



Union bashers march unopposed — where were the unions?

Stop the "We Care" rightists!

In the aftermath of the Qantas strike, tens of thousands marched against unions throughout Australia on the week of 9 March. The week before, 35,000 had marched through the streets of Auckland in an outpouring of anti-labour venom the day after the Federation of Labour (FOL) called off strikes in defence of arrested picketers. To the tunes of "God Defend New Zealand" and "Waltzing Matilda", the flag-waving jingoists sought to put strikes and unions beyond the pale, as something akin to treason.

The bulk of the left has tried to play down the so-called "We Care" mobilisations, but these marches were an open political challenge to the very foundation of the unions, the right to strike. And the open season which the marches sought to declare on union militants and leftists had already claimed a victim when, at the height of the media propaganda blitz, Wollongong union official Bill Kelly was gunned down in his home (see article page 2).

The marchers could and should have been swept off the streets by a show of force by the workers movement, a massive counter-mobilisation with the full weight of the unions behind it. Undoubtedly thousands of militant unionists would have jumped at the chance had the union tops given a lead. It is a crime that the only opposition displayed against these right-wing mobilisations — with the exception of the 2100 Melbourne wharfies who walked off the job the day of the Melbourne march (but did not rally against it) — were tiny rallies of isolated leftists, forced to huddle behind police lines for protection and worse than impotent, a picture of weakness.

From the official leaders of the Australian labour movement there was virtually not a squeak, bar the whimperings of Bob Hawke's ilk. This man with his eye on Fraser's job declared in Parliament that many strikes were unjustified, but the ALP was trying to do something constructive rather than take part in "this type of divisive action". In other words, the ALP is even more patriotic, and can put the lid on strikes even more effectively.

The acquiescence of the labour bu-



The "We Care" anti-union marches: labour bureaucrats let union-bashing go unopposed.

ASp photo

reaucracy in the face of the marches was itself a treacherous blow against the unions. In 1969 a near general strike shook the bourgeoisie, freed jailed union official Clarrie O'Shea and put on ice the penal powers of the anti-working-class arbitration system. Ever since the ruling class has feared a repeat. But the anti-union marches — the fruit of the repeated sellouts foisted on the working class by the union misleaders since 1969 — have helped create a political climate in which the Fraser government can mobilise the popular petty-bourgeois support it needs to take on the unions and win.

Now, too, the cause of union bashing can be bolstered with anti-Soviet patriotic hysteria and a right-wing social current mounting increasingly aggressive attacks on democratic rights and the position of women. "Moral majority" reaction, anti-Soviet chauvinism, and strikebreaking — that is the poisonous stew brewing

against organised labour. And instead of fighting it, the reformist labour bureaucrats are joining in — fulminating against sex shops in Sydney and openly endorsing US imperialism's anti-Soviet bases.

Breeding ground for fascism

After the Auckland demonstration the bourgeois media set about building up the Australian marches with a nauseous flood of anti-labour effluvia. The sinister Rupert Murdoch made the front running, turning his yellow tabloid, the *Daily Telegraph*, into a "We Care" publicity organ. Tania Harris, a nobody, became a "Kiwi Joan of Arc", even a "Kiwi Bernadette Devlin" — a grotesque insult to the tough Northern Irish militant who recently survived seven bullets from reactionary Orange assassins. Murdoch's TV station flew Harris over by private jet and cloned her in the form of one Leanne Hayward ("a sales manager from

Cremorne"), another nobody. We are supposed to believe that these sweet (and, naturally, pretty) young things, through sheer patriotic wholesomeness singlehandedly rallied decent, god-fearing folk to take a stand against evil union militants and their "communist" officials bent on destroying the god-given right of Qantas to use scabs and every boss to make money off his workers' sweat. Spontaneous? Not a chance: these events were stage-managed from beginning to end.

In Auckland several National Party MPs joined the march, and in Sydney the Liberals helped run the show behind the scenes. It was no accident that they marched past Labor Premier Wran's office and demanded that he appear. "Piggy" Muldoon, the New Zealand prime minister, promised the empty-headed Tania a tete-a-tete with the polo-playing chinless wonder Prince Charles

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For workers defence guards to stop anti-union attacks!

Attempted murder of union organiser

SYDNEY — The climate of anti-union hysteria which mobilised 15,000 in the streets of Sydney on March 9 threatens the working class with more than flag-waving, singing and chanting. Its deadly potential was underscored when, the day before, Wollongong union official and long-time leftist Bill Kelly was gunned down at his front door in an explicitly anti-union murder bid.

Kelly is an organiser for the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association (FEDFA) and a prominent local member of the Communist Party (CPA). At 3.30 am on 8 March he and his wife Kathy were awakened by two men claiming they wanted to confer with him about union matters. Understandably suspicious, he slammed the door when he saw a shotgun being raised. This action alone saved their lives; but three shotgun blasts through the door put Kelly in the hospital for several days with one blast taken in the leg.

Later, an anonymous phone call threatened Kathy Kelly that "If there is any

more industrial trouble or stirring, we will kill you and your husband" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 March). The following day a meeting at the South Coast Trades and Labour Council building to discuss the shooting was preceded by a bomb hoax. And since then, the Kellys have received more death threats. This campaign of vicious anti-union terror must be stopped. It is a matter of life and death, not just for Bill and Kathy Kelly, but for the labour movement as a whole.

So far no indication has been made public as to the identity or suspected identity of the gun thugs. Yet, without a whisper of evidence, the bourgeois press immediately sought to lay the blame at the door of the unions. The *Illawarra Mercury* talked about "union criminals" and "union warfare on the South Coast"; Murdoch's flagship, the *Australian*, even compared the shooting to the widely reputed gangland shootouts in the Victorian Painters and Dockers. These blatant slanders are designed to put the victim on trial, and by laying a false trail objectively serve only the real criminals — who may well strike again.

We want to see these murderous scum, whoever they are, jailed. But it would be folly for the workers movement to rely on the bosses' cops for protection. The burning need is for a union-based workers defence guard to stop the killers from striking again. The organisation of workers defence guards is key to the fight against the threat of rising anti-union violence. However, the leadership of the TLC (whose secretary, Merv Nixon, is a

leading CPAer) has concentrated its efforts on demanding a police investigation and sent a deputation to plead with the NSW police commissioner, Lees, for action. In its leaflet on the shooting, the TLC rightly points out that "Those who have mounted this [anti-union] campaign ... are really the ones who pulled the trigger of the shotgun that was fired at Bill and Kathy Kelly". But these, the real criminals behind the gunmen, acted for and as part of the capitalist class — and it's *their police force!*

A call for the sort of action needed, in contrast to these suicidal reformist illusions, came in a motion put forward by a militant in the NSW branch of the Printing and Kindred Industries Union (PKIU) at its 18 March monthly meeting in Sydney (see box). After the mover, Spartacist supporter Ron Rees, had finished motivating it, however, branch president Graham Porter ruled it out of order in an act of high-handed bureaucratic suppression.

The pretext was Porter's absurd claim — flying in the face of Dolan's public statements — that contrary to Rees' motion, the ACTU leadership had not "endorsed" Fraser's strikebreaking RAAF airlift! What really upset the PKIU bureaucrats was this pinpointing of their fellow ACTU bureaucrats' responsibility for fostering the anti-union climate through their cowardly airlift sellout.

Instead a toothless motion was passed which confined itself to condemning the attack and subserviently requesting assurance from Wran and his police minis-

ter that no effort would be spared to apprehend the culprits. One militant denounced this reliance on the bosses' cops, but was also ruled "out of order" when he protested the suppression of the previous motion for workers defence guards. Fairfax printers have had bitter experience with Wran's cops on the picket lines. How could anyone who had heard them lie to frame up and convict printers arrested on the picket line, as Rees had, trust them? They might decide to frame up Kelly himself, said Rees in the debate. Supporters of the "rely on the cops" motion all claimed they didn't trust the cops either, but had no alternative to offer. Some denounced the call for workers defence guards as a proposal for "vigilante squads" — as if organising to defend fellow unionists against murder is some sort of provocation.

This nonsense is dangerous, for it is used to justify a policy of retreat and passivity that will only encourage fascist and other reactionary thugs. Inaction by the FEDFA/TLC would be scandalous. The consequences of reformist reliance on the bosses' state can easily be mortal. Just as a show of force by organised labour in opposition to the anti-union hysteria would have driven the rats who tried to kill the Kellys scurrying back to their cellars, determined action by workers to defend themselves and their organisations is the only way these terror attacks can be repulsed.

Jail the thugs who shot Bill Kelly! No confidence in the bosses' cops! All confidence in workers defence guards! ■

The following motion on the shooting of Bill Kelly was moved by Spartacist League supporter Ron Rees, member of the Herald/Sun PKIU Chapel, at the 18 March PKIU NSW branch meeting.

The NSW branch of the PKIU protests against the shooting of FEDFA organiser Bill Kelly in Wollongong and demands that his assailants be jailed. It came on the heels of the Fraser government's use of the RAAF to break the Qantas strike, an action which the ACTU leadership openly endorsed instead of fighting.

Furthermore it occurred the night before the anti-strike, anti-union marches of 9th March. These marches were an outrage which the ACTU leadership allowed to go ahead unopposed by organised labour.

We reject the inference that this shooting was part of an intra-union dispute, as the bosses' press would have us believe. It was a direct result of the anti-union hysteria whipped up by Fraser and the press barons. Recognising that the object of any government inquiry into this shooting would only be to conduct an anti-union witchhunt, laying the blame on the victims of this violence, the labour movement must strongly oppose such an inquiry.

The trade unions cannot rely on the police to stop further such attacks, therefore must form their own workers defence guards as necessary. In view of the continuing death threats against Bill Kelly, this branch will support all efforts by the South Coast Labor Council and other union bodies to defend Brother Kelly.

Rightists...

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(she was thrilled), while Fraser gave his blessing in a government motion in parliament "endorsing the feelings" of the marchers. Everywhere they were backed by bosses who gave their white-collar workers paid time off to attend. The Brisbane march was organised directly under the auspices of the Queensland Housewives Association, an organisation backed by troglodyte premier Bjelke-Petersen and with links to the ultrarightist League of Rights.

That these marches are a culture medium for the growth of even openly fascist organisations was glaringly apparent at the Sydney march. The usual assortment of Eastern European anti-communists and Festival of Light reactionaries was there, carrying placards like "No strikes in Russia", "Send Commies to Russia" and "Australians for Jesus". They were joined by blue-rinse middle-class housewives fresh from their rose gardens, Qantas staff scabs and small bosses. But most ominously, Nazi thug Ross May also showed, with a band of skinhead toughs in tow, to march at the head of the demonstration. The bosses may view these fascists as an embarrassing fringe for now; but it is out of just such a frenzied petty-bourgeoisie, ruined by crisis-ridden capitalism, that mass fascist movements are built.

Sellouts spawn anti-union reaction

In New Zealand, the most serious class confrontation since the 1951 waterfront strike was posed when Muldoon escalated a strike by Air New Zealand engineers over wages and conditions by jailing 48 strike pickets. Immediately a number of unions in the Auckland area walked out in solidarity, posing the possibility of a countrywide general strike to free the jailed unionists and to beat back the Muldoon anti-union offensive. Instead, the FOL executive, heavily influenced by the pro-Moscow Socialist Unity Party, sat on its hands and let the spontaneous walkouts dissipate. A week later, as Muldoon and Fraser were using their respective airforces to break the Air NZ and

Qantas strikes through a massive military airlift of "stranded passengers", the FOL settled for a government review of legislation outlawing militant strike picketing and ordered all unions still out to go back to work.

This contemptible, cowardly stab in the back — leaving the jailed workers still facing charges — gained less than nothing. For as Muldoon's labour minister, Jim Bolger, arrogantly warned, changes in the law might make the unions worse off; the FOL sellout merely puts Muldoon in a better position to strengthen his anti-union measures. A militant general strike could have *smashed* all anti-picketing, anti-union legislation as well as the military strike-breaking, and would have prevented the Tania Harris marchers from ever getting onto the streets of Auckland.

In Australia, the ACTU's Cliff Dolan similarly did next to nothing to combat Fraser and the Qantas management's anti-union campaign. The Qantas strike

began when the "militant" executive of the Flight Stewards Association (FSA) announced its opposition to proposed speed-up manning levels on Qantas' new 747SP planes. But this opposition was quickly whittled down to a narrow dispute over whether a single position should be filled by a (male) steward or by a (female) hostess — who are in a different union. It was a division which Qantas exploited to the hilt. After provoking a strike by the FSA, Qantas bosses organised mass scabbing by pilots, hostesses and their own permanent pool of "staff labour".

Eventually, under considerable pressure, the ACTU tops slapped a twelve-day ban on the scab plane. In response Qantas started sacking workers who observed the ban, a provocative move which sparked a walkout by ground crew in protest. Even at this stage, when the struggle had become one to defeat Qantas' permanent scab force, the ACTU executive deliberately held back from

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Drop the charges against ACOA pickets!

SYDNEY — On 24 February Neville Wran's cops arrested four pickets outside the Commonwealth Centre here in Chifley Square. The arrested pickets were part of a seventy-strong picket line which had been thrown up during the 24-hour strike called by the Administrative and Clerical Officers Association (ACOA) in response to the Fraser government's reactionary Commonwealth Employees (Redeployment and Retirement) Act and the recent announcement by Fraser's Razor Gang that over 100 public service workers are to be sacked.

The arrests came at about 11 am when cops physically tried to clear a pathway for scabs to the doors of the government building. When the pickets refused to budge, Wran's

thugs in blue launched out and arrested one striker, Steve Bolt, then three others who ran to his defence. The arrested pickets have since been charged with obstruction and resisting arrest; one, Diane Fieldes, has also been charged with the more serious offence of assaulting a police officer. The four have been remanded on unconditional bail and are scheduled to appear at St James' Court on 7 April. The ACOA federally has undertaken to cover legal costs arising from the arrests, but what is really needed is a campaign by the labour movement to ensure that the charges are *dropped*. These arrests are an attack on the right of all unionists to strike and to picket effectively. Beat back Fraser's job-slashing, union-bashing offensive! No victimisations! Drop the charges now!

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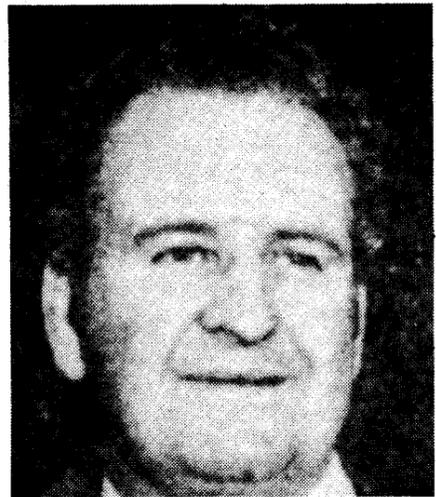
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ALP "moral majority" campaign targets democratic rights



ALP Lord Mayor Doug Sutherland.

SYDNEY — Anyone walking through the streets of Darlinghurst or Kings Cross lately will have noticed a relative absence of the usual scene ("wanna girl, luv?") on the street corners. It's not that business is bad, but rather that the reactionary "clean up Sydney" campaign of Labor Lord Mayor Sutherland is beginning to have its effect.

Sutherland's aim is to remove sex and porn shops from street level, so they won't offend "moral majority" types, and to "clean the streets" of prostitution. And in the last few weeks, ALP premier Neville Wran's cops (long alleged to have their own rake-offs from the "vice trade" as well as Sydney's illegal casino operations) have been carrying out this policy with gusto, cracking down on all those whom they consider to be "sexual deviants". In particular, the police have reportedly raided a number of gay bars and steam baths, including The Signal in Darlinghurst, King Steam and The Roman Bath in the City, and the Rex Hotel in the Cross. In addition Wran has formed a special 20-strong "Juvenile Crime Squad" to hound child prostitutes off the streets — presumably into the basements and back alleys where they will simply continue to be exploited and brutalised by the pimps and cops.

Yet these are the same cops who went on a vicious rampage at the Gay Mardi Gras in June 1978, arresting almost 200 and injuring scores of others. The same cops who broke the picket lines of striking Government Printing Office workers in 1978 and who attacked pickets at the Fairfax printing plant in early 1980. Sutherland's right-wing morality crusade is an attack on democratic rights which must be stopped now! Down with police harassment of gays, prostitutes and transvestites!

The ALP anti-sex shop offensive comes in the context of heightened union bashing (the "We care" marches) and Cold War anti-communism. For years the self-appointed guardians of public

morals, the Festival of Light, have tiraded against "sin and smut" — ie, adult cinemas, live shows, prostitution, homosexuality, abortions and even straightforward heterosexual intercourse done in anything but the missionary position. The Liberal silvertails of the Civic Reform Group have long been agitating too to get sex and porn off the streets of Kings Cross. This time they've been quick to back Sutherland's campaign, explicitly linking it to the recent anti-union mobilisations.

ALP steals Fred Nile's thunder

On 21 March, a 60-strong Festival of Light rally in George Street called on people to "show your support for the Lord Mayor's clean up of the 26 illegal moral pollution centres", and handed out a leaflet entitled "Aussies care" which sported a picture of Tania "I hate strikes" Harris. Sutherland had been invited to speak but failed to show up — presumably because it would have been too embarrassing even for him to be seen with this anti-working class rabble, rather than any disagreement with the sentiments they were voicing. As it was the rally was a flop: the handful of Salvation Army and blue rinse types who turned out cut a sorry sight with their placards demanding "Stamp out smut" and "Rid our street of sewers" and proclaiming "Jesus Christ is the only solution to moral pollution". But then why should the rally have been big? After all, the Labor city government is doing the job for them.

Of course, for these bourgeois moralists, their hypocrisy knows no bounds. For instance, the late Leo Port (Civic Reform lord mayor) was title holder to a string of houses in Goulburn Street that were rented out as massage parlours. And Wran never sent his cops to seize *Playboy* magazine when daughter Kim graced its pages. The bourgeoisie and their lieutenants in the labour movement have nothing to fear from this campaign

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Sydney, 22 March: Festival of Light rally against sex, strikes, socialism ... for ALP's anti-porn campaign.

anyway; they always get what they want — from good booze to kinky sex to abortions. After all, they can afford it.

What is particularly ominous about the current anti-porn crusade is that it is being spearheaded by the ALP. Sutherland himself sees his role as that of "moral guardian". A few years ago he opposed the granting of a liquor licence to Sydney Town Hall and is pushing his present campaign with the zeal of a born-again Christian. In an interview with the *National Times* (15-21 March), he spelled out the line:

"There is ample evidence these days that these businesses are harmful. It is not hard to establish that the explicit nature of their message is having a deleterious effect on the young of the city. I'm constantly getting complaints from mothers and fathers who are embarrassed to walk along the streets of the city with their sons and daughters.

"There are little old ladies in Elizabeth

Bay who find it an ordeal to walk to Kings Cross station."

This touching concern for "little old ladies" and the city's youth is rank hypocrisy: what has the ALP ever done to eliminate soaring unemployment among school leavers in the Western Suburbs? Behind his pious words is a willingness to use bourgeois state censorship. Henceforth the sexually permissible will be what Doug Sutherland and the City Fathers say it is — and their view of morality is taken straight from the bourgeois family.

Scandalously, Labor "lefts" at Town Hall, like Alderman Tony Reeves, are supporting Sutherland's campaign. Reeves feels the need to distance himself from some of the more egregiously reactionary aspects of Sutherland's moralising, claiming "I'm not the Mary Whitehouse of Town Hall" (*National Times*, 15-21 March). But Reeves is

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IWD — a proletarian holiday!



ASp photo

Melbourne: Spartacist contingent defends IWD as proletarian holiday.

MELBOURNE — Bourgeois feminists may celebrate it, but 8 March — International Women's Day — is a workers holiday. Originating in 1908 among female garment workers in New York's Lower East Side, who marched under the slogans "For an eight-hour day", "For the end of child labour" and "Equal suffrage for women", it was officially adopted by the socialist Second International in 1911. In keeping with these traditions, the Spartacist League (SL) contingent on this year's Melbourne march celebrated IWD as a proletarian holiday — in opposition to both the petty-bourgeois feminists and their fake-left followers.

The shrinking ranks of the increasingly right-wing Women's Liberation Movement had planned a day of apolitical infantile trivia. But when confronted with the communist presence of the SL, these "sisters" showed that their "anti-politics" stance is really anti-communism. Megaphones other than

those of the "official marshals" were declared "banned", and rumours were circulated that "anti-feminist" (read: SL) placards would be ripped up. As the contingents were forming up, men were declared "illegitimate" (!) and told to march at the back.

The International Socialists (IS) had mildly chastised the feminists for their male-exclusion policy. The *Battler* (7 March) had declared that "IS members in the planning committee challenged both the hostility to men itself, and having such things decided by a minority." Some challenge! The oh-so-democratic IS had participated in excluding our comrades from the planning committee: exclusion, it would seem, is only "undemocratic" when it's directed at the IS itself.

The IS' pretensions to opposition to exclusionism disappeared on the day of the march, moreover. When the SL proposed a united front with the IS to march in the

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Cold War thunder

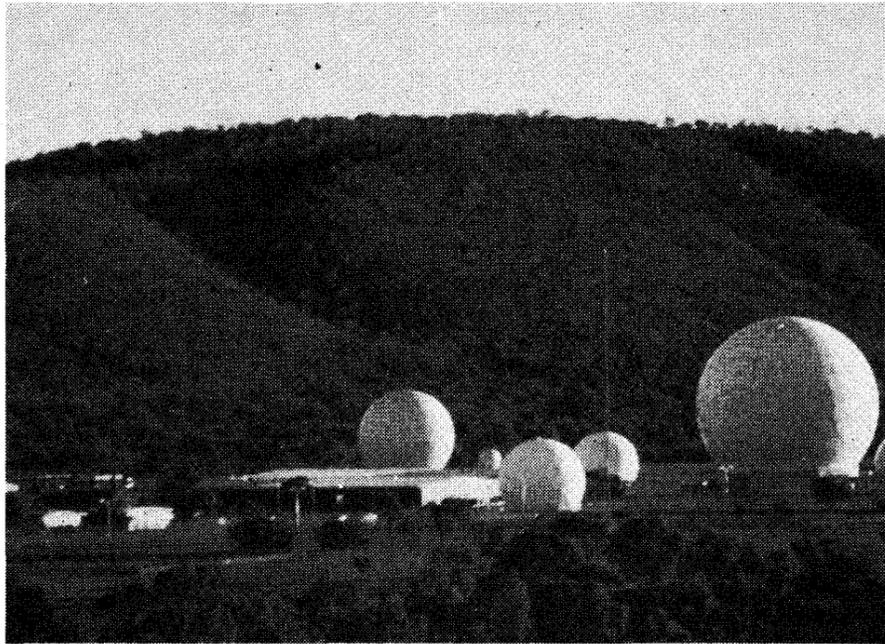
Fraser fronts for US nuclear madness

The Cold War winds of hardline anti-communism are blowing full blast in imperialism's capitals. In the US, Reagan and his sinister secretary of state Alexander Haig have been issuing fifties-style denunciations of the Soviet leaders as a bunch of ruthless terrorists ready to "lie, cheat and steal" to further world revolution. In Britain, Tory journalist Chapman Pincher has been discovering alleged KGB spies under the most unlikely beds — from the former head of MI5, Sir Roger Hollis, to an ex-ASIO agent, one Charles Howard ("Dick") Ellis. Here in Australia, the bourgeoisie has been doing its bit too to whip up anti-Soviet hysteria: Murdoch's *Daily Mirror* has been running lurid sensationalist tales of "highly trained" KGB women seducing foreign diplomats in Moscow (part of the "training" involves being raped in a KGB centre outside Kiev!), while Malcolm Fraser last month seized on some unremarkable remarks by Soviet ambassador Dr Nikolai Soudarikov to re-affirm the government's support to Reagan/Haig's war preparations.

All Soudarikov did was to call for the improvement of Australia-USSR relations, frozen by Fraser after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Referring to US bases and the proposed staging of B-52 bombers here, he criticised Fraser's foreign policy for making Australia a likely nuclear target, a simple statement of the obvious. In response, Fraser thundered that this was a "grave threat by the ambassador" (*Australian*, 6 March) and announced that henceforth the existing severe travel restrictions on Soviet diplomats would extend to practically all Soviet visitors. Anti-Soviet causes celebres like the ex-Red Bikini Girl defector and *Penthouse* centrefold Lilliana Gasinskaya get automatic permanent residence status, but Soviet visitors must submit detailed itineraries even before they get in. So much for the "democratic way of life" in this outpost of the "free world".

Fraser's aim in painting the Soviets as nuclear aggressors is to cover up Australia's increasing integration — via the US bases — into US imperialism's drive for nuclear first-strike capacity. On 11 March Foreign Minister Tony Street returned from the US with an agreement allowing US B-52 bombers use of the RAAF's Darwin base for staging "surveillance" and "navigation training" flights. US Secretary of State Haig, formerly Nixon's Chief of Staff during Watergate, in return gave a worthless "assurance" that the B-52s would not carry nuclear weapons without the consent of the Australian government.

The agreement fooled nobody, not



US base at Pine Gap integral to imperialism's anti-Soviet Cold War drive.



Soviet ambassador Soudarikov.

even ALP leader Bill Hayden, who cut his usual ridiculous figure quibbling over the details and prating about "national sovereignty". With deputy leader Lionel Bowen, Hayden decided to press the issue by arranging a tour of four of the most important US military installations: North West Cape submarine communications base, the highly secret Pine Gap (run by the CIA), Nurrungar and the Smithfield satellite tracking station outside Adelaide. At each, the pathetic duo gave the bases a clean bill of health, expressing only occasional "reservations". The alternative, Hayden reasoned with schoolboy naivete after his trip to Pine Gap, was that there had been

"a conspiracy to mislead us. I just can't accept that" (*National Times*, 22-28 March). The CIA tell fibs to old Bill? Unthinkable!

Rather than *Australia* being threatened, the US bases constitute a threat to the Soviet degenerated workers state, whose destruction and reconquest for capitalist exploitation has been the goal of the imperialist powers since October 1917. In his book *A Suitable Piece of Real Estate*, Desmond Ball demonstrates that bases like Pine Gap and Nurrungar are in all probability ground stations for precision surveillance systems which facilitate highly accurate attacks on Soviet missile silos. Similarly, the strategic value of precision navigation systems like Navstar at Smithfield and Omega in Gippsland is that they allow the US submarine fleet — which carries over half the US ICBM force — to attack Soviet ICBMs with deadly accuracy.

In accepting the ANZUS alliance and the US bases, the ALP leadership are criminal accomplices of the US preparations for a nuclear first strike on the USSR. From 1972 to 1975, the Whitlam government defended the US war bases as loyally as its conservative predecessors. "We never told the people at the election that we disclose other people's secrets", said Whitlam (*Age*, 29 March 1973, quoted in Ball, op cit). The ALP also did its bit to assist Fraser's cooked-up anti-Soviet furore when frontbencher and former Whitlam minister Bill

Morrison paraded his loyalty by describing how the KGB tried to recruit him in 1963.

Describing his own recruitment to the Soviet intelligence service in his book *My Silent War*, Kim Philby writes that "One does not look twice at an offer of enrolment in an elite force." Philby and his contemporaries Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean were clearly motivated by a desire to serve what they believed to be world revolution, and we Trotskyists can take pleasure in their exploits and triumphs — and, if Chapman Pincher's revelations are true, the triumphs of subsequent honourable schoolboy spies like Roger Hollis. But the KGB has in its ranks thousands of police-bureaucrats whose work consists in carrying out crimes against the working class, including assassinating Trotsky in 1940. The likes of a Bill Morrison, however, did not reject the KGB because of its anti-working class measures; instead he went on to become a Labor politician, which Industrial Workers of the World leader Tom Barker contemptuously described in 1918 as "the lowest job going outside of the public hangman" (quoted in Ian Turner, *Sydney's Burning*).

The global military confrontation dominating world politics is a clash between two conflicting social systems, and the international working class cannot stand aside. The planned economy and nationalised property of the Soviet Union, laid down by the October Revolution of 1917, are historic acquisitions of the working class which must be unconditionally defended against imperialism. But the Pentagon warmakers and their loyal allies have made it plain that they are prepared to plunge the world into nuclear armageddon in order to "take back" the Soviet bloc countries. As US National Security Council adviser on Soviet affairs, Richard Pipes, put it: there is "no alternative to war with the Soviet Union unless the Soviets change their system of government" (quoted in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 March).

Hayden's "left" critics in the ALP will no doubt verbally protest his endorsement of the US bases. But their opposition simply reflects, in Lenin's apt words, "a petty-bourgeois desire to keep as far away as possible from the great battles of world history". But world history will not leave the Australian capitalist state alone: the US military presence necessarily draws it into the vortex of world politics and poses point blank the question — for or against defence of the USSR? We stand for the smashing of the US bases because they target the Soviet Union, not because they threaten Australia's "independence". No ALP government, "left" or right, is capable of uprooting the US military establishments: only victorious proletarian revolution can defeat the imperialist warmongers and their Australian backers.

In the face of this Cold War hysteria which threatens to turn hydrogen hot at any moment, the Stalinist leaders in the Kremlin and their Socialist Party (SPA) supporters here are ludicrously still calling for "detente" and "peaceful co-existence". Wedded to the dogma of "Socialism in One Country", they peddle the illusion that there is a "peace-loving" wing of the bourgeoisie with whom they can unite — a criminal policy which only undermines defence of the USSR. But as Lenin said as far back as 1916, there is only one road to peace: "Arm the proletariat to defeat, expropriate and disarm the bourgeoisie". Today it is the Spartacist League alone which defends Lenin's program and which is committed to ensuring its realisation. For it is only proletarian revolution in the imperialist centres which can eliminate the threat of war hanging over mankind's head, by eliminating the exploitative capitalist system which engenders poverty, depression and imperialist militarism. ■

IWD...

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main body of the demonstration, the IS declared this to be a "provocation". So they trooped meekly to the back, although a number of ISers seemed disgruntled by their leadership's gutlessness. Indeed, one ISer admitted that the decision was cowardly — but added that it had been decided "democratically" and thus she too would uphold the decision. The Socialist Workers Party was predictably equally spineless. As its contingent shambled to the back, one SWPer remarked, "After all, it's *their* day!"

Not so. The ignorant and guilt-ridden fake left may be eager to hand over a working-class holiday to anti-working class, men-hating feminists, but the Spartacist League is not. We marched in the main body of the demonstration and put forward the communist program for women's liberation. When the march reached Flagstaff Gardens, the SL contingent organised a speakers' platform. But the IS and SWP were so concerned to

dissociate themselves from us that they refused an invitation to speak. IS leader Janey Stone later admitted that her group "didn't want to cause a reaction". Two feminists, however, spoke from the platform; one of them might as well have been talking for the absent IS and SWP when she claimed that IWD was not a proletarian holiday and that the SL were confusing it with Moomba, held two days later on Victorian Labor Day!

It was left to the SL speaker to raise the question of women's oppression and the program to fight it. As the speaker began to address the crowd, a gaggle of lesbian punk feminists tried to drown her out by singing loudly over megaphones. Neither the SWP nor IS raised the slightest protest. However, some women supporters of the Italian Communist Party, along with Amanda Biles of the disintegrating Melbourne Discussion Group, helped our comrades put an end to the disruption. So despite the muzzling attempts of the feminists and the spinelessness of the fake left, a communist woman did put forward a class perspective on IWD:

"The rightward shift in the women's movement is exemplified not only by actions like we've seen today in attempting to suppress me from speaking, but it applies to the political stance that has been taken by feminists throughout Australia.... The fact that International Women's Day last year was organised under the auspices of the United Nations also points to the rightward shift. The UN, the tool of imperialism, will help support the struggle for women's rights — what a farce. This is the point about autonomy that the Spartacist League has said time and time again. The women's movement can't be autonomous of the class struggle. The class struggle goes on no matter how many women try to pretend it doesn't, no matter how many women try to shout us down.... Which side do you stand on? Do you side with the bosses or do you side with the working class in their struggle and the struggle of all the oppressed? That's the key question to address on this day.... You fight for women's liberation through fighting for a program of world socialist revolution and the way to do that is to fight for a communist women's movement, a non-male-exclusionist communist women's movement. That's what the Spartacist League is fighting for...." ■

On 17 February, the Fraser government endorsed the move initiated by Minister for Industrial Relations Andrew Peacock to deregister the Builders Labourers Federation (BLF) of Norm Gallagher. Peacock's deregistration bid is an open attack on the whole union movement. Deregistered, the BLF would be stripped of its rights under bourgeois law: BLF property and funds could be impounded by the bosses' courts; the union would lose recognition of awards under which its members work, while raiding by other building unions would be legally sanctioned. The arbitration system is designed to tie the unions to the bourgeois state, but this deregistration is aimed at smashing the BLF. Organised labour must launch a militant class-struggle campaign to stop this offensive in its tracks! Hands off the BLF!

Instead of fighting Fraser/Peacock's attack, the Gallagher-led BLF bureaucracy has gone out of its way to prove to the bosses that it is really no threat. When Victoria's Liberal premier, Dick Hamer, sent in his cops to break the BLF picket line at Omega — after months of sordid bureaucratic squabbling between the BLF and right-wing-led FIA over who was to build this anti-Soviet US base — Gallagher rolled over and played dead. Shortly after Peacock's announcement, Gallagher signed an agreement with the Master Builders Association in Victoria detailing an elaborate "disputes procedure" — outside of the arbitration framework — to minimise strikes. Hailed as a "smart manoeuvre" which would embarrass Peacock, the agreement is simply a new mechanism for selling out builders labourers' struggles.

On 6 March, Gallagher even flaunted his own anti-Soviet credentials to try and convince Fraser to lay off. In a grovelling telegram, he declared support for "your rebuke of the Soviet envoy, Dr. Soudarikov, and our support for your stand against Soviet expansion generally" and condemned Peacock ("the only Wet in the Liberal Cabinet") for "vacillating on this question". For Gallagher and his co-thinkers in the Maoist Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist), China's anti-Soviet alliance with US imperialism "transcends other issues", including "disagreements" with Fraser (*Vanguard*, 5 March). But Fraser opposes the Soviet degenerated workers state for the very same reason that he opposes the BLF and the trade unions: these are historic gains of the working class which he and his class are pledged to "roll back". Hardly surprising then that Fraser backs to the hilt Peacock's deregistration plans. Gallagher's self-abasement before this anti-union, anti-Soviet Cold Warrior can only strengthen the government's determination to break the BLF.

Gallagher has no strategy for fighting this attack — but it is equally clear that the rest of the union bureaucracy has none either. At best they have paid lip-service opposition to Peacock's moves and made verbal promises not to poach members off the deregistered BLF. But what might be in store was shown at a 26 March meeting of the NSW Labor

Open season on BLF

Peacock threatens, Gallagher grovels



Norm Gallagher: crawling to Fraser.



Peacock: out to break BLF.

Council which decided to suspend, "pending an investigation", the BLF from council membership after upholding complaints from the Plasterers' Federation about BLF raiding on a Sydney building site. The only beneficiaries of this decision can be Fraser and Peacock. As the *Sydney Morning Herald* (18 February) noted the day after Peacock's deregistration plan was announced: "the government hopes that the outlawed union will be cannibalised by the AWU and FIA, who would only too gladly poach the BLF's members." In this Labor Council decision, the government's hopes are beginning to be realised.

The BLF is certainly a corruptly run union which is prepared to drag other unions before the courts and uses violent strongarm tactics against trade unionists in pursuit of its own squalid, sectarian, craftist interests. In June 1978, for example, NSW BLF organiser Sean Cody launched a vicious thug attack on two members of the Spartacist League who happened to be selling papers in Sydney's Trades Hall Hotel (see *Australasian Spartacist* no 55, July 1978). But every other union in the building industry — from the pro-Moscow BWIU to the right-wing FIA and AWU — has as sordid a track record of bureaucratic poaching and raiding. As an AMWSU delegate at the meeting observed in a speech supporting a BLF amendment to defer suspension: "If we suspended all the unions which are involved in demarcation disputes, this hall would be half-empty" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 March).

Since the recession of 1974-75, the building industry has been in decline and with it the unions' membership — and financial — bases have shrunk. The result has been an intensification of craftist demarcation disputes as union officials have fought to preserve their own little fiefdoms at the expense of each other. Now they have banded together to push the BLF out into the cold, making it an easier target for Fraser and Peacock. All militants must oppose this decision: reinstate the BLF now!

MBA steps up anti-BLF offensive

Sensing that the BLF is isolated, both the Master Builders Association and the NSW police have stepped up

their harassment of the union. The same day as the NSW Labor Council suspended the BLF, the MBA ran a half-page advertisement in Murdoch's union-hating *Daily Telegraph* (26 March) threatening to dismiss "for desertion of employment" builders labourers who leave "the job they are on to picket another site". The ad also declares that "No strikes for so-called 'safety issues' will be recognised" — at a time when the BLF is engaged in a strike over unsafe working conditions at a site in Ultimo, Sydney.

These words aren't just idle talk, either. On 13 March police arrested three BLF organisers on the Parramatta, Ultimo and Sutherland sites of Meriton Apartments and charged them with trespass and obstruction. This is an outrage! These sites must be immediately shut down through militant mass picketing until all the charges are dropped!

Behind the anti-BLF offensive is the much-heralded "mineral resources boom", out of which construction bosses confidently expect to make massive profits. State governments are already offering an array of incentives — cheap transport and electricity and reduced taxation — to attract capital investment; but the one thing they would like to offer above all else is a docile trade union movement, unable to defend its members against profit-hungry exploiters. If Peacock/Fraser succeed in breaking the BLF, they will undoubtedly also turn their sights on the so-called "tamecat" unions now acquiescing in the deregistration threats.

Deregistration: then and now

It is ironic that the current *bete noire* of the construction bosses should be Norm Gallagher. In 1974, when the BLF was previously deregistered, Gallagher was welcomed by the MBA as a "knight in white armour" (*Financial Review*, 18 February). For good reason: Gallagher actively colluded with the MBA to smash the BLF's NSW branch, then led by Communist Party honchos Jack Munday and Joe Owens, and "left" ALPer Bob Pringle. After their election in 1973, Owens/Munday/Pringle initiated the famous "green bans" campaign, which far from being militant and progressive, only dissipated the union's strength in

sometimes supportable but largely mis-directed and useless struggles.

At the same time, the bans earned the enmity of the MBA as a form of political strike. Gallagher, then in factional opposition to Munday/Owens/Pringle, was welcomed by NSW MBA director R L Rocher as "far more likely to be reasonable" (*Australian*, 10 September 1974). After ousting the NSW leadership, Gallagher secured reregistration of the BLF in 1976, but only by giving a signed undertaking to minimise disputes on building sites. In 1978, Munday, Owens and Pringle were expelled from the union.

Now the boot is on the other foot and, like Gallagher before him, Jack Munday is showing that he is prepared to put it in. In an article in the anti-union *Sydney Morning Herald* (10 March), Munday professes opposition to the deregistration of the BLF, but then proceeds to argue Peacock's line that Gallagher is indeed responsible for "unnecessary conflict" in the building industry. At the same time he carefully builds up a case for himself as the man to run a reasonable and, above all, *harmless* BLF.

The sordid history of bureaucratic dogfighting within the BLF and between it and other building unions; the treacherous policy of hauling fellow trade unionists before the bosses' courts — a strategy defended by Munday in his *Herald* piece; and the refusal to wage an all-out fight against the bosses' anti-union austerity offensive shows conclusively that all these feuding bureaucrats have to offer their ranks is a program for betrayal and defeat. What building workers need is a united, class-wide struggle against the employers and the government, and a single industrial union in the construction industry to fight around a program of jobs for all — 30 hours work for 40 hours pay! But to win these goals a class-struggle leadership is needed — a leadership committed to overthrowing this rotten capitalist system and its anti-union arbitration courts and replacing it with a planned socialist economy, administered by a workers government based on workers organisations. Stop Fraser/Peacock's anti-union offensive! Defend the BLF! ■

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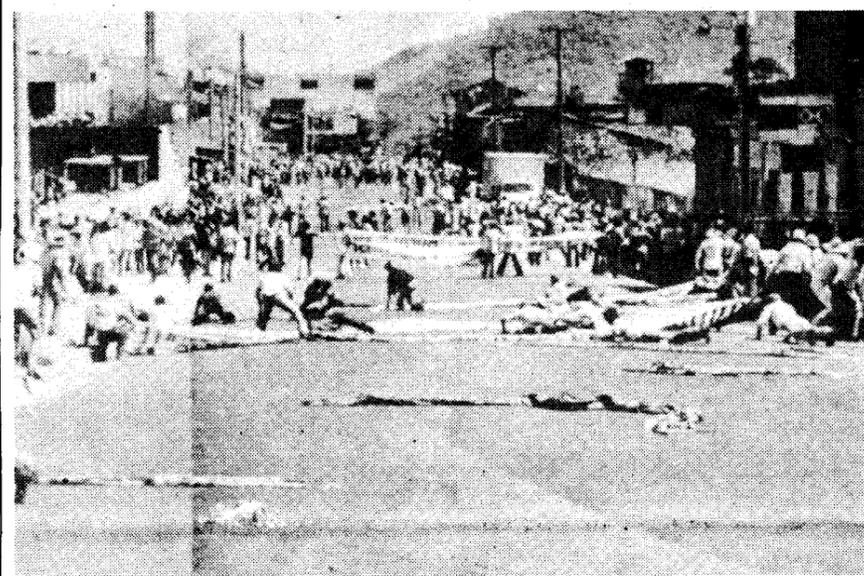
Continued from page twelve

get a "human rights" slap on the hand this time. And the reason is that what's posed here is a class battle on an international scale. And therefore the only answers which make any sense are class answers — the program and perspective of proletarian revolution. That's why we say what at first struck a lot of people on the left as "off the wall", that "Defense of Cuba and the Soviet Union Begins in El Salvador!" And, comrades, the events of the last week have emphatically confirmed that warning. For example, one liberal Congressman complained it was a return to "gunboat diplomacy" — he's so right. Spanish radio reported last Tuesday that there are presently more than 40 American ships in the Caribbean trying to stop arms shipments to Nicaragua and El Salvador's leftists. Reagan answers the liberal concern about getting embroiled in a "new Vietnam" saying he intends to deal with the problem at its "source", which he claims is Cuba and the USSR. Now in fact that's baloney, but it is US policy. So now Washington is telling Moscow that SALT depends on the junta winning in El Salvador. Havana's being told that unless they stop arms shipments to the Salvadoran leftists they will face a naval blockade.

And then what? Recall what the Soviet diplomat said who negotiated the Russian backdown over the October 1962 missile crisis. He said, "We will never permit this again". And the Kremlin meant it. So where will the liberals and social democrats stand in a new Cuban missile crisis? I recall very well how things stood the last time. The Socialist Workers Party, the SWP, which used to be a Trotskyist organization until it started tailing after Castroism in the early '60s, had been building up a pro-Cuban front group, called the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. With an eye toward the liberals, they talked only about "self-determination" and "hands off" Cuba. But when the missile crisis came around, when push came to shove, big surprise: all of the liberals just faded away. There was no more "fair play" for Cuba — it was "which side are you on, brother?" for it was a class question. And the SWP capitulated to the liberal pacifists by refusing to criticize Khrushchev, even though Castro himself, their big hero, was opposed to the deal and the Cuban masses were incensed at the deal which left them without essential protection against American imperialism.

So that's what's wrong with these class-collaborationist coalitions and politics on the part of supposed left-wing and revolutionary forces. When it gets down to the nitty-gritty, they paralyze effective action by the workers organizations, because they seek to avoid the fundamental contradictions. Whereas the main thing Marxists have always pointed out about politics is that when all is said and done, it comes down to a class division: you're on one side or the other on a picket line. In a civil war you stand on one side or another, or because there's no qualitative difference from the point of view of the proletariat you're opposed in a revolutionary way to both sides. But these reformists try to *hide* that distinction. So the question I would pose here is what happens when there's a new Cuban crisis — all those liberals talking now about "Let the Salvadoran People Decide", where will they and coalitions built on those politics stand then? You can't escape the class question.

So Reagan has chosen El Salvador and Central America as the axis around which he's revving up his Cold War. And what's going to be at the center of the political battle is the question of the Soviet Union and the degenerated and deformed workers states. As Trotskyists we have a side there. We criticize the



(Above) January 22, 1980: 200,000 take to the streets of San Salvador to commemorate the 1932 uprising. (Below) The bloody aftermath: junta sharpshooters murder 21, wound 120.

detente illusions of a Brezhnev or Castro — Castro, by the way, supported Carter against Reagan last November, but who laid the basis for what's happening in El Salvador if not Carter? We call for the ouster of a Stalinist caste which weakens the foundations of proletarian rule by its attempts to conciliate imperialism. And that is part of our overall political program for the unconditional defense and extension of the gains of the October Revolution. So to prepare the proletariat for its tasks, key slogans are: "Defense of Cuba and the USSR". Enough of this talk about a "political solution" with the bloody junta: "Military Victory for the Left Insurgents in El Salvador!" and "Break with the Bourgeoisie!" In Nicaragua there's no middle way, the only road is "Expropriate the Bourgeoisie!" and "Set Central America Afire with Workers Revolution!"

El Salvador 1932

So let's look a little bit at El Salvador and go through some of the last 160 years since independence was won from Spain. Now, first of all, El Salvador is not a banana republic, it's a coffee republic. Since the late 1800s its main export has been that little green bean that turns to gold for the coffee barons. But more than anything else, it's the quintessential country run by an oligarchy. The ruling class consists of a very small number of families — the biggest one is called the Hills, the Alvarez are another. These are dynastic families who control everything. They're the landlords, the generals, the bishops, the presidents and so on. In El Salvador they call this oligarchy the 14 Families. Someone did a study on it recently and they discovered there were 60. So if you want to make a distinction...

It's a murderous society with many semi-feudal characteristics. But only semi-feudal, because it's been producing for the world market ever since at least a century ago. So in this situation you get deeply felt democratic demands. To get rid of these butchers, right? Why should 14, or 60, families lord it over everyone? The demand for land to the peasants who till it. And for national emancipation from the imperialist overlordship that's exercised by the US, directly and through its local intermediaries. In Latin America today bourgeois-democratic demands are burning revolutionary issues. But as Trotskyists we don't therefore call for a "democratic revolution" as the social democrats and Stalinists do. The fundamental contribution of Leon Trotsky and the Russian Revolution to Marxism is that we understand that in this imperialist epoch you can't have real democracy (particularly for the oppressed masses) unless the workers win it by achieving their own class rule.

The reason is that if some of these "democratic" capitalist forces finally get power, they're going to have to carry out a repression that's not that different from what the previous tyrants and patriarchs did. Why? Because the reason that these dictators are the norm in Latin America in the first place is because there is a very tiny bourgeoisie sitting on top of a very big oppressed peasant and proletarian or plebeian population whose miserable conditions are continually leading to revolutionary ferment. And the only way that they can keep them down is through one kind or another of bonapartist regime — you know, the "man on horseback", military dictatorships which ultimately come down to mass terror. In line with this, I was doing some translating the other day and it occurred to me that there are an awful lot of words

in Spanish for coup. So I looked it up and there were 297 nouns for coup. If you add the verbs, it's over 580! So there's actually more words than there are for snow in Eskimo. Of course, the reason is there's a lot of snow in the Arctic, and in Latin America you have a lot of coups. And then in El Salvador they just got their first civilian president in 50 years. His name? Jose Napoleon Duarte — Joe Napoleon!

In El Salvador, the quintessential land of the coffee oligarchy, this tendency to bonapartist rule is shown dramatically. For the country has been continually subjected to military rule ever since 1932. It's the longest continuous period of army rule anywhere on the continent. And it's not an accident. Why? Well, El Salvador is the most productive area of Central America, producing commercial crops from one end of the country to the other — it's like one giant plantation. And when they went into coffee, they just threw hundreds of thousands of peasants off their land, so that the percentage of landless peasants who have become agricultural workers in El Salvador is far higher than anywhere else in Latin America. The conditions are very similar to what they were in Zapata's Morelos around the time of the Mexican Revolution, and of course the Mexican Revolution had a big impact at this end of the Central American isthmus.

So when there was an international financial crash, the capitalist economic collapse of 1929, the traditional terror was lifted and the landless laborers began to lift their heads. The oligarchy saw the storm clouds gathering and decided to dump the reformer, replacing him with a bonafide hangman-general named Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez. The Communist Party called for an uprising to which the rural masses responded massively. And the result was an indescribably bloody repression. Thirty thousand people died, in a country of a little over 2 million people. It's like shooting down 3 million people in the United States by comparison.

This was the first Communist-led uprising in America, and it was met with the longest-lived military dictatorship in the Western hemisphere. There's a close relationship here, and the point is that El Salvador expresses in concentrated form the conditions of bourgeois rule throughout Latin America. This is what is at the heart of the Trotskyist theory and program of permanent revolution, namely that in the backward capitalist countries the very weak bourgeoisie cannot rule independently of and against imperialism and the semi-feudal elements. In fact, they're intimately allied, and they cannot install a bourgeois-democratic revolution; the history of the French and English Revolutions cannot be repeated here. Because the ruling class is not much more than a branch-office bourgeoisie. All of the "experiments" in bourgeois democracy have failed miserably in Latin America. A few decades ago, Uruguay was supposed to be the Switzerland of Latin America. Or Chile, a little piece of Europe transported to South America. And they had the Alliance for Progress to boot. Well, look at Uruguay and Chile now.

So why does this happen everywhere? That's what the Trotskyists understand while the Stalinists and social democrats are always bitterly surprised. You see, these reformists always maintain that you can have some kind of a bourgeois-democratic stage, or an anti-imperialist stage, or an anti-oligarchic, anti-feudalist, anti-fascist stage, etc, etc. When you hear all that rhetoric you should stop and ask yourself, what's missing here? It's anti-everything and full of Marxist-sounding terminology, but there's no reference to proletarian revolution. Right? So all of this fancy language is essentially to cover up the fact that they refuse to struggle for

Australasian Spartacist



Spartacus Youth League-initiated demonstrations in US demand "Military victory to leftist insurgents in El Salvador!" and "Down with the junta!" At the University of Wisconsin, Madison, 400 students rallied on 4 February; on 21 February, 150 demonstrated at Oberlin University.

proletarian revolution. In fact, they are simply trying to put over some kind of more liberal or "progressive" capitalist regime which will ultimately turn around and repress the workers just like its predecessors did. And only the Trotskyists tell the truth, that to win the classic demands of the bourgeois revolution today it's necessary for the working class to take power and establish its own class rule. This is the *only* alternative to bloody counterrevolution.

The classic case in Latin America is Chile. Now Chile actually does have a more European class structure, and ever since the 1930s it's had large reformist and even centrist workers parties. Consequently they also had their People's Front experience. They had a series of popular fronts from 1936 to the late 1940s, and the last one was headed by General Gonzalez Videla, whose main support was the Communist Party. He came into power in 1945, and by 1947 he had thrown the entire CP into concentration camps. There's also the other alternative, the Pinochet variant, where the Allende Unidad Popular acted as a barrier to going beyond the limits of capitalism. The UP was brought to power by a working-class upsurge — initially very enthusiastic — but as it gradually played its forces out, imperialist reaction and the domestic bourgeoisie struck back. In either variant the popular front is a roadblock to revolution.

Break with the bourgeoisie!

To come back to the case of El Salvador, there are other limitations to bourgeois economic development and the achievement of any kind of real prosperity or social progress in the region. And that is that the whole area is Balkanized into tiny countries. Basically, all of Latin America is in many

senses one big nation, with the exception of Brazil. But in the case of Central America, this is even more extreme. It emerged from colonial rule as a single federal state, but the bourgeoisie was so dispersed that it soon split up. But the result is that you now have Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama, none of them economically viable....

Now part of the reason why you have such overwhelming poverty, such a tiny middle class, is that the narrow national framework doesn't allow for genuine economic development. And any attempt at development within the capitalist framework is doomed to failure, because you set up a canning plant here, a Revlon factory there and pretty soon they're all competing and the local bourgeoisies are getting at each other's throats because there's no market for their produce. Let me give you an example, this so-called "football war" between El Salvador and Honduras in 1969. This was one of the most ridiculous wars in Latin American history, but it had nothing to do with football. What happened is that the Central American Common Market was set up as part of the Alliance for Progress; you were supposed to produce widgets in one country and gizmos in the other, and then you would get to the "take-off stage" and Walt Rostow would come down and give you a prize.

That's the theory, but El Salvador being a little more advanced began industrializing like crazy, and soon Honduras complained that their market was being invaded. Meanwhile there were also a lot of peasants spilling over the border, because land pressure in El Salvador is very great. So Honduras accused its Maryland-sized neighbour of imperialism and threw out thousands of squatters. Both countries were whipping up popular hysteria and after a contested

football game in Mexico City it blew up into a war. But the fundamental thing was competition between these economically unviable statelets. This "football war" put an end to the Central American Common Market and since then there's been hardly any industrialization at all. If the working class took power, of course, it would not be some tiny "socialist republic of El Salvador", but in the framework of a socialist federation linking all of Central America with Mexico, which is the real potential industrial powerhouse of the region. And that is the precondition to any real economic development.

Now another important aspect of the situation in El Salvador is the extremely sharp left-right polarization, reflecting the deep abyss between the classes. Another dramatic example: in Latin America there's a certain code on how to run a dictatorship. It used to be, for instance, that when leftists got jailed they would be relatively well treated, because everyone knew (including the jailers) that after they sold out, one of these fellows might be the next president or a cabinet minister. Now that's all changed after the Alliance for Progress, which led to the systematic dissemination of Nazi-style torture methods by "enlightened" American imperialism. Okay, so another rule of the game is that there is a certain cycle to these things. As long as you're going to keep the masses in abysmal poverty, it's inevitable that periodically they will have waves of mass protest sweeping through the population. And the rule is that when it reaches a high point you let it pass over, let 'em march past and wait for another day. Not in El Salvador.

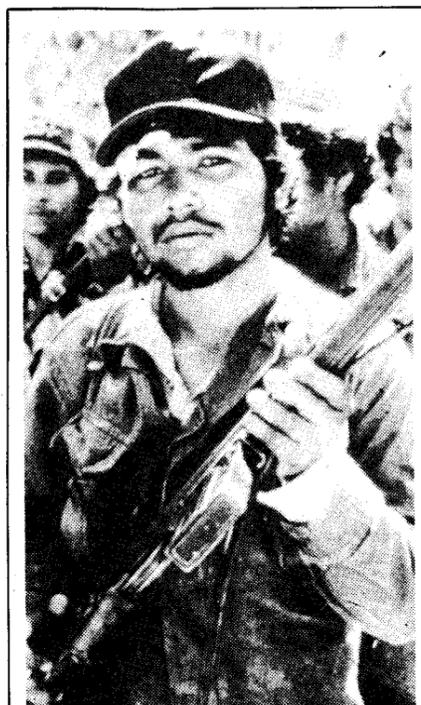
So what is the response to that? As Marxists, communists, we say that it's necessary to organize the oppressed and the exploited around that social force which has the class interest to do away with the system that leads to such sadistic killers. But unfortunately the Salvadoran left has been influenced by decades of nationalist and Stalinist-reformist ideology so that its efforts have mainly been directed at papering over the very deep abyss between the classes there. That's what their whole popular-frontism policy is about. In the name of "democratic unity" they get the workers and peasants committed to respecting the private property of the capitalists, the "integrity" of the armed forces, the "serene guidance" of the church, and so forth. So you tack on a handful of dissident Christian Democrats and a couple of limp-wristed Social Democrats — actually bourgeois liberals masquerading as social democrats — all in order to keep the masses in check. Then supposedly you won't frighten off the "progressive bourgeoisie" and maybe you can strike a deal with Washington.

So they get a popular-front coalition with a few liberals and priests and reformists. And the masses, who are overjoyed at the ouster of the previous gang of murderers, initially give them their support. Now they've already had a version of this in El Salvador with the so-called reform junta that was put in by Carter in October 1979. They had liberal army officers, liberal civilians; the Communist Party supplied a labor minister, and there were two hard-line colonels. So what happens? The liberals all get shunted aside, one after another, in what's called a "creeping coup", and the military hawks unleash the worst bloodbath in decades. Oh yes, and you have a "land reform" that is brought to you by the same people who brought you "pacification" in Vietnam. This land reform consists of handing out parcels to the members of a fascist organization called ORDEN, which has links to the military and is used to spy on the peasants. And the rest of the people who used to be there, the agricultural laborers, etc., all get thrown out, sent up into the hills where they are labeled guerrillas and then shot down by the army. It's called "Reform by Death" in El Salvador.

So today they have another version of this class-collaborationist coalition, the Revolutionary Democratic Front. At first it was headed by the landowner Alvarez and now by the "social democrat" Ungo,

both of whom were members of the original "human rights junta" of October 1979. Lately the FDR has also been angling for an agreement with Colonel Majano, who was also a member of that junta but has now been arrested. It's a more left-wing coalition, more like Allende's UP perhaps. But what does it stand for? What about the land question, for example. The junta has a "land reform" — what does the left say to that? Now Bolsheviks call for agrarian revolution, not land reform. The peasants are not going to fight for pieces of paper that say "title to land" on them, so that they keep on paying 50 percent of the harvest, only now it's not sharecropping but paying off the land bank. History shows that the only time the peasants really believe that anything has changed is when they rise up in a revolutionary insurrection and burn down the hacienda or manor house, and burn the land records. That's what happened in France in 1789 or Russia in 1917, or also in the defeated peasant revolution in Mexico in Morelos.

The reason is quite obvious. In addition to the "title" in the peasant's hand there is another piece of paper, right? It's in the national archives in the capital. And when the wave of reform passes, the landowners are going to return from Miami. Then it's going to be their piece of paper against the peasant's piece of paper. And guess what — their piece of paper has more guns behind it. So the peasants are rightly skeptical about these various reforms. Whereas if they are mobilized around a program of land to the



El Salvadoran guerrilla: 13,000 dead proves lack of Soviet/Cuban aid.

tiller and led by the social force that has the power to impose that against the bourgeoisie, namely by the working class, they can be a tremendous auxiliary force and even the bulk of the numbers supporting proletarian revolution. But not if you have a popular front. Senor Alvarez is in the coalition; he holds thousands of hectares of land and represents a social class.

Internationally it's the same thing. So recently the Second International has been mucking around in the US' backyard, recognizing all sorts of liberal and populist parties as members of their social-democratic international. Now Alan Riding, a very perceptive reporter for the *New York Times*, was writing about this recently. There's a very small group in El Salvador called the National Revolutionary Movement, the MNR, a bunch of liberals headed by Guillermo Ungo, who is a vice president of the Socialist International. Thus they're connected with the Social Democratic Party of Germany, which sends them D-marks and acts in some respects for the interests of West German capital. So Riding remarked that the actual number of social democrats in El Salvador could probably fit into one Volkswagen. What they're angling for is for Helmut Schmidt and Willy Brandt to pull their chestnuts

Continued on page eight

Spartacist forum - UNSW

Front Line El Salvador

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Speaker:

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1 - 2 pm

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SWP opposes "Down with the junta" demand

Military victory to El Salvador left!

MELBOURNE — In their latest attempt to be the "best builders" of a popular-frontist alliance, the reformists of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) have shown that the first thing to go is their pretensions to revolutionary Marxism. At an 11 March meeting of the "Committee in Solidarity with Central America", called to discuss the civil war in El Salvador, leading SWPer Renfrey Clarke flatly *opposed* organising demonstrations around the slogan "Down with the junta! For military victory to leftist insurgents!" When pressed to defend this scandalous position by a Spartacist League (SL) supporter present at the meeting, Clarke rambled on that the call for "No US aid" would "logically" mean the junta's downfall. Asked why the committee didn't then *openly* call for the overthrow of the junta, Clarke admitted his real reason: such a demand would cut across "building the broadest possible popular support". What this meant soon became clear when another SWPer at the meeting announced that the speakers at the forthcoming El Salvador rally on 3 April would be chosen on the basis of "real influence" — ie, Don Chipp's Australian Democrats, the ALP and the church!

The SWP's cowardly refusal to fight for the military victory of the leftist guerrillas over the blood-drenched junta should nauseate anyone with the slightest shred of revolutionary fibre. For the last fifty years the El Salvadoran bourgeoisie has ruled through brutal military terror: in 1932, they slaughtered 30,000 workers and peasants after the failure of a Communist-led insurrection; in the last year alone they have gunned down over 12,000 more. With Reagan's blessing, the junta has declared its willingness to kill 300,000 if necessary, in order to win the civil war. Why then all the fuss over demanding that the El Salvadoran workers and peasants *succeed* in overthrowing their hated rulers?

In the first place the SWP is trying to cement an alliance on El Salvador with liberal bourgeois politicians like Chipp. According to the rules of class collaboration, one mustn't alienate such "progressive" forces with slogans that pose



Leftist guerrillas battle El Salvador's bloody junta.

"military solutions", ie, by taking sides in the civil war. More importantly, the SWP refuses to call for military victory to the leftist insurgents because of their craven tailism of the oppositional popular front, the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR). The FDR is in favour of a "political solution", ie, a deal with the junta! History has shown time and again that the liberation of the working masses can take place only through the destruction of the capitalist state. Any deals in El Salvador would leave the junta's repressive apparatus intact, thus ensuring that the death squad terror would continue.

The people who stand to gain from an imperialist-sponsored negotiated settlement of the civil war are not El Salvador's oppressed, but the bourgeois politicians who lead the FDR popular front. Their presence in the anti-junta forces is a guarantee to the imperialist powers that the guerrilla struggle will stay within the bounds of capitalism. And the more enlightened sectors of world imperialism know it. In an article in the *Melbourne Age* (17 March), former US ambassador to El Salvador, Murat Williams, was unambiguous:

"Last July, I had as luncheon guests in

Washington three leaders of the Salvadoran Opposition: Enrique Alvarez, president of the Democratic Revolutionary Front and a member of one of the most aristocratic Salvadoran families, Dr Guillermo Ungo, a professor at the Jesuit-run Catholic University; and a young lawyer from the office of the Archbishop of San Salvador. One could not find three more authentic anti-communists anywhere. They represented the kind of anti-communist, centrist leadership that our Government professes to favor, yet persistently overlooks."

Yet these are the people the SWP tails after, whom it is afraid to "alienate"!

This disgusting betrayal of the ABCs of Trotskyism is nothing new, though. In January 1978, the SWP's American mentors came out in opposition to the slogan "Down with the Shah", branding it as "ultimatic" and "ultraleft" (*Militant*, paper of the US SWP, 12 January 1978). During the Vietnam War, the SWP earned a reputation for its consistent *opposition* to the slogan "Military Victory to the NLF", on the grounds that this would drive away the defeatist, liberal wing of the US bourgeoisie who simply wanted to cut their losses and "bring our boys home".

The Spartacist League in contrast took a class side in the civil war in Indochina, and called for the military victory of the NLF/North Vietnamese forces over US imperialism and its Saigon puppets.

In an attempt to build anew a mass, classless "anti-war" movement, the SWP now raises the call for "No more Vietnams". Doubtless Don Chipp and the church can agree with that — after all, their class *lost* in Indochina. But under the changed conditions of Reagan rule, with anti-Soviet Cold War frenzy being whipped up, this call is simply a utopian appeal to non-existent liberal "public opinion". And what does the SWP now make of Che Guevara's famous call for "two, three many Vietnams"? His portrait may grace the walls of their bookshops, but it is clear his combative spirit doesn't infect the members.

One of Trotsky's central contributions to Marxism was the program of Permanent Revolution, the understanding that in an underdeveloped country under the thumb of imperialism, the bourgeoisie cannot solve the outstanding tasks of the bourgeois revolution. Only by taking power in its own name and establishing its own class rule can the proletariat put an end to the horrendous poverty and bloody repression which constitutes life under the El Salvadoran junta. At stake in El Salvador is ultimately the question of which class will rule: we stand for the destruction of the junta and the struggle for *proletarian* power, not just in this tiny coffee republic, but throughout Central America. Victory for the junta in contrast would mean mass slaughter in El Salvador, and would be the green light for an all-out assault by imperialism on Sandinista-ruled Nicaragua, Cuba and the Soviet Union. The choice before the El Salvadoran masses is clear: victory or death! In this conflict the working class internationally has a vital stake: Down with the junta! Military victory to the leftist insurgents! No to the popular front! The SWP's refusal to raise these demands is striking confirmation that all it has to offer the proletariat is a program for betrayal and defeat. ■

El Salvador...

Continued from page seven

out of the fire, and in return they promise to be good boys, pay all the imperialist debts and so on. But what do you suppose Schmidt and Brandt are going to do when Reagan's gunboats start coming down the coast? Not a hell of a lot.

So the question of popular-frontism runs through all aspects of the situation in El Salvador, including the recent failed offensive. This was billed as the "final

offensive", and *Time* magazine quoted one guerrilla leader saying it was the "final, final offensive. Finally!" Now it sounds like a joke, and partly it's for military tactical reasons, but behind all the stop-and-go offensives and retreats in El Salvador there is a political program. Now it appears to be the case — and it's hard to tell because of the blackout in the imperialist press — that there was little response to the call for insurrection. And certainly that was the case with the general strike. A leader of the left-wing insurgents, whose coalition is called the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, or FMLN, Ana Guadalupe Martinez said that "The masses felt that they lacked the support to massively carry out the strike, and for the political-military organizations, it was too weak to have been able to grow over into an insurrection... The strike call at this point in time was a political error."

No to the popular front!

But this is not the first time such an error has occurred. The general strike last August was also a failure, and for similar reasons. In that case they were trying to negotiate with various bourgeois forces to broaden their popular front. And on the eve of the strike the bus owners pulled out. Shortly after the strike one of the more "moderate" groups, the FARN, left the military body of this multi-faceted

left-wing coalition, the DRU, in the hopes of making a deal with Colonel Majano. Now the deal did not come off, because significant sectors of the Salvadoran bourgeoisie are not willing to be part of a left coalition. But the point is that it's the constant effort to try to get such a deal which has held them back from mobilizing the masses in a truly revolutionary insurrectionary direction. For example, in the recent final/general offensive they never intended to carry out a countrywide uprising. Action in the cities was always supposed to be auxiliary, and not because they are some kind of Maoist "prolonged people's war" guerrillas.

What they were after was to get a piece of territory where they could set up their alternative FDR government, and then the Helmut Schmidts and Lopez Portillos could recognize it and if they were lucky maybe it would come up before the UN or the OAS. In other words, the military action was conceived fundamentally as a pressure tactic on the international bourgeoisie. However, such a strategy is hopeless under the circumstances of Reagan rule. And in any case even if it did come to power, what it would mean is eventually that the workers and peasants would be cheated out of a victory for which they had shed a lot of blood. And everything would all end up back in the hands of the ruling class. So while the bulk of the left tries to mask the class

division, the Trotskyists say that it is necessary to mobilize the working class, with the support of the peasants, to overthrow this very tiny bourgeoisie, which however has the backing of imperialism. And in the new Cold War context, the tasks posed by tiny El Salvador are on a global scale. ■

El Salvador demo

Melbourne

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No to the popular front!

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Out of nothing comes nothing What is Socialist Fight?

MELBOURNE — Discussion circles composed of renegades from various left organisations, academic dilettantes, political losers and would-be trade-union or ALP careerists are a common feature of the Melbourne left. Out of this murky milieu there occasionally arises a small fragment with pretensions to be something genuinely "new" on the left, and attempting to carve out a niche as an active "revolutionary" group rather than just a talking club. In general one whiff of the political aroma surrounding such groups is more than enough to send serious Marxists running in the opposite direction, fast. Unable to find new ground within revolutionary Marxism without confronting the Trotskyism of the Spartacist League (SL), the politics of these groups invariably remain mired in the opportunist origins of their chief supporters. Such is the nature of *Socialist Fight* (SF), a new allegedly "Trotskyist" paper, one number of which has been produced by a tiny grouplet around Paul White, late of the Melbourne Discussion Group (MDG).

The MDG originated in 1978 as a talkshop for anti-Spartacists and would-be centrists who found themselves without a home when the Mandeliste Communist League liquidated into the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in 1977. Among the leaders of these "boat people" of ostensible Trotskyism were Frans Timmerman, a onetime SWP honcho, and Paul White, a pretentious gadabout in constant search of a pool in which he can be the unchallenged big fish. Now, having broken with Timmerman and the MDG, White is at it again: his announcement of *Socialist Fight* came in February in a leaflet appropriately bearing the headline, "Not another left paper!"

Truly the classic example of the sect that could hold its conference in a phone box, SF's known supporters are a total of three former MDGers. One would expect such a "group" to concentrate on justifying its separate existence politically, through detailed examination both of its origins and the programs of other left groups. But none of such seriousness for *Socialist Fight*: its brief description of where it came from hinges entirely on a falsification! In an article entitled "The politics of *Socialist Fight*", the trio claim that they were denounced as "dogmatists" and "sectarians" for "fighting for Trotskyism" in the MDG. This undocumented statement is a plain lie. The real fight for Trotskyism in the MDG is a

matter for public record, a struggle carried out in opposition to White & Co. It culminated in last November's MDG conference (which SF doesn't even mention), at which Angelo Rosas and Steve King fought on the basis of the document, "Against petty-bourgeois eclecticism! For Trotskyism!" This programmatic statement, together with other documents by Rosas and King from the struggle in the MDG and its Sydney offshoot, the Trotskyist Study Group (TSG), is available in *Revolutionary Communist Bulletin* no 9, from the SL (see ad this page).

White had prepared for the conference by campaigning not for "Trotskyism", but for a half-baked "transitional organisation" which would be based on only three points: women's liberation and work in the trade unions and the ALP. He thus hoped to capture the MDG/TSG in an organisation for "practice", leaving the politics to be worked out later. Then in a sudden about-face at the end of the conference White, together with Sydney TSGers, discovered that it "was ludicrous to go into practice without a programmatic base", stabbed Timmerman in the back and scuppered the whole project. Rosas and King in contrast consistently opposed this farcical enterprise, arguing instead for a full discussion of the Trotskyist program; later they joined the SL (see "Weekend of the living dead", *Australasian Spartacist* no 80, Summer 1980-81). Now White has broken with his erstwhile TSG bloc partners too and has only his half-a-handful of supporters to count on. But on all this, SF is silent!

Thus *Socialist Fight* is more interesting for what it doesn't say than for what it does. Take the Russian Question, for example. The handout "Not another left paper!" had promised a major article on Poland, but none appeared. Instead, on the back page of *Socialist Fight* is an ad informing the reader that he can order "professionally printed Solidarity T-shirts ... exclusively through *Socialist Fight*". "Put the wind up your favourite union bureaucrat", raves the blurb. But

even the most reactionary trade union bureaucrats, such as the AFL-CIO hierarchy, think Solidarity is the best news in years. Hardly serious, perhaps, but this "smart" piece of flippant trivia is the most you're likely to get on these questions from *Socialist Fight*.

The paper does carry a line claiming (very weakly) to stand on "defence" of the "nationalised economy" of the USSR against imperialism, but hastens to add that in "any clash, or apparent clash, between this 'defencism' and support for working class revolt against the bureaucratic tyranny we stand entirely with the working class and against the bureaucracy" (emphasis added). This is a clear reference to Poland, where a venal Stalinist bureaucracy has driven sections of the working class into the arms of the Catholic church. Poland is poised on a knife edge, between the path of workers political revolution and bloody capitalist counterrevolution; but *Socialist Fight* couldn't care less. It may quote Trotsky on the need to "swim against the current", but in truth this gaggle of Stalinophobes is floating downstream on the current of anti-Sovietism. Uncritical of the Western-oriented, clericalist Solidarity leadership, and standing for Soviet troop withdrawal from Afghanistan (White's public position — but again not mentioned in the paper), SF has more in common with the anti-Soviet International Socialists (IS). Like the IS SF even has fake-mass work pretensions! No wonder then that the grouplet's main public appearances to date have been in the company of these "third camp" social democrats.

Nothing more than a platform for the self-preening ambitions of the demagogue White, *Socialist Fight* pretentiously claims it will be a "campaigning paper that can organise the left"! "Organise the left"? For what? This lying rag is just as confused as the rest of the fake left. It calls for a "communist women's movement", but then in the next breath claims "we do not counterpose this goal to what exists", so as not to

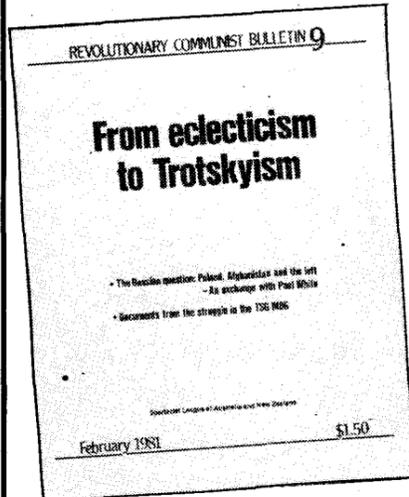


Paul White in Solidarity T-shirt. Aspiring Lech Walesa? ASp photo

offend the dwindling band of rightward moving feminists and "ban porn" moralisers. It says "no viable or politically adequate organisation exists — at either the national or international level", but endorses *Organising the Proletarian Party* by Martin Thomas of the reformist British International-Communist League (I-CL), which White has pushed uncritically for years. It says that Trotsky's Fourth International is dead, but then says it will "take seriously" the "Trotskyist" movement by "orienting to" the United Secretariat (USec). In fact, White's only reason for separation from the USec/SWP was apolitical and involuntary on his part — he was expelled! As for "comradely dialogue" with "far left groups" (none of which is mentioned), White refuses not merely to debate with the SL, but even to hand our supporters his leaflets. We leave the last word to Trotsky, who in his own time had to deal with such sectlets as Paul White's:

"A small organisation that has no unified program and no revolutionary will is less than nothing, is a negative quantity. In this sense I have spoken very contemptuously of the small groups in Bulgaria, Rumania, and Poland. Their confusion is really too big for their small compass. The revolutionary movement is only injured by them. On the other hand, the smallest of our groups are valuable because they know what they want and because they base themselves on the great tradition of Bolshevism with which they are internationally closely bound."
— "Open Letter to a British Comrade", *Writings*, 1935-36, p294.

Revolutionary Communist Bulletin no 9



- The Russian Question: an exchange with Paul White
- Documents from the Trotskyist Study Group/Melbourne Discussion Group

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Rightists

Continued from page two

fighting to shut down the airline completely. The result was that the workers on strike were confronted with the demoralising spectacle of a supposedly struck airline flying up to 90 percent of its flights daily. Then, in the middle of the dispute, the flight stewards (having settled for a compromise on the manning scales) went back to work! One out should have meant all out, with mass picket lines to shut Qantas down.

When Fraser decided to call in the RAAF/RNZAF to airlift the thousands of passengers stuck at airports in New Zealand and Australia, even Murdoch's *Australian* (2 March) recognised that this was "the first use of RAAF planes to break an airlines dispute". This massive "ANZAC Airlines" strikebreaking operation could have been stopped in its tracks, through general strike action in Australia and New Zealand, as the Spartacist League alone called for ("Smash Fraser/Muldoon strikebreaking!", *Australasian Spartacist* no 82, March 1981). But how did Dolan respond to the first large-scale use of the military to break a strike since Labor prime minister Ben Chifley sent the troops into the coalfields in 1949? *He defended it!*

In an interview with the Communist Party (CPA) paper *Tribune* (4 March) he said: "One of the difficulties in this sort of dispute is that you get ordinary working people stranded around the world, and unions face the problem of lack of public support". He could only complain that "the newspapers don't say anything about the unions not objecting to the airlift — they just laud the government". He claimed that "it would have been a different matter if they'd attempted to use RAAF pilots to fly Qantas planes". Really? The fact is that the RAAF pilots didn't need to seize the Qantas planes because they had their own.

It is hard to think of a grosser piece of barefaced treachery. *Tribune* wholeheartedly endorsed it, even stating flatly in a companion piece that the airlift "is not actually breaking the strike". Fraser and the bosses must have been stunned by this enormous gift from Dolan, for they had expected some sort of fight. Industrial Relations minister, Andrew Peacock, had initially opposed the action out of fear that massive union reaction would effectively counter it. Even the military top brass were reportedly worried lest the RAAF be "seen to be acting as strikebreakers" (*Sun-Herald*, 1 March). From the standpoint of the ruling class, Dolan "proved" Fraser right — there was no need to fear the working class; you can break strikes with impunity while Dolan and the CPA stand by and even applaud, actively sabotaging any resistance by the workers.

There was at least one instance of resistance. In Auckland, bus drivers responded to the scab airlift by refusing to ferry passengers to the plane. And at a mass meeting of Qantas workers on 6 March, an estimated 400 strikers (almost one-third of the meeting) voted *against* Dolan's proposal to return to work. Amid cries of "sellout" and "stay out", Dolan forced through a settlement which "won" nothing but an agreement to discuss a disputes procedure — a procedure which *sanctions* Qantas use of staff scabs against any "wildcat" strikes, and confines "authorised" strikes to "the equipment in question" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 March).

Far from being "smart tactics" to win "public support", Dolan's treachery inflicted a defeat on all Qantas workers, endorsed the use of staff scabs and RAAF strikebreaking, and gave the green light for Murdoch & Co's "We Care" marches. It was no thanks to the official leadership of the labour movement that the marches, which were strongest in Brisbane (4000) and Sydney (15,000), dribbled to a 4000-tops unenthusiastic fizzer in Melbourne two days later and a pathetic 700 in Perth.

Behind the "We Care" reaction lies over a decade of betrayal of workers

struggles. The 1969 near general strike, which freed jailed Tramways Union leader Clarrie O'Shea and smashed the penal powers of the anti-working-class arbitration system, proved that the bosses can have all the anti-union laws on the books that they want and still be stopped cold by the determined mobilisation of the proletariat's social power. The ruling class must reverse that lesson by inflicting a crushing defeat on the unions if it is to drive workers' living standards down to "acceptable" levels. But launching such an attack runs the risk of provoking another general working-class mobilisation against the bourgeois state, which could threaten the rule of the bourgeoisie itself.

But the 1969 victory was only a qualified one — the penal powers remained on the books — and the upsurge was channelled by the bureaucracy into support for the return of a Labor government, in 1972. For revolutionists, this was an

A Sp photo



Nazi Ross May (left) in front lines of Sydney union march.



1969: Near general strike to free O'Shea gutted bosses' penal powers.

opportunity to expose in practice the ALP reformists as class traitors and open the road to splitting the ALP ranks away from a party wedded to class collaboration. But the Whitlam government was sacked in November 1975 before its own capitalist austerity measures had fundamentally shaken the deeply-rooted illusions of its mass base in parliamentary reform.

The working class rallied to the defence of "its" government, correctly perceiving in the undemocratic installation of Fraser the bosses' intention to launch a general attack on the union movement. The call went up for a general strike, and class confrontation was directly posed. The working class was defeated, not in battle against the bosses, but by the treachery of its leadership which worked overtime to defend capitalism by frustrating the workers' desire to fight, even at the cost of their own parliamentary skins.

Fraser came to power pledged to cripple the unions, drive down wages, put an end to militant strikes and implement a policy of social austerity. Every time the proletariat showed its willingness to fight, it was betrayed by defeatism and class collaboration at the top. In mid-1976 a popular ground-swell of anger greeted his gutting of Medibank, the one substantial reform of the Whitlam years. Here was an issue over which the working class could have mobilised behind itself the oppressed layers of the petty bourgeoisie: an all-out general strike could have

stopped Fraser in his tracks, not just "saving" Medibank but reversing the defeat of November 1975 and placing on the agenda the question of class power. Forced to call Australia's first-ever official general strike, the ALP/union leadership rendered the strike completely ineffective, keeping it to a mere 24-hour holiday — during which Hawke ostentatiously played tennis.

In October 1977, LaTrobe Valley power workers came close to shutting down Victoria in a determined strike against arbitration wage freezing in what could have been the turning point in the retreat of labour under Fraser. Then half a million workers stood down by Hamer, with the need for a statewide general strike posed, waited for the power workers' lead. There was widespread working-class sympathy for the strike and Hamer could only find a dozen would-be scabs. Here the likes of Hawke were already discredited among the ranks; even then-CPA member John Halfpenny was booed at mass meetings. Reformist misleadership of the most "militant" variety, extending right down to the shop floor in the shape of CPA shop stewards, was needed to stifle this struggle.

If Fraser has not yet used the anti-union laws he started bringing in in 1977, it is because he hasn't had to. It was a defeat that they were allowed onto the books at all without a fight; but ever since, the bureaucrats have caved in at the mere threat of their use in any strike which took on national importance. When the austerity budget of August 1978 provoked anger and indignation, the social democrats used mass rallies as a safety valve and did nothing. Government attacks on Telecom and Australia Post workers in 1979 were met by what has become a patented feature of the bureaucracy, so-called "guerrilla strikes" — rolling

Addressing the patriotic strikebreakers in their own language, the leaflet praised the spirit of "come on, Aussie, come on" as "fair enough on the face of it" and appealed to the marchers to support the efforts of the unions to "provide a decent life for all Australians, and not just a wealthy few".

In a subsequent article in *Tribune* (11 March), the CPA spelled out further its reformist "don't rock the boat, don't anger the right wing" policy: "The first thing is that unions must seriously consider how they can mount campaigns which ... minimise the inconvenience to ordinary people". This grovelling appeal for weaker strikes is a wretched capitulation to the scab-herding arguments of the bourgeois press. If members of the public suffer temporary hardship as a result of a strike then only the bosses are to blame for refusing to meet the workers' demands.

While the CPA was busy leafleting the Sydney march, the International Socialists (IS) were organising pitiful counter-demonstrations in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. The IS had set up front groups called Committees to Defend Our Unions consisting overwhelmingly of themselves. In Brisbane, they managed to get some of their supporters arrested; in Sydney, 25 huddled together in Chifley Square, while a larger rally in Melbourne's City Square drew up to 200, including a contingent from the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). In no case, however, was there any organised presence by the unions, either officially or by way of organised numbers.

The outcome was pathetic: as the marches passed, ISers would howl "fascist", then try to address them and then even make frenzied efforts to physically stop them. The IS' stunts were an adventurist substitution, and the Spartacist League refused to take part. What were needed were mass mobilisations by the unions to stop these demonstrations from ever starting. In the absence of such mobilisations, the IS' rallies were at best a display of impotent moral outrage, and at worst were a positively harmful display of weakness, which can only embolden the union bashers.

Any militant would sympathise with the sentiment to stop these pro-scab marches: the question is how? But the CPA and Socialist Party (SPA) responded with red-baiting slander. *Tribune's* Murray Broad denounced the Brisbane counter-demo as playing "into the hands of the right wing and the media from start to finish". He then added that "the irresponsible statements of the IS served to undermine the democratic movements which have been fighting for the right to march for years". The SPA's *Socialist* (11 March) took the same tack: "It is the Trotskyists and other ultra-left groups who use these violent tactics and, as history has shown, they aid the further development of reaction". This hogwash is meant to cover up for the role of CPA and SPA union bureaucrats in refusing to so much as lift a finger to mobilise against the marches.

Trotskyist the IS is not, and certainly not "ultra-left". Substitutionist bravado characteristically veils the same defeatist refusal to mobilise the working class as displayed by the bureaucrats. In fact the IS, far from being politically counterposed to the bureaucracy, acts as its left appendage through their "rank and file"

Spartacist League
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reformist groupings, backs the same losing "guerrilla tactics" and cheers when "left" would-be bureaucrats drag their unions into the bosses' courts.

This time it was the CPA handing out leaflets to a reactionary demonstration which included the Nazi Ross May; last year that's what the IS was doing, joining the imperialist anti-Soviet chorus over the Red Army intervention in Afghanistan. Ironically, the IS counter-demonstrators found themselves being told to "go back to Russia" by the "We Care" marchers at whom they were yelling "scab" or "fascist". The Ross Mays of this world know well that both the unions and the Soviet degenerated workers state are working-class gains which they are out to smash. Defence of the trade unions in Australia is integrally linked to the Trotskyist program of defence of the Soviet Union against imperialist aggression — all the more so as Fraser enlists in Reagan's anti-Soviet war drive.

Sabotaged by CPA/SPA/ALP mis-

leadership, many strikes succeed only in creating maximum disruption for the minimum gain. At the Melbourne anti-union march a placard was brandished aloft proclaiming that the Qantas strike "has cost \$25 million for nothing". Unfortunately, the Qantas workers did go back with nothing to show for their strike.

Another case in point is the long-drawn-out 35-hour week campaign. In itself this demand is woefully inadequate as a way to fight unemployment; what is needed instead is a struggle for a *sliding scale of hours*, which should begin at a minimum with a 30-hour week for 40 hours pay, with the hours worked being decreased as necessary to provide jobs for all. Such a struggle must also be combined with a fight for massive wage increases with cost-of-living clauses to ensure that wages keep pace with inflation. But the way in which CPA/"left" union leaders (like the AMWSU's Laurie Carmichael) have been "fighting" for the 35-hour demand is pathetic. Taking five

hours off work *every month* only serves to isolate individual shops, demoralise the workers, and achieves next to nothing.

Nationwide strikes, coupled with factory occupations to beat back threatened redundancies, and a drive to unionise the multitude of poorly organised metal shops throughout Australia, are what is needed. Far from "alienating" the petty bourgeoisie, such a determined struggle would unite behind it sectors of the impoverished middle classes, who would see a working class organised and fighting to win.

Despite the obviously media-manufactured character of the "We Care" demonstrations, these marches represent a serious threat to the Australian labour movement. Building on them, Fraser will now undoubtedly look for an opportunity to take on the unions and deal them a stinging blow, thus shifting decisively the balance of class forces that has existed in this country

since at least 1969. Before that happens, the working class must launch its own offensive against this union-bashing government and its hired scabs. What is needed is a revolutionary leadership of the labour movement to fight for a program which meets the objective needs of the working class, a leadership committed to fighting to overthrow this decaying capitalist system and replacing it with a planned socialist economy.

- For a sliding scale of hours and wages to combat unemployment and inflation!
- For militant strike action and occupations, backed up by mass picket lines! One out means all out! Smash arbitration and all anti-union laws!
- For workers defence guards to stop anti-union assaults!
- Defend the Soviet Union! Smash Reagan/Fraser's war drive!
- For a workers government, based on workers organisations!
- For a mass revolutionary party, section of a reformed Fourth International!

Anti-porn...

Continued from page three

going along with the closure of the sex shops reportedly in order to secure implementation of the "left's" scheme to finance low-cost public housing through a 2 percent levy on all developments costing over \$200,000. As another ALP alderman explained with candid cynicism: "While people are up in arms about sex shops, they won't worry about the levy" (ibid)!

Even the "far left" Socialist Leadership Group (SLG) of ALP permanent fixture Bob Gould has refused to come out against Sutherland. At a 22 March SLG-organised "Housing Meeting", the Gouldites refused even to discuss a Spartacist League motion condemning the ALP anti-porn campaign. It was "irrelevant" and "out of order", Gould blustered. But the real reason Gould doesn't want to confront the question lies in the fact that he too supports ("critically", of course) the 2 percent levy and doesn't want to "alienate" any potential support for his own housing shenanigans. After all, Doug Sutherland himself was a featured speaker at the inaugural meeting of the Gouldites' pathetic "campaign".

Feminists echo Festival of Light

Sutherland/Wran's attacks on gays and other oppressed groups must now prove embarrassing for the moribund Australian women's movement. More incensed by the sight of a woman in a black garter belt than in a head-to-toe *chador*, these petty-bourgeois feminists have taken to the streets over the past period to "Reclaim the Night" and to call for bourgeois state measures against sex shops and pornography. Their wacry has been US feminist Robyn Morgan's dictum "Pornography is the theory, rape is the practice" — a sinister anti-male slogan which obliterates the crucial distinction between rape, which is criminal assault, and reading or viewing pornography, which is simply *not* a violent act.

The Spartacist League has consistently opposed the "Reclaim the Night" marches as *reactionary* mobilisations. No matter how much the feminists protest to the contrary, these marches put them in an objective political bloc with the most conservative forces in society: bible-thumping anti-abortionists and pro-death

penalty right-to-lifers. And we have warned that the first victims of any legislation introduced as the result of the anti-porn marches "would be the already discriminated against: homosexuals, transvestites and anyone else whom the state cares to describe as 'sexual deviants'" ("Feminists march against sin and smut", *Australasian Spartacist* no 72, April 1980). Even the so-called "liberal" Offences in Public Places Act has been used against gays and prostitutes. The labour movement must demand the repeal of this and all other laws governing sexual conduct!

In contrast, most of the fake left tagged along behind the anti-porn feminists. The International Socialists (IS) went so far as to picket a sex shop on Swanston Street, Melbourne in December 1979; leading ISer Janey Stone's subsequent criticism was that the picket didn't occupy the shop — presumably to tear to shreds the girlie magazines on sale inside!

As for the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), it supports reactionary "age-of-consent" laws as "historic acquisitions of the working class [which] should be enforced" (*Militant*, paper of the US SWP, 13 April 1979). The article echoes the most backward sentiments about "dirty old men" when it adds that those who stand for repealing these bourgeois laws are "primarily adult men who believe they should be unrestricted in having sex with children". Where then does the SWP stand on cases such as that of film director Roman Polanski, who was threatened with jail and driven into exile for his affair with a 13-year old girl? Age-of-consent laws in the real world are used not to prevent child abuse but to victimise practitioners of what ruling-class morality damns as "unnatural" sex.

Marxists flatly oppose state interference in the lives of consenting individuals and oppose any attempts by the bourgeois state to impose its moral code upon society. For us, pornography is *not* the basis of women's oppression; this hate-filled capitalist system with its rigid family structure and straitjacket morality is. And we recognise that prostitution, like adultery, is the reverse side of the coin of the artificial and hypocritical monogamous ethic of the nuclear family, the basic unit of social/economic organisation under capitalism. Only socialist revolution which replaces the obsolete family with higher social insti-

tutions, thus freeing women from the drudgery of domestic labour, will be able to genuinely end women's oppression and with it the institution of prostitution. And when the workers come to power, they will deal out summary justice to the pimps and madams who live off "their girls". But this program, the program of the Spartacist League, is counterposed to that of Sutherland, the ALP "lefts" and the "ban porn" feminists, whose calls on the bourgeois state to further limit existing democratic rights only help prolong women's oppression by shoring up the capitalist system and its poisonous chauvinist ideology. ■

Teachers...

Continued from page twelve

The latest charges against Kealba teachers has been across-the-board militancy: as many as eight motions calling for an indefinite, statewide strike have emerged from regional meetings, branches, and individuals in a matter of days. These are counterposed to the policy expected to come from the Central Committee, the VSTA's statewide leading body, for a weak "tactic" of strikes lasting no more than three days at a time. The VSTA's response will be discussed at a mass meeting scheduled for 1 April in Dallas Brooks Hall, but according to militant teachers who spoke to *Australasian Spartacist*, even this statewide stopwork meeting could be cancelled on the basis of a deal to drop the charges against Kealba teachers in return for a moratorium on union action to enforce conditions, as was made over Seaford-Carrum in March last year.

Rank-and-file teacher response to the past few years of attacks on conditions has included the appearance this year of an oppositional group in the VSTA, known as "Teacher Solidarity" (TS) which is supported by the International Socialists (IS). A Teacher Solidarity motion for an indefinite statewide strike to get the charges against Kealba teachers dropped passed at recent meetings of the Western and Central regions of the union. The motion called for an elected strike committee, but ignored the other two unions and left the problems of mass unemployment of teachers, LTE, forced transfers, and Departmental inspection completely unaddressed. The real needs of teachers include fighting around these points, as well as finding a way to link up with the labour movement as a whole around a class-struggle program centred on putting the working class in power in society — the only long-run solution to the problems of teachers and education generally. A motion passed unanimously at Hadfield High — and at the militant Northern Region of the VSTA by a close majority — presented by Hadfield militant Greg Benfield, pointed in the right direction. It called for a strike to reverse all charges against teachers, and an end to LTE, forced transfers and inspection; and for withdrawal of Hamer's brutal standdown regulations. Further, it called

for picket lines to close down every school in the state, unity with the VTU and TTUV, and for teachers union representatives to get off the Teachers Tribunal (see box). Particularly important was the last point, which indicates a perspective of a break once and for all with collaboration with the bosses' state as a *sine qua non* for a genuine class-struggle program for public workers.

The bureaucratic Vaughan leadership of the VSTA is expected to try to bury rank-and-file sentiment for an indefinite strike by presenting only one of the many motions calling for this at the 1 April mass meeting — a cynical insult to the membership which should be opposed by all militants. What teachers need is a leadership willing to stop at nothing short of the struggle for power by the working class.

For an indefinite statewide strike of teachers in Victoria! Drop all disciplinary charges against teachers! Smash all the attacks of the Hamer government on teachers and public education! For a class-struggle opposition to all three teacher union bureaucracies! ■

The following motion was passed at the Northern Regional meeting of the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association (VSTA) on 25 March. It was the most far-reaching of 8 motions calling for an indefinite statewide teachers' strike to emerge from all sectors of the union following the laying of charges against 29 teachers at Kealba High School by Minister of Education Alan Hunt. It was presented by Greg Benfield, a militant at Hadfield High School, where the motion was also carried.

The laying of charges against members at Kealba and victimisation of members at Seaford-Carrum come as the latest in a series of vicious attacks against our union ranging from the introduction of forced transfers and LTE to the ever-worsening of teachers' conditions and wages.

In view of the pressing need to defend the union against these attacks, this meeting of the Northern Region of the VSTA calls on the Executive/Central Committee to immediately call an indefinite statewide strike, calling on the TTUV and VTU to join the strike, around the following demands:

- immediate withdrawal of charges against all teachers
- withdrawal of the standdown regulations
- hiring of all unemployed teachers
- an end to LTE and forced transfers
- an end to inspection

In order to ensure the victory of the strike, picket lines must be set up to close down all schools in the state, and a strike committee must be elected to coordinate the running of the strike. Further, this meeting calls for all teachers' union representatives off the Tribunal.

Spartacist Club Forum

Obscene Anti-sex Campaign

ALP, "Moral Majority"

Attack

Democratic Rights!

Speaker: R D'Amico
Central Committee, SLANZ

Thursday, 9 April 1981
Sydney University
Venue to be announced

For further information contact
(02) 264-8195



Front line El Salvador

Smash junta terror!

**Defeat
US imperialism!**

**Defend Cuba,
USSR!**

We print below an abridged, edited version of the first half of a speech by Jan Norden, editor of Workers Vanguard, Marxist fortnightly of the Spartacist League/US, recently delivered in Boston and New York under the title, "For Workers Revolution in Central America". An expanded version of the second half, focusing on Nicaragua, will appear in Workers Vanguard no 277, 27 March 1981.

It's high noon in Central America. The whole isthmus is red-hot, bubbling like the volcanic chain that forms its backbone. A string of banana republics, puppet dictatorships and oligarchic tyrannies have shot their wad, and there is an historic day of reckoning approaching. There is a general crisis of bourgeois rule in the region, such as it has been practiced over the last half century. And in this explosive situation a new administration has moved into the White House which is determined to send a bloody message to the Kremlin. The message consists of Huey helicopters, 105 millimeter bazookas, PT patrol boats and US "military advisers". The blood is supposed to be that of the Central American masses. Reagan has challenged Castro and Brezhnev to a shoot-out over El Salvador, and Central America is now the focal point of the Cold War — the point at which all the energy of imperialism's anti-Soviet war drive is concentrated on the tinder of popular outrage and the flames begin to leap up.

To meet this challenge the left, both in Latin America and in the imperialist

centers, has to face head-on the basic question, to take a stand in the confrontation between rapacious imperialism and the degenerated/deformed workers states of the Soviet bloc....

So in the last couple of weeks we have been treated to this outcry over Soviet arms in El Salvador.... So the first thing you have to do is to debunk the imperialist lies. To recall President Reagan's words of a few weeks ago: who is it that goes around the world lying, cheating and stealing? Well, we have a candidate for that. It's the United States....

The reality is that there is unfortunately no effective Soviet aid going to the insurgents in El Salvador. Because if there were, we wouldn't have had 12,000 people who died at the hands of the right-wing death squads and the junta's army in the last year. That is the proof. Hopefully there are some arms from Cuba and the Soviet Union there. But the fact of the matter is that there is not adequate protection for the masses facing blood-thirsty dictators. And then the Soviet ambassador to the US gets up and says, "We're innocent". Unfortunately he was telling the truth. If he did lie, cheat and steal in order to further the cause of world revolution, we'd feel a lot better. But it's not so.

Now what we are seeing here is the attempt by the leading capitalist world power to reassert a claim to global hegemony after being badly mauled in Indochina. The unraveling of the various dictatorships in the region is intimately connected to the relative weakness of US imperialism following Vietnam. Then came Jimmy Carter's "human rights" crusade, which in Latin America was essentially a passing phase of bourgeois hypocrisy. But as we pointed out from Day One, its real direction was against the Soviet Union. In other words it was imperialist moral rearmament, in preparation for war. And it wasn't just going to be Cold War, it would be hot war. And Reagan has decreed that this is where the hot war starts. So Central



Troops of the bloody El Salvador junta: armed courtesy of Reagan's anti-Soviet war drive.

America is a substitute for the Persian Gulf or Berlin or somewhere else. Poland, for example. That's the place that's uppermost in Washington's mind. And by "drawing the line against Communism" in El Salvador, what they are really preparing for is to "roll back"; in Foster Dulles phraseology, the historic gains of the Russian proletarian revolution.

Secondly, as we wrote in the last issue of *Workers Vanguard*, the US rulers are not seeking to achieve "stability" in the region or anything of the sort. The only solution that they have in mind for the Central American left is a "final solution". Reagan's spoiling for a fight; he wants the blood to flow in rivers. And

since the most powerful imperial power of this epoch wills it, *the blood will flow*. That is a fact. So why all this talk about a political solution? The Latin American populist regimes, like Mexico, and European social democrats are talking about it. It's so much pipe-dreaming. And they'd better take that Detente Gold out of their hookahs, because this is serious business. But the same sort of dangerous utopianism is coming from the intended victims, from the Sandinista leadership in Nicaragua and spokesmen for the Salvadoran left. They should draw some conclusions from the US brush-off. *Reagan stands by his butchers.*

The Salvadoran junta is not going to
Continued on page six

For a Victoria-wide teachers' strike!

MELBOURNE, 28 March — In a continuing series of attacks on teachers in Victoria, Minister for Education Alan Hunt has charged 29 members of the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association (VSTA) for participating in a half-day stop-work action in protest of class sizes at Kealba High School with "dereliction of duty". The teachers face anything from reprimands to the sack when they go before the Teachers Tribunal, the arbitration and disciplinary body for teachers which includes both Education Department and teachers' union representatives. This provocation is just the latest turn in a steamrolling offensive by the discredited Hamer government to slash public service expenditure and break teachers' resistance.

The attacks began in earnest in 1977 with the introduction of staff ceilings. Hiring was cut back disastrously, and

teacher training programs reduced almost to zero. In 1978 a system for declaring teachers "in excess" was imposed, and forced transfers of teachers introduced to overcome staffing anomalies caused by the cuts. Limited Tenure Employment (LTE) was then brought in in 1979 to speed up "natural attrition" by removing job security. Many teachers were thus transformed into "emergency" teachers, who could be employed for filling short term vacancies up to one year, with no guarantee of permanency. The response of teachers to this attack on permanency was the first-ever joint statewide, strike by the three unions — the Victorian Teachers Union (VTU — mainly primary teachers), the Technical Teachers' Union of Victoria (TTUV), and the VSTA. A huge mass meeting of 20,000 teachers at Olympic Park voted overwhelmingly to go on strike if any

teacher was employed under LTE the following year.

But 1980 saw more LTE teachers, and the bureaucratic leaderships of the three unions showed that they had no intention of launching a real fight to stop LTE. Attendance at mass meetings dropped markedly.

Attack on Seaford-Carrum

In March, Hunt sent Departmental inspectors to raid Seaford-Carrum High School, an historically militant VSTA branch, in order to bring charges against militant teachers. His snoops were met by an immediate walkout at the school, but the VSTA bureaucrats arranged a deal to buy off the charges in return for a 3-month moratorium on work actions to enforce conditions. And in November, when Hunt pulled a similar raid, the VSTA leadership ordered Seaford-

Carrum teachers to remain at work! After three days of interrogations, six branch officials and other militants were given forced transfers, virtually gutting the branch. Emboldened by the lack of resistance to its policies, the Hamer government introduced vicious legislation at the end of the year to withhold the pay of, or indefinitely stand down, militants who caused "disruption" (read: go on strike), or who simply tried to enforce union conditions.

The ability of teachers to fight Education Department attacks on a branch by branch (ie, individual schools) basis has been whittled away by mass unemployment of teachers and the defeatist, sell-out policies of teachers' union leaderships like that of VSTA president Peter Vaughan. But the response of teachers to

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