripes in its leadership. Now that this campaign has reached a decisive point with escalating moves to curb the AUS through court decisions and restrictive laws AUS is floundering helplessly.

Following a ruling last year by Victorian Supreme Court Justice Kaye (in an action brought by Liberal student Robert Clark) that AUS political expenditure was "ultra vires", last January's AUS Council dutifully cut off all funds to "proscribed" political activities, including the predominantly Asian Maoist-dominated Overseas Student Service (OSS) (motivated in part by sectarian rivalry between the AUS "left" bloc and the equally reformist Maoists). This spineless display scarcely placated, indeed encouraged, the attack. Now AUS faces Hamer government legislation to empower university administrations to determine which AUS and SRC (Student Representative Council) activities are "political" and which are "services", making fees for the former optional.

Significantly, even the NCC front group at Monash University, the Monash Moderates, came out in *defence* of compulsory membership (*Free Speech*, 13 April). The impotent AUS, in itself scarcely a major threat to any significant capitalist interests, is not the real target. Students, a socially diverse layer with representation from all classes but primarily the petty bourgeoisie, have neither the common interests nor the social power as a group to pose a serious threat, unlike the 2300 LaTrobe Valley power workers who almost succeeded in smashing the indexation wage freeze last year. Compulsory "student unionism" is necessarily compatible only with a lowest common denominator of apolitical trivia.

But the ruling class has been out to deal with campus radicalism ever since the student movement of the Vietnam War days effectively put in abeyance their accustomed control over campus political and ideological life. Now, with a shift in the political mood on campus to the right in recent years, the bourgeoisie has seen its chance to restore university life to "normal".

Central to this aim is not only an attack on democratic rights and a crackdown on student leftists, but also an attempt to block student solidarity with workers' struggles. When the Sydney University student general meeting, on a Spartacist Club motion donated \$300 to the striking LaTrobe Valley power workers in Victoria last year, right-wing students successfully mobilised to get the decision reversed. And again at Sydney, the administration vendetta against demonstrators opposing visiting racist apologist Hans Eysenck is a classic witchhunt, complete with a demagogic propaganda campaign for "academic freedom" and "free speech".

The AUS's fake-left leadership, to the extent that it has done anything at all, is "defending" AUS on the terms of the ruling class's attack -- defending the "principle" of "compulsory unionism", the importance of student services, and the slogan of "student control of student affairs". In adapting to "student issues", the campus expression of reformism, the fake lefts reject the revolutionary working-class program which alone provides a basis for mobilising labour in defence of leftist students and democratic rights on campus. They are incapable of defending even themselves and their precious positions of influence in AUS because they refuse to draw the class line.

This is the lesson of the campaign at Sydney University to defend 16 leftist anti-Eysenck demonstrators (including supporters of the Socialist Youth Alliance [SYA], Communist Group and International Socialists [IS]) victimised by the administration. While the Spartacist Club forthrightly described the attack from the start as an administration witchhunt against the left, these reformists not only consistently rejected our proposals for militant protest actions but for a time even refused to publicly acknowledge that most of the defendants were leftists in order to



Melbourne, 13 April: protest against Hamer legislation.

avoid alienating the liberal support which they fruitlessly pursued. Finally, after five months, Iser Martin Hirst conceded that "It's now [!] become fairly obvious that it is an attack on the left". What foresight!

Pursuing the logic of reformism to its bitter end, the AUS tops' "response" to the Hamer legislation was a motion (ER11) supported by the SYA which, far from categorically denouncing this move by the state to strengthen its grip on the universities, instead calls for a "mass mobilisation" to demand that "no legislation should be passed or implemented unless it is supported by students in a democratic vote" (emphasis added)! Had the "Trotskyists" of the SYA been in Germany in 1932, they would therefore have voluntarily gone off to the concentration camps if the 90 percent Nazi majority in the universities "democratically" voted to send them there!

In contrast, Spartacist Clubs at Sydney and LaTrobe Universities called for a "militant campaign ... enlist[ing] the support of the trade unions" around the demands: "Defend AUS against government attacks! Government/courts out of student affairs! Staff-student-campus worker control of all tertiary institutions!", and alone forthrightly condemned *all* state intervention against AUS, "democratic" or not. But the AUS "lefts" would have nothing to do with any sort of militant, pro-working-class campaign. When an SL-initiated chant, "Smash Hamer's legislation!", was taken up by many students at a Melbourne protest march on 13 April, AUS organisers attempted to drown it out with their pathetically impotent call for "student control over student affairs".

Writing in the 25 April *Bulletin*, Tony Abbott -- a sophisticated student reactionary ideologue at Sydney University -- dismissed the question of compulsory student fees and their use as the "least significant aspect" of the issue:

"Student politics is being used as a base to attack not only the educational superstructure but also the very assumptions on which society is built, such as the merit of liberal democracy, the necessity of the family and Christianity."

To the ruling class the universities are both important tools for propagating bourgeois ideology and arenas for contention with the proletariat and its vanguard for the support of the broad middle layer of students. As demonstrated by the LaTrobe Valley strike, for students to give money to striking workers when the capitalists are mobilising every resource to smash their strike inspires horror and outrage in ruling-class circles. And as the ruling class well knows, the universities have also historically provided the revolutionary workers movement with talented intellectual cadre. The old and the new order compete for cadre at the universities.

As with the attacks on AUS, the working class has an interest in the universities -- in challenging the bourgeoisie's control over them, in defending and improving students' living stand-

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Leonid Plyushch, "socialist" Soviet dissident On tour for imperialism

Ukrainian dissident Leonid Plyushch's tour of Australia last month was received with glowing reports in the bourgeois press. The reason for the bourgeoisie's friendly attitude to this self-proclaimed "neo-Marxist" was not hard to discern. For, from start to finish Plyushch's tour was a promotional campaign for imperialism "with a human face" -- US president Jimmy Carter's fraudulent "human rights" campaign and the anti-Soviet military build-up which it masks in the rhetoric of opposition to "totalitarianism". Thus Plyushch's first stop was Canberra, where he criticised the imperialist powers before a parliamentary sub-committee on "human rights" in the Soviet Union for their "insincere and insufficiently firm stand" at the recent Belgrade conference, a follow-up to the 1975 Helsinki agreement (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 April).

In both Melbourne and Sydney, Spartacist League (SL) supporters intervened in Plyushch's public talks to expose his claim either to socialism or to representing the interests of the Soviet workers, compelling the "socialist" Plyushch to devote much of his presentations to an "explanation" of "how normal [:] capitalism is better than state capitalism [ie Stalinism]" and to explicitly denounce the October Revolution. An *Asp* supplement ("Plyushch: 'socialist' crusader for imperialist anti-communism", 18 April) distributed at the talks noted that:

"... it is precisely Plyushch's claim to 'socialism' which makes him the useful tool of imperialist anti-Sovietism that he is. Unlike openly reactionary pro-capitalist dissidents like Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Andrei Sakharov, Plyushch can be relied upon by the imperialist bourgeoisies to gain a hearing for anti-communism from the workers movement."

Exposing the fraudulence of the imperialists' concern for "human rights", one SL speaker at Plyushch's Melbourne University talk on 26 April said: "Carter and Fraser do not want rights for Russian workers, they want to smash the nationalised property of the Soviet Union and restore capitalist exploitation". Plyushch's stock response to our unconditional defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism was to claim that we thereby "supported the Stalinists". In reality it is imperialist pawns like Plyushch and his kind who -- by providing the Kremlin with a convenient foil to discredit before the Soviet workers all opposition to its rule as imperialist-influenced -- aid the Stalinists they seek to fight. Only one historic opposition to Stalinism has refused to bloc with imperialism against the Soviet Union -- Trotskyism. Trotskyism through its call for workers political revolution represents -- as the same SL speaker said -- "something the Kremlin fears ten times more than they fear the imperialists".

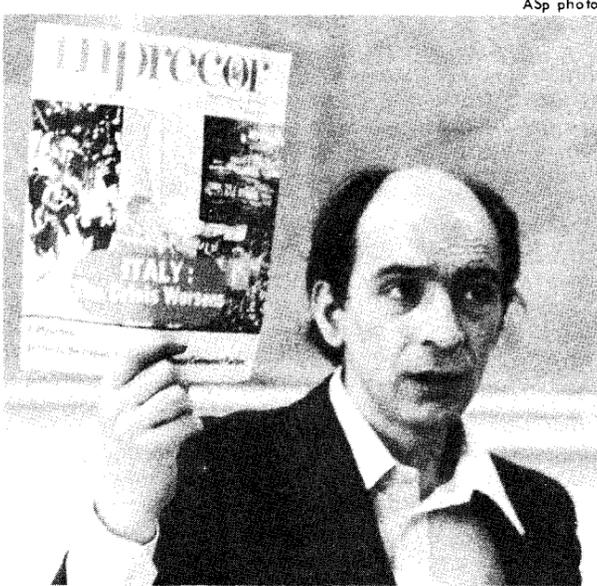
Workers control . . .

Continued from page seven

against the organism of which they were the representatives that the discontent of one section of the workers was directed." (*Col-lectives in the Spanish Revolution*)

The turning point of the Spanish revolution, the "May Days" in Barcelona, was precipitated by a military attack by the Popular Front government on workers management. The CNT collective which ran the telephone system was especially irritating to the Popular Front because it enabled the anarchist workers to listen in on communications between the central ministries in Valencia and their Catalan counterparts. On 3 May 1937 the Stalinist commissar of public order in Catalonia, Rodriguez Sala, attempted an armed assault on the Telefonica building. The infuriated response of the Barcelona workers -- a massive general strike including the erection of street barricades -- was on the verge of sweeping away the government forces when the anarchist ministers, Garcia Oliver and Federica Montseny, intervened to arrange a truce. This gave the central government time to send 6000 Civil Guards to occupy Barcelona.

In the rightist reaction which followed, the POUM leader Andres Nin and anarchist Camillo



Sydney University, 19 April: Leonid Plyushch lauds USec.

Plyushch's cynical justification for his bloc with imperialism was that the Russian workers could not wait for "the coming of the Fourth International", as he put it at his 19 April talk at Sydney University. But not all "Trotskyists" were like the Spartacists, he explained. Waving a copy of the United Secretariat's *Imprecor* (14 April 1977) which reprinted, with only the mildest criticism, his statement on the Helsinki accords, Plyushch exclaimed, "these Trotskyists are supporting human rights". And, indeed, the USec's Australian representatives, the Socialist Workers Party enthused that Plyushch's tour "will undoubtedly serve to strengthen the worldwide campaign for democratic rights in the Soviet Union" (*Direct Action*, 27 April). In the terms of these renegades from Trotskyism, this "worldwide campaign" would no doubt be "strengthened" even more if, as Plyushch argues, the imperialist powers were "firmer" with the Soviet Union.

The struggle for workers democracy in the Soviet Union cannot be divorced from an uncompromising defence of the gains of October from imperialist aggrandisement. As Trotskyists we defend all the Soviet dissidents against Stalinist persecution -- even reactionary ones like Solzhenitsyn -- so long as they do not engage in activities which militarily threaten the USSR. But those ostensibly socialist dissidents like Plyushch and Piotr Grigorenko who, lacking a revolutionary proletarian perspective, seek support outside the workers movement for the cause of soviet democracy must, inexorably, become pawns of imperialism and counterrevolution -- enemies, not friends of the Soviet workers. ■

Bermeri were assassinated among others, the left-centrist POUM was suppressed and the anarchists were expelled from the government (although they remained loyal to the Popular Front). The "May Days" broke the back of the vanguard of the proletariat; the liquidation of the revolutionary dual power established in July 1936, including workers management, followed apace.

The Trotskyist position toward workers management in the Spanish revolution is governed by the fact that it constituted a form of proletarian dual power in relation to an essentially bourgeois government. While criticizing and opposing anarcho-syndicalist doctrine, we would be the most resolute defenders of workers management in practice, far more so than the treacherous CNT bureaucracy. While maintaining and stepping up production for the war of the Republic against Franco, a Trotskyist leadership would have refused and resisted the Stalinist-inspired state requisitions of capital equipment on the pretext of furthering the war effort. Trotskyists would have demanded the ouster of official representatives of the Popular Front government from all bodies administering the collectives. Above all, the Trotskyists would also have explained that genuine socialization of production required the overthrow of the Popular Front (no less than the defeat of Franco's army) and the establishment of a planned economy administered by a workers government.

The contrasting experiences of Russia 1917-21 and Spain 1936-39 indicate that our attitude toward workers control and management depends above all on the class nature of the state power, and secondarily on the development of the revolution from a proletarian offensive against capitalist rule to the consolidation of a workers government administering a centralized, planned economy. ■

Land rights . . .

Continued from page three

variety of land rights means in reality is not an idyllic existence but stagnation at one point or another in between the old ways and integration into capitalist society at the lowest rung. For the vast majority of reserve Aboriginals, a genuine return to the old society is no longer possible.

Mining, land rights and proletarian revolution

Petersen and the mining companies have done their best to whip up racist sentiment against compensation claims for mining operations by "greedy" blacks, well expressed by an anonymous "Queensland ALP man" quoted in the *Bulletin* (11 April):

"But most Queenslanders want to forget about the Aborigines. They're trouble and expense, and the chaps at Aurukun will get no support in Queensland for wanting to pinch all the mining royalties for themselves [!]. That's being seen as greedy and downright ungrateful. After all, we've been feeding and clothing them for decades ... there's a lot of support for Joh already, even in the Labor Party."

The racist gall required to complain that Aboriginals are not filled with gratitude for having been slaughtered and reduced to wrenching poverty reveals well enough the infection of the labour movement with this virus. For our part, we are not sorry to see mining barons finally compelled to disgorge some of their immense profits to the Aboriginals whose land they have hitherto simply seized, and we defend the right of the Aurukun and other tribes to extract whatever compensation they can from these blood-suckers. But although in some instances Aboriginal tribes can conceivably get rich from mining money, such business deals will have no impact on the living conditions of the vast majority of blacks.

And it does not help to ignore the fact also underlined by the nameless "ALP man's" tirade -- workers, white or black, also continue to get nothing from Australia's mineral wealth. Along with all natural resources and means of production, the land and minerals will be nationalised by the proletariat in the course of throwing off capitalist rule and taking power.

The return of the missions and reserves to those living on them, where applicable enabling traditional use of the land such as the preservation of sacred sites currently or recently recognised, would eliminate the most immediate felt sources of victimisation. But unlike the Maoists and the SWP, we recognise that a workers state would seek both to exploit important mineral resources and to progressively liquidate the halfway-house culture of poverty, disease, ignorance and superstition which survivals of tribal or semi-tribal existence represent. However, to attempt to do so by compulsion is scarcely necessary and would only replace one jailer by another. A workers state would respect local control of traditional lands, reserves, missions etc, and unlike the capitalist state would honour a wide range of additional land claims beyond these often arbitrary boundaries. But at the same time it would address the far more real social needs of such groups through a systematic campaign to provide quality housing, medical care, social services, education, and jobs.

Contrary to the SWP, which laughably urges NT blacks to rely on the power of the anti-uranium movement, only the working class, the producer of all social wealth under capitalism, has the social power to defend blacks against continued victimisation and discrimination; to smash the Queensland acts; to fight for expropriation of the mining companies and cattle stations, and for full employment; to organise particularly the unorganised, super-exploited rural black workers; to open the road for the integration of blacks as conscious workers into the labour movement. And in its struggle for power, the working class has

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a special interest in the social liberation of Aboriginals. Though Aboriginals are scarcely a strategic ally of the proletariat, in fulfilling its historical obligation to them the victorious Australian workers state will also demonstrate, in concrete deeds, to the oppressed masses in the surrounding Asian region its repudiation of the Australian labour bureaucracy's vile tradition of white-racist imperialism.

The most attractive features of primitive tribal communism -- the absence of private property or a special repressive apparatus, the unity and social harmony preceding the development of classes -- will be realised again not by a return to the foundations of primitive scarcity but on the qualitatively higher plane of a classless society; on the foundations of open-ended material plenty through scientific knowledge, planning and technological control over nature. That is the true road to human dignity. ■

AUS . . .

Continued from page nine

ards, including services, TEAS, etc, and in opening up the universities to working-class and other oppressed youth through open admissions and full living stipends. But students will not be won to the side of the proletariat, either in particular class battles or as committed revolutionists, on the question of higher TEAS payments.

Some of the leading cadre of the early Communist International came out of the youth groups of the Socialist International, won to Bolshevism by its implacable opposition to social chauvinism, the imperialist war and bourgeois militarism. Had they been appealed to on the grounds of "student interests" in the face of the tremendous upheaval represented by the first world war, who could have cared? Only an intransigent program of proletarian revolution, addressed to the vital issues in the class struggle, can create a powerful communist youth movement capable of, as the class struggle intensifies, polarising and splitting students as part of workers' struggle for power. That is the perspective of the Spartacist League. ■

Horn of Africa . . .

Continued from page nine

Somalis (the Issas). The other half consists of the Afars, who are not Somali and in fact the two peoples have a long history of murderous hostility. To annex the territory of Djibouti to a "Greater Somalia" would involve either driving the Afars out of their homeland or else subjecting them to systematic national oppression. In any case the real prize in Ethiopian-Somali squabbling over the former French colony is control of the port. In this potential source of armed conflict Marxists take no sides.

For proletarian internationalism in Africa

In very backward regions of Africa the bourgeoisie in the epoch of imperialism is incapable of progressive nation building. The classic bourgeois-democratic revolutions lifted the fetters of feudal oppression, but in the epoch of capitalist decay the weak bourgeoisies of the ex-colonial countries are *incapable* of breaking the chains of imperialist domination or even of overcoming tribalism and feudalistic-religious obscurantism. "Democratic Somalia" is a fanatically Muslim state whose national hero is the "mad mullah", Abdullah Hassan.

Only under the dictatorship of the proletariat, which in the Horn of Africa must centrally rest on the Ethiopian and Eritrean proletariats, could the Somali people achieve national emancipation without infringing upon or brutally denying the legitimate national rights for other peoples of the region. ■

(adapted from Workers Vanguard no 195, 3 March 1978)

Meatworkers . . .

Continued from page twelve

position of an independent course of action, that the capitalists recruit their scabs and, when necessary, their fascist shock troops.

The success of the graziers' and meat-industry millionaires' vicious strikebreaking mobilisation of thousands of farmers will only whet their appetite for more union blood. The "militant" Cattlemen's Union threatened to pour scabs into the abattoirs if the AMIEU stoppage had gone beyond the scheduled four days. A taunting editorial entitled "Showdown yet to come" in an NSW rural paper, the *Land* (13 April), boasted that "farmers have now shown that, given the right

cause, they can unite and muster strength which even the hitherto all-powerful unions cannot take lightly".

Nothing more is needed to put paid to the myth purveyed by some self-styled "communists", particularly the Maoists, of a "patriotic people's unity". In the eyes of the Maoists, workers and farmers (not to mention "national bourgeois") are equally "progressive" forces for "national independence and socialism". Thus the 20 April *Vanguard* (paper of the Communist Party of Australia [Marxist-Leninist]) devotes the greater part of an article entitled "Capitalism, It's The Enemy Of Both Farmers And Workers" to explaining how it's the enemy primarily of farmers and attempting to portray small farmers (and even the graziers of the aforementioned Cattlemen's "Union") as born fighters for socialism.

Yet in the midst of a confrontation which could quite easily have turned into a bloody melee between picketing workers and strikebreaking ("radically re-thinking"?) farmers, nowhere does *Vanguard* say what its position was on the scab attacks! And how could it? For the Maoists, the class struggle must be *subordinated* to the pursuit of a reformist bloc of all classes against "compradores" and "superpowers". Especially in this case such cross-class unity necessarily stands *counterposed* to the picket line, the physical embodiment of the class line.

It is true that farmers, like the rest of the petty bourgeoisie, are not some unalterably reactionary mass; that their only hope lies with the workers' conquest over capitalism. The pernicious and deepening unity of the farmers and the wealthy graziers, exemplified by the proposed merger of the Australian Wool Growers' and Graziers' Council and the small farmers' Australian Wool and Meat Producers' Federation, can and must be split by the labour movement, winning the small farmers to its side and arraying the graziers with their natural capitalist allies. But this cannot be done by obfuscating the fact that farmers and workers are different social classes with different, sometimes counterposed, class interests. Organised labour must be prepared to crush those small farmers who willingly follow the reactionary strikebreaking lead of the graziers and the financiers.

In writing of the mobilisation of the petty bourgeoisie behind French fascism in the 1930s, Trotsky condemned the vacillating policies of the Stalinist and social-democratic misleaders of the workers: "To bring the petty bourgeoisie to its side, the proletariat must win its confidence. And for that it must have confidence in its own strength" (*Whither France?*). The Australian workers movement has powerful defensive organisations. But that power is squandered by its traitorous leadership in half-hearted actions which retreat from confrontation with the bourgeoisie and serve only to draw the middle classes closer to the capitalists' side.

Far from preventing "confrontation, violence and bloodshed" by his betrayal of the meat and waterside workers, Hawke only opened the union movement up to future, far more violent and dangerous attacks by the bourgeoisie's scabs. The working class needs a leadership worthy of the name: one that will not shrink from a defence of workers' picket lines, one which in its resolute struggle to defend the independent class interests of the workers will be able to sway the oppressed layers of the middle classes to its side, to the struggle for a socialist society. ■

Italy . . .

Continued from page two

"We totally condemn the means, the objectives and the political conception of the 'brigatisti', which is based on terror. But we refuse to build, on this state, the social basis for an increasingly repressive regime." (quoted in *Le Monde*, 22 March)

Appropriately, they called for an exchange of Moro for BR leader Curcio.

The Italian section of the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International", Livio Maitan's Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari (GCR), was, if anything, even worse, parroting the PCI's accusations against the BR and solidarising with the "anti-terrorism" campaign in a revolting display of political cowardice:

"Whether the Red Brigades were direct participants, or if on the contrary they only provided a political cover for an action taken by others, this does not affect their political condemnation, which must now be total... "The kidnapping of Aldo Moro and its political exploitation, which unequivocally bear the stamp of the right, make necessary a powerful workers mobilization." (*Rouge*, 20 March)

The GCR, which for years recruited on the basis of unadulterated Guevarism; which uncritically applauded the spectacular 1974 assassination of Franco premier Carrero Blanco; which mindlessly

cheered on acts of indefensible terror against innocent civilians by Irish and Palestinian nationalists; now unveils its true political appetites. Enthusiastic advocates of terror elsewhere, when it occurs closer to home they rush headlong into the arms of their "own" bourgeoisie as soon as the predictable "anti-terrorist" demagoguery begins.

In contrast to the GCR's hypocritical capitulation, some leftists in Italy took a principled and courageous stance. The Gruppo Bolscevico-Leninista of Umbria, which broke from the GCR in opposition to voting for reformist workers parties in a popular front -- not to be confused with the GBL d'Italia, which supports voting for the working-class components of such a bourgeois political formation -- forthrightly defended the BR against the bourgeois state (in a leaflet dated 16 March), while correctly pointing out the futility of individual terror:

"The actions of the BR not only serve as a pretext for the state to launch attacks on the left, but also promote a further dispersal of the proletariat and its vanguard. Instead of spurring the workers onto the road of class struggle, these actions condemn them to passivity and observation from afar.

"But at this time we do not turn our backs on the terrorist militants in an accusatory and criminal manner. Honest revolutionaries must not flee (as do the cowards of the Italian left) from the obligation to defend ALL the left against the state and its bestial repression. We openly and forcefully affirm that the demand of freedom for the victims of white terror is an irrevocable component of our communist program."

Bourgeois justice in Italy does not pretend to be neutral. The fascist murderer who gunned down a Lotta Continua militant last September escaped punishment, while the slain leftist's comrades were sentenced to one-and-a-half years in prison. Furthermore, the BR leaders' lives are in danger every moment they remain in the bourgeoisie's jails. Free the imprisoned BR leaders!

For years the escalating terrorism of the fascist MSI met with only routine police round-ups which rarely even came to trial -- there are still an estimated 300 right-wing thugs under arrest. Since 1976, however, groups such as the BR have tried to single-handedly even the score with the marauding fascist scum.

Leninism and terrorism

Leninists have always opposed individual terrorism. From the time of the Russian Marxists' polemic against the Narodniks, who sought to bring down czarism by bombing the czars, to the present where authentic Trotskyists opposed Guevarist guerrillism, our method has always been the class struggle, reliance on the working masses. When much of the left was hailing the random, indiscriminate terror practised by nationalists such as the Palestinian PFLP, who specialise in airport massacres and hijacking innocent passengers, we denounced it as criminal and indefensible. But where terrorist acts have been directed against the class enemy -- out of hatred for capitalism -- the Spartacist League has never flinched from defending those militants from the organised terror of the capitalist state.

The attraction of futile and substitutionist terror for dedicated young militants in Italy is only possible in the absence of a revolutionary party capable of mobilising the working masses toward a seizure of state power and establishment of proletarian rule -- the only alternative to the social rot of Italy's decaying capitalism. ■ (adapted from Workers Vanguard no 200, 7 April 1978)

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Workers protest at 19 April hearing of arrested pickets, Fremantle court.

Farmers' anti-union caravan in Adelaide, 31 March.

Farmer mobilisation smashes meatworkers' ban Picket lines must be defended!

Recession-level unemployment; defeatist, chauvinist labour protectionism; government strikebreaking; and an eleventh-hour settlement contrived by ACTU president Bob Hawke -- all have been familiar ingredients in recent labour battles. But what was directly at stake in last month's dispute between the Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union (AMIEU) and the sheep exporters was the labour movement's ability to defend one of its central and most important weapons -- the picket line. And what was particularly ominous about the defeat suffered by the AMIEU was that it was not the employers and their governments alone who were out to get the workers but thousands of farmers on the rampage for union blood.

For two weeks before Hawke announced his settlement on the evening of 11 April, hordes of strikebreaking farmers had been flaunting their intent to deal the AMIEU a body blow. Graziers from as far away as Queensland joined in huge demonstrations in Adelaide of reactionary anti-union "militancy". Then, on 10 April, as a phalanx of WA cops dragged off and arrested 62 pickets in Albany and Fremantle the farmers invaded the Albany wharves to load sheep onto a docked ship. The following day a thousand farmers threatened to do the same at the small SA port of Wallaroo.

Scab labour had not worked the wharves in twenty-five years. For the first time in a decade the Waterside Workers Federation (WWF) leadership, who had been observing the AMIEU ban, felt compelled to shut down every wharf in Australia. The AMIEU leadership, finally, decided to call for a nationwide meatworkers' strike. But even this long overdue move was rendered an empty gesture from the start -- it was to last only four days (including the weekend!) and to begin only two days hence. And two days was all it took for Hawke to scurry down to Adelaide in the interest of preventing "confrontation, violence and bloodshed" and earn yet another round of applause from the bourgeois media as the miraculous "industrial fixer". Having already agreed to Hawke's deal, the AMIEU bureaucracy nonetheless went ahead with its stoppage as a token "protest" against the smashing of the picket lines in a cynical attempt to save face with an angry rank and file.

The dispute originated in the AMIEU's long-standing claim that Australia's mushrooming live sheep trade with the Middle East was threatening the jobs of as many as 16,000 of the union's 40,000 members. In particular, the bans -- limited to only two states, WA and SA -- were placed against sheep exporters like Elders-GM and Metro Meats, who had gone back on an earlier agreement with the union to export two carcasses for every live sheep. In the end Hawke got the AMIEU to call off the bans and the pickets in exchange for nothing but some nebulous "negotiations" which agreed to a tri-partite inquiry

(government, exporters and union) into the live sheep trade with the Middle East.

As for the 62 arrested unionists, who had already been "confronted" with threats of "violence and bloodshed", Hawke offered nothing but promises that the charges would be dropped. After going ahead with a 19 April hearing for the 34 pickets arrested in Fremantle and remanding it to 11 May, the reactionary Liberal Court government finally relented under federal government pressure. But had the TLC called out every worker in WA immediately after the arrests, Court's strikebreaking laws could have been given a stinging defeat instead of being left to threaten the labour movement again.

The day after the AMIEU picket was smashed over 3000 angry unionists poured into the streets of Fremantle for a TLC protest rally. "If this crowd here today had been here yesterday" said speaker John Marks, an AMWSU assistant secretary and supporter of the reformist Communist Party, "not one of the bloody trucks would have got on the wharves" (*West Australian*, 13 April).

But why weren't they? The union officialdom had several days' notice of Court's legislation, the graziers' strikebreaking intentions were no secret, and the scabs were then allowed to occupy the wharves for two whole days. Those 3000 unionists, standing solidly on the wharves in mass pickets the days preceding the cop/scab assault, assured of the backing of the rest of WA labour, would have stopped the strikebreakers in their tracks. Preparations for militant, disciplined defence of the pickets would have made the graziers' thugs think long and hard before making their menacing threats.

Militant mass pickets vs reliance on bosses' state

Militant tactics like mass pickets are counterposed to the reformist misleaders' blind reliance on the benign "neutrality" of the capitalist state. Even the national watersiders' protest stoppage was exactly that -- a protest designed to pressure the class enemy and its state into offering meaningless "guarantees" that scab labour would not be used on the wharves again. Not surprisingly, WA labour minister Grayden "guaranteed" that non-union labour would not be used, if union labour was available -- ie, there would be no scabbing if there was no strike on which to scab! There was only one effective guarantee against scabbery -- the extension, reinforcement and defence of the picket lines which the WWF and AMIEU bureaucrats allowed to be smashed!

Confidence in the bosses' courts and cops to "arbitrate" the class struggle is but one side of the bureaucracy's pro-capitalist policies; its "defence" of workers' jobs through protectionist demands aimed at bolstering Australian capitalism is another. In recent years a number of large abattoirs and meatworks, such as the Smorgon plant in Victoria, have shut down. Thousands of

workers have been thrown onto the streets -- without the slightest resistance by the AMIEU tops. Over 700 workers were retrenched in five SA abattoirs in the last six months alone.

Especially in the face of an international recession which has continued unabated for five years, it is a particularly cruel hoax to claim that protectionist demands for import/export quotas can ameliorate the ravages of unemployment. With the contraction of the world market there is even less chance of expanding Australia's share of the market as a means of creating new jobs.

The ugly racism which lurks behind protectionism came to the surface at a 12 April stopwork meeting at the Homebush state abattoir in NSW, as one union organiser defended the AMIEU campaign through a derogatory anti-Arab slur, contemptuously asking: "What are they going to feed the sheep on in the Middle East -- sand?" Yet much of the ostensibly revolutionary left, including the nominally anti-protectionist International Socialists (see *Battler*, 22 April), explicitly supported this chauvinist campaign.

Small farmers -- which side are they on?

The AMIEU will not ward off retrenchments through attempts to pressure sheep farmers or pin the blame on Arabs. A nationwide strike for a thirty-hour week at no loss in pay could have secured full employment in the industry. A demand for the expropriation of the meat industry and the large farmholdings without compensation, coupled to a call for the granting of interest-free loans to hard-pressed farmers, could have undercut the reactionary farmer mobilisation by encouraging small farmers to break from the graziers. For most of the scabs were not "wealthy rednecks on the tear" as suggested by AMIEU official O'Toole. And as the support of LaTrobe Valley shopkeepers for last year's power workers' strike, and of farmers in the US for the recent coalminers' strike demonstrate, petty-bourgeois layers can be won to the side of the working class in its struggles.

While wealthy graziers such as Ian McLachlan, one of the organisers of the reactionary mobilisation and leader of the SA graziers' association, and his colleague, Sir Samuel Burston, president of the Australian Wool Growers' and Graziers' Council, have close links with the giant meat exporters and the Liberal/National Country Party government, the small sheep farmers had nothing to gain from lining up behind the profit-hungry meat companies. Elders-GM pays farmers \$10 a head for live sheep but takes \$15 for itself. Of the \$340 million it received from exports in 1977 less than \$75 million found its way into the hands of farmers -- and most of that went to the large operators. It is precisely from among such petty-bourgeois layers, ground up by recession and inflation, devoid by virtue of their class

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