

Australasian SPARTACIST



NUMBER 50

FEBRUARY 1978

TWENTY CENTS

A disgusting Stalinist spectacle

Murderous nationalism in Indochina



Vietnamese premier, Pham Van Dong. Rival Stalinist bureaucracies in Hanoi and Phnom Penh sacrifice workers in nationalist slaughter.

In the early morning hours of 31 December Radio Phnom Penh lifted the last veil of official secrecy surrounding the border clashes which have marked relations between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) and the Democratic State of Kampuchea (Cambodia) ever since the Indochinese war ended in early 1975. Broadcasting out of the still nearly deserted capital, President Khieu Samphan denounced Vietnam's "undeclared and premeditated war" against the "sacred territory of Democratic Kampuchea" and severed diplomatic relations (*Asiaweek*, 13 January). The Vietnamese were "the most aggressive and ferocious armed forces ever to attack Cambodia and the Cambodian people", charged the Samphan statement. They had "raped and killed our [!] women in the same or

claims that it has not occupied any Cambodian soil but has only protected the "motherland" are as self-evidently ludicrous as Phnom Penh's boasts of "total victory" and the "annihilation of thousands of Vietnamese troops". However it appears that the Khmer Rouge, heavily outmanned and outgunned by the battle-hardened Vietnamese army, have suffered significant reverses.

After what was clearly a carefully prepared campaign, the SRV apparently now occupies whole chunks of Cambodian territory, including the Parrot's Beak region, a longtime NLF stronghold. While Hanoi has most likely ruled out an outright march on Phnom Penh for fear of provoking retaliatory military action by Cambodia's Peking

hind Hanoi and Phnom Penh. China recently sent a high-level delegation including Chou En-lai's widow on a morale-boosting trip to "Democratic Kampuchea". The Kremlin in turn has confined itself to reporting only the Vietnamese side of the fighting, churning out its own statement which blames China for the armed clashes.

And where Hua and Brezhnev go, of course there follow their loyal sycophants in the West. But the most stomach-churning role of all may well be that of the Maoist Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) (CPA[ML]), whose chairman, EF Hill, happened to be in Peking on one of his frequent pilgrimages when news of the fighting broke. Courtesy of Hua and Teng Hsiao-ping, Hill was flown down to Phnom Penh to meet with Pol Pot, after which came lavish praise of the Cambodians for "heroically defending their hard-won national independence" and the now-ritualistic denunciation of "the extremely sinister Soviet social-imperialism and those who do its bidding" (*Vanguard*, 19 January). *Vanguard* reported that Hill and Pol Pot expressed "thorough-going agreement on all questions", including, presumably, the comparison between the Vietnamese Stalinists and "Thieu-Ky".

A whole generation of CPA (ML) supporters found their way to Mao/Stalinism out of identification with the Stalinist leadership of the heroic struggles of the Vietnamese workers and peasants. Now they are expected to accept that their erstwhile heroes are worse than those imperialist pimps Thieu and Ky and must be smashed by the Khmer Rouge in the struggle against "hegemonism".

The US imperialists themselves, and their client states and the various corrupt dictatorships which together make up the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN),

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Vietnamese army: after decades-long struggle against imperialism, led like their Cambodian brothers into squalid nationalist border war by Stalinist leaders.

even worse manner than the Thieu-Ky and South Korean mercenary troops of the past". Radio Phnom Penh went on to compare Vietnam with Hitler's Germany before World War II.

Hanoi quickly countercharged, claiming Cambodia had launched border raids into Vietnam as early as May 1975 and that recently "many divisions" of Khmer troops had attacked all along the southern frontier, shelling populous areas deep inside Vietnam. An SRV statement accused the Cambodians of "the most barbarous crimes", which if true would reinforce the bloodcurdling accounts of recrudescing peasant atavism under the Khmer Rouge regime:

"looting, burning down houses, schools and pagodas, chopping up people, killing children in the presence of their parents, taking out livers, cutting open stomachs and removing foetuses from mothers' wombs and, in some places, rounding up people and butchering all of them." (*Asiaweek*, 13 January)

While the mutual exchange of atrocity allegations has reached an increasingly fevered pitch (Hanoi now bluntly calls the Cambodian leaders "sick minds"), the actual battlefield situation remains somewhat obscure. Hanoi's repeated

patron, it seems determined to establish a *cordon sanitaire* along the border -- either as an act of permanent conquest or as ransom in the "negotiations" they are now cynically offering their "fraternal brothers". Phnom Penh has however stridently rejected any such negotiations, stating its determination to wage a "people's war" in order to "wipe out all the remnants of the enemy forces still clinging to our territory" (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 20 January).

What a disgusting Stalinist spectacle! After heroically battling imperialism for decades, the Indochinese working masses have been hurled at each other's throats in a nationalist frenzy fostered by rival Stalinist cliques. Revolutionary Marxists oppose both sides in this ugly frontier feud. The chauvinist bureaucratic parasites in Hanoi, Phnom Penh and Vientiane must be swept out through a political revolution under the leadership of an Indochinese Trotskyist vanguard, centred on the Vietnamese proletariat. A soviet federation of Indochina would put an end to this maelstrom of murderous nationalist rivalries.

Naturally their respective Stalinist big brothers in Moscow and Peking have lined up be-



Cambodian leader Pol Pot (left) with Hua Kuo-feng (right).

Chile — first cracks in junta rule

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Indochina . . .

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can hardly conceal their delight with the bloody fratricide between their former military foes. Zbigniew Brzezinski, "national security advisor" to US president Carter, declared it to be the "first proxy war between China and the Soviet Union". Brzezinski's exaggerated hopes nonetheless hinted at the value of the conflict to the imperialist bourgeoisie, allowing it to play off one deformed workers state against another.

And even before the extent of the fighting was known, the authoritative bourgeois journal *Asiaweek* (30 December 1977) confidently prophesied that "the new 'war' for Indochina augurs only good for those non-socialist [ie ASEAN] states". Unlike China, which has fulsomely praised ASEAN as a bulwark against "Soviet hegemonism", Vietnam has until recently denounced ASEAN as the US-promoted counter-revolutionary cabal it is -- directed first and foremost at the Indochinese workers states. Now while Cambodia played the obsequious host first to the Burmese dictator, Ne Win, and then to the Thai foreign minister -- thus at least formally ending the sporadic border fracas with its Thai neighbour -- the Vietnamese foreign minister, Nguyen Duy Trinh, spent his January winging around the capitals of ASEAN.


None of this is particularly startling. The policy of the competing Stalinist bureaucracies toward one another has always consisted of chauvinist attempts at domination and shameless backstabbing. To whip up chauvinist sentiment, both sides have exploited the ancient antagonisms between the two nations. The Khmer Rouge has long appealed to the "glorious traditions" of the brutal Angkor Empire which dominated much of Indochina from the thirteenth century on. The Vietnamese Stalinists in their own equally unsavoury way hark back to the period of expansionism which by the mid-nineteenth century had not only virtually wiped out the Champa nation and other mountain peoples but, combined with Thailand's push north, threatened the very existence of the Khmer nation. Only the arrival of the French colonialists saved Cambodia as an "independent" nation.

Nor is there any lack of more recent ammunition for fuelling national enmity. Hanoi can point to the barbarous treatment of the once-million-strong Vietnamese minority in Cambodia: massacred in their tens of thousands by the US imperialist puppet regime of Lon Nol, they were then arbitrarily expelled by the Khmer Rouge. The Khmer Rouge, on the other hand, can recall being repeatedly sold out by the Vietnamese, beginning with the 1954 Geneva accords which consigned all of Cambodia to the French-dominated neo-colonial regime of Prince Norodom Sihanouk. One aspect of the secret deal Kissinger made with Hanoi and the NLF in the 1973 Paris "peace" accords was a commitment by the Vietnamese to cut off all military aid to the Cambodian FUNK (National United Front) as part of the price for US reconstruction aid.

Of course Peking was just as ready to sell out its Khmer "brothers". Not only did Chou En-lai play a key role in arranging the 1954 agreement but in late 1973 he hinted broadly in a conversation with French diplomats that the Chinese would be prepared to support a "neutral coalition government" under Sihanouk if only Kissinger and Nixon could be wooed away from their bitter-end commitment to the incompetent Lon Nol dictatorship.

The timing of the Vietnamese military

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Australasian SPARTACIST 

a monthly organ of revolutionary Marxism for the re-birth of the Fourth International published by Spartacist Publications for the Central Committee of the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand, section of the international Spartacist tendency

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GPO Box 3473, Sydney, NSW, 2001
(02) 235-8115

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Three dollars for the next twelve issues (one year).

AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST is registered at the GPO, Sydney for posting as a publication - Category B.

Printed by Maxwell Printing Company Pty Ltd, 862 Elizabeth Street, Waterloo, NSW 2017.

Spartacist League holds summer camp

"We trace our roots to the Russian Revolution"

The Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand (SL) held its third annual summer camp and eighth Organisational Plenum Meeting (OPM) in January. Beside the OPM itself, the week-long camp included a number of educational presentations and special commissions appointed by the outgoing Central Committee to discuss perspectives for particular areas of work -- campus, the women's movement, press and press sales. Among over thirty members, sympathisers and fraternal visitors present were comrades who had been won to Trotskyism from the Communist Party (CPA), International Socialists (IS), Socialist Workers Party (SWP), Communist League (CL), Worker Student Alliance, Socialist Labour League (SLL) and the feminist movement -- a vivid confirmation of the SL's ability to regroup subjectively revolutionary militants from a myriad of fake-left groupings.

Modest growth and several noteworthy successes was how the OPM national report summarised the last year. At the previous summer camp it had been noted that, due to the commitment of cadre for necessary international expansion, the organisation would face a challenging period, even possibly entailing cutbacks in certain areas of



Campus commission reporter at summer camp. ASp photo

work. In assessing the SL's work since that gathering, the OPM was able to express satisfaction at the progress made by the organisation, particularly marked by the development of a layer of middle-level cadre. Our three major campaigns -- the LaTrobe Valley power strike support, exposure of ASIO infiltration within our movement and the defeat of a feminist-inspired attempt to exclude SL supporters from Sydney Women's Liberation -- created a national impact.

With the CL's collapse into reformism and the Healyite SLL even more erratic and discredited, the SL is increasingly prominent as the communist pole of attraction on the Australian left -- a point confirmed from the experience of their own arenas by the reporters from the campus commission and the women's commission (which unlike the male-exclusionist "women's caucuses" set up within reformist groups like the IS and the CPA was a working body under the direction of the entire organisation). The SL's continuing vitality among the rubble of our centrist opponents is no accident -- we are firmly anchored in the revolutionary program.

The national report focused primarily on the coming year. Immediate tasks centre around a better utilisation of resources through the acquisition and improvement of skills -- an important part of the process of training a professional cadre. The reporter stressed the importance of concretising trade-union fraction perspectives while continuing to work on the campuses and in the women's movement. On a motion from the sales commission the OPM voted to conduct the SL's first public ASp subscription drive early in the year.

Three new members admitted by the OPM had their first experience of a genuinely Leninist and internationalist organisational plenum. The visiting representative of the international

Spartacist tendency (iSt), SL/US Central Committee member Al Nelson, greeted the OPM with a report on recent international developments, including the recruitment of a group of supporters in Sweden and exciting prospects for the London Spartacist Group. And the national reporter reminded the comrades that, "It's one of the most important functions of this section ... to develop cadre for use throughout the world movement".

Cadre training was the aim of the lively educational discussions as well, tapping historical experience to deepen the organisation's understanding of current questions. The special interest which Asia holds for Australian Trotskyists was noted by a number of speakers during the discussion on the origins of Communism in Asia. Not only do we bear particular responsibility for assisting in the construction of Trotskyist organisations in that strategically important region; our struggle against Australian chauvinism must necessarily concentrate on its most virulent expression -- "yellow peril" xenophobia.

In what was certainly one of the highlights of the week, Comrade Nelson related a first-hand account of the struggle of the Revolutionary Tendency (RT -- precursor of the SL/US) against the rightward degeneration of the US SWP mentioned above. When the RT was bureaucratically expelled by the US SWP in 1963, it took with it the unique revolutionary heritage of Cannonism -- maintained to this day by the iSt.

Comrade Nelson pointed to two facts which were central in accounting for the US SWP's unique preservation of revolutionary continuity through 15 years of the post-World War II period. The founding core of American Trotskyism, unlike elsewhere, included a whole layer of seasoned Communist cadre who were expelled along with its founding leader, James P Cannon, from the Communist Party USA in 1928. Secondly, while the Fourth International worldwide suffered terrible losses of leading cadre during World War II, the SWP escaped relatively unscathed. "You're in an organisation whose roots you can trace back to the Russian Revolution", Comrade Nelson explained, "and your history, your traditions are Russian, Bolshevik".

That "thread of continuity" as Comrade Nelson called it, transmitted through the experience of the first and only successful workers revolution, is today embodied uniquely in the revolutionary Trotskyist program of the international Spartacist tendency. It is that program which guides us in the task which lies ahead -- the construction of a party to lead the proletariat to power. ■

Split in US Maoists

What was until recently the largest Maoist organisation in the United States, the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP -- formerly Revolutionary Union) is being torn apart by a deep-going split over the purge of the Gang of Four and the consolidation in power of the Hua/Teng regime in Peking. The long-simmering split is revealed in an exclusive in-depth, inside report and analysis in *Workers Vanguard* no 190 (27 January), weekly paper of the Spartacist League/US.

The shattering of the RCP represents not only a dramatic shift in the political landscape of the US left but highlights the wrenching crisis afflicting Maoist organisations around the world, including Australia. For in its origins and politics the RCP was characteristic of almost a whole generation of New Left radical youth recruited to Mao/Stalinism through identifying with the "Cultural Revolution". *Workers Vanguard* no 190 can be ordered for 25 cents from Spartacist Publications, GPO Box 3473, Sydney, NSW, 2001.

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Not with a bang, but a whimper

Exit the Communist League

The swallowing of the Communist League (CL) by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) at their 8-15 January "Fusion Conference" brought to an end five years of open, often bitterly hostile squabbling between competing national affiliates of the "United Secretariat" (USec), that swamp-land of pseudo-Trotskyism. Rooted in the *realpolitik* of USec factional conciliation, this unprincipled union was clearly a foregone conclusion from the start of the misnamed "fusion process".

After eight years of what amounted to a de facto international split, the US SWP-led Leninist-Trotskyist Faction (LTF) and the centrist, European-based International Majority Tendency -- the mentors, respectively, of the SWP and CL -- have decided for the time being to bury the hatchet, usually in the political skulls of their respective expendable satellites. The ceasefire came complete with territorial adjustments and clearly demarcated spheres of influence. The English-language edition of the IMT's international organ, *Inprecor*, has been dissolved into the US SWP's *Intercontinental Press*. Europe was ceded to the centrist majority, much of the rest of the English-speaking world to the reformist minority and, as always, Latin America remains a no man's land where dirty tricks galore are permitted and committed by both sides. The first of nearly a dozen national sections to split, the Australian groups were also among the last to reunite. But in this case, last was indeed least.

Despite widespread and evident distaste and disgruntlement toward the fusion on the part of the CL membership, manifested most openly through the Brisbane civil-liberties campaign (where the SWP cowardly abstained from street marches while the CL enthusiastically tailed a confrontationist "new mass vanguard"; see *ASP* no 49, December 1977), the fusion breezed through with only an afternoon of debate and three votes cast in opposition at the conference. *Direct Action* (26 January) proudly crowed that "The broad measure of political agreement achieved during the fusion process is indicated by the fact that no such [oppositional] tendency was formed" and touted the "virtual unanimity of political line" at the conference. Indeed, not one of the "oppositionists", such as they were, opposed fusion with the SWP *in principle*, on the basis of its reformist politics. For to oppose the fusion on programmatic grounds would necessarily have entailed a condemnation of the USec itself as an unprincipled rotten bloc -- a point noted by both pro- and anti-fusion elements -- and a concomitant break with the USec.

The spate of pre-conference documents by the CLers expressing their disgust with the SWP's social-democratic positions on several current key political issues thus stood as an indictment not only of the SWP's reformist politics, but equally of the cynical cowardice of the USec-loyal "oppositionists". One such document, entitled with unintended irony "From right opportunism to political oblivion" (*Joint Discussion Bulletin [JDB]* no 9, December 1977), charged the SWP with "a disturbing deference [sic] towards the power of bourgeois opinion" in the Brisbane events. Another attacked the SWP and CL for their criminal refusal to defend the petty-bourgeois terrorists of the RAF against the state terror of the German bourgeoisie. Yet another denounced US SWP leader Joseph Hansen's third-campist call for multilateral nuclear disarmament, echoed by the SWP/CL, for making their "position on defence of the workers states at best hazy and compromising ... these are the ideas of Max Shachtman [!]" ("From a molehill to a mountain", *JDB* no 10, January 1978).

But the most scathing attack on the politics of the fusion came in a "Critique of the SWP/CL election manifesto" (*JDB* no 7, December 1977), signed by fully seven members of the Sydney CL. According to the document's authors, the manifesto "represents a political adaptation to the consciousness of the masses"; "it does not deal with the question of whether if the ALP adopted some of these policies it would be any less of a bosses party"; it is "a capitulation to the large anti-technology, environmentalist section of the anti-uranium movement"; "it attempts to constrain our [!] program within the limits of governmental policies, reform and legislation"; "it does not pose the question of workers democracy in any form"; "it repeatedly offers formulations about bourgeois institutions characterised by great unclarity"; it puts forward a sectoralist approach; its line of "support for a democratic, secular Palestine" posits a stagist conception of national liberation; it implies that "a government at the head of the state apparatus of an imperialist class [can] take up and implement an

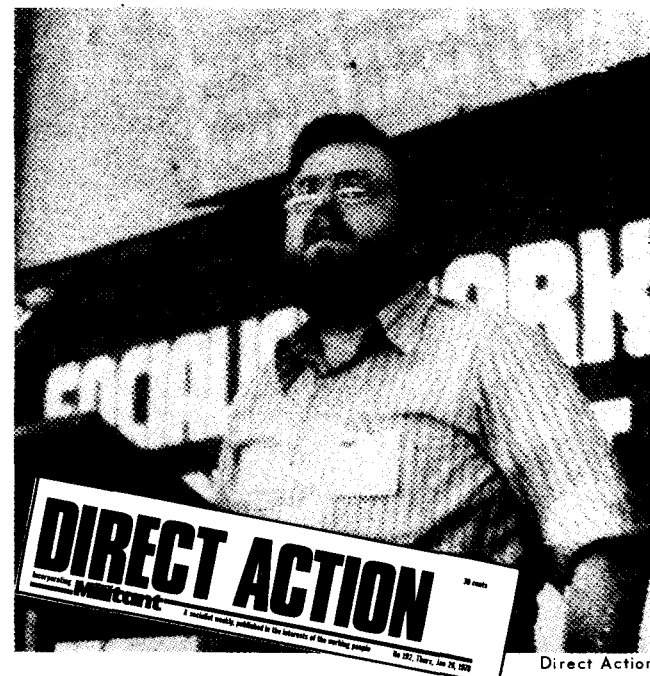
anti-imperialist policy". "In fact, in the absence of any statement to the effect that it is the working class we want in power, that we are opposed to parliament, the Manifesto appears to seek to *implement its policies* through Parliament. This is not a Trotskyist position."

No, it is not. But in following through with the fusion notwithstanding, the "oppositionists" demonstrated they were more frightened of finding themselves outside the USec than averse to becoming *conscious* traitors to the revolutionary program. Exploiting this weakness, the pro-fusionists lost no opportunity to solemnly invoke the "unfortunate fate for those comrades who might choose at the conference *not* to fuse and to leave the new fused section of the Fourth International altogether. They will find themselves in a political desert and ... inevitably ... in a dead-end sect" (*JDB* no 11, January 1978). For those not conversant with the meaning of "dead-end sect" in Pabloist jargon, CL leader Lee W acknowledged in a backhanded way the identity of the only credible left alternative to USec tailism: "The Spartacist League [SL] is a good example of the effectiveness of 'revolutionary' resolution-mongering in trade unions and mass campaigns -- no one, particularly worker militants, takes them seriously" ("How not to build the anti-uranium movement: a reply", *JDB* no 12, January 1978).

Clearly the leaders of this newly fused "broad union" of social democracy take the threat of revolutionary Trotskyism more seriously than they are willing to let on to their ranks. It is no accident that the hesitant and truncated if accurate characterisations of SWP politics by the "opposition" sound like a distant and broken echo of SL politics. The SL and the international Spartacist tendency (iSt) have provided the only consistent, revolutionary programmatic alternative to the USec swamp, to both the tame reformism of the LTF and the eclectic tailism of Mandel. Dozens of subjectively revolutionary USec militants in a number of countries, including Australia, repelled by the USec's cynical masquerade, have been won over to the genuine Trotskyism of the iSt.

Thus despite all protestations to the contrary the SWP leadership itself is compelled in its own

way to take the SL "seriously", as revealed in the only eventful moment of the dreary week-long conference. When, shortly before the conference proceedings began, SWP national secretary Jim Percy discovered that the SL had rented a room in the same public facilities, adjacent to the con-



SWP leader Jim Percy hailing self-liquidation of CL. The ex-CL is now only a mention on *Direct Action* masthead.

ference venue, in order to make Trotskyist literature available to conference participants, he went into a livid rage and proceeded to do in the SL supporters to the facility administrator and his security cop (see "Letter to the SWP", this issue)!

The first order of business at the conference then was an announcement that "the administration has been informed of their [the SL's] motives [?!] for being here ... [and] they have now been removed". When a long-time fellow traveller of the CL, Betty Hounslow, had moments earlier attempted to register a protest against this un-

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Percy calls cops on Spartacist League

Letter to the SWP

Sydney
12 January 1978

Comrades:

On the morning of Sunday, 8 January, immediately preceding the opening of your joint "Fusion Conference" with the ex-Communist League, Socialist Workers Party national secretary, Jim Percy, called in the bourgeois authorities -- the conference-site administration and its security police -- against supporters of the Spartacist League. Fitting inaugural though it was for your reformist fusion, Percy's reprehensible and criminally dangerous breach of workers democracy and fundamental proletarian principle can elicit only scorn from serious leftists and class-conscious workers.

Failing to intimidate SL supporters with his threat that, "You either go quietly or unquietly!", Percy strutted straight over to the administrator to have him revoke a room previously rented by the SL and expel our supporters from the facilities. How glaringly cynical your claim to Trotskyism! Not even when the administrator -- in Percy's presence -- threatened to have our comrades physically removed by the local cops did Percy register a protest!

Before the administrator and his security cop Percy falsely, brazenly accused the SL supporters of being there to harass conference participants. Prominent SWPer Jamie Doughney denounced our comrades as "provocateurs" and their presence as a "security risk", claiming the SL was there to "spy" on the internal proceedings of the conference. We were slanderously accused of having rented the room under false pretences by falsely associating ourselves with the "Youth Alliance" (!) conference. We demand that these unfounded slanders be publicly and formally retracted.

The facts in the matter are far more straight-

forward than this jumble of lies. The SL rented a room in its own name. The administrator himself admitted to an SL supporter that at no time had our comrades either stated or implied any connection with the "Youth Alliance" conference. (Even the most gullible SWPer would have to swallow hard to digest the charge that the SL would under any circumstances claim to be associated with the diehard-reformist SWP.) From the start, we told the SWP leadership what our intentions were: to display and distribute our literature in our room and in clearly public areas and to discuss our politics with interested conference participants. Even the Communist Party does not prevent opponent working-class tendencies from distributing literature outside its national conferences -- as the SWP well knows from itself having exercised this right.

The claptrap about "security" is absurd on the face of it. There was at least one other conference. Continued on page seven

Spartacist
(Fourth Internationalist)

English-language
organ of the
Interim Secretariat
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Spartacist tendency

(northern) Autumn 1977
price: 50 cents

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Pinochet's plebiscite farce

Chile — first cracks in junta rule

The January 4 plebiscite orchestrated by General Pinochet, brutish Caesar of the military junta which for the past four years has ravaged the working people of Chile, is a clear indication of the deepening isolation of the bonapartist regime and particularly of its strongman. The rigged results were universally discounted, even by the US State Department, given the obvious impossibility of anything even pretending to be an expression of the popular will under present conditions in Chile. Rather than masking the dictatorship with a veil of democratic approval, the stacked "vote" only succeeded in recalling other unsavory plebiscitary regimes (from Napoleon III, who had his 1851 coup "approved" and himself declared emperor, to similar "consultations" ratifying acts of force by the Nazis).

Most importantly the hopeless attempt to "legitimize" the pinochetista dictatorship unleashed the first open anti-junta demonstrations since the bloody 1973 coup drove all opposition underground. Just in recent months the first limited expressions of mass discontent saw the light of day, braving the ever present threat of

proletariat of the threat posed by the reformists' plans. Talk of a "peaceful transition to democracy" is a deceitful lie! Do not forget where the "peaceful road to socialism" led to: 11 September 1973 and the massacre of thousands of unarmed leaderless workers. The bourgeoisie will not make a present of the democratic liberties so fervently desired by the Chilean masses,

ultra-rightist organization Patria y Libertad (Fatherland and Freedom) is now opposing the junta.

The different pressures resulting from the current situation are reflected within the junta, and we see Pinochet balancing on a trapeze that is already rather frayed. Both General Leigh and

by the Organizacion Trotskista Revolucionaria de Chile

for it fears above all the revolutionary potential of an aroused working class. That is why it overwhelmingly backed the 1973 coup and will call forth another counterrevolutionary slaughter if necessary to prevent the masses from "going too far" in the course of overthrowing the murderous junta. The watchword of Leninist revolutionaries is and must remain: Smash the bloody junta through workers revolution!...

The Stalinists and social democrats falsely label [the junta] "fascist" in order to excuse their "anti-fascist" fronts with sectors of the bourgeoisie. But although the 11 September coup

Admiral Merino of the Navy have come out against the plebiscite. The motives are not the same: Merino has always acted directly on the orders of the Pentagon and the CIA, while the air force commandant has been the spokesman for a corporatist policy, calling for more representation for the *gremios* (business and professional associations) in search of mass support, thereby appearing as the representative of the fascists of Pablo Rodriguez (leader of Patria y Libertad). Pinochet opposes such a change of course, and it is in this framework that he called his "national consultation" as a desperate attempt at self-defense.

The motion approved by the United Nations, condemning Chile for its continuous violation of human rights, reportedly "angered" President Pinochet. The latter decided to respond with his plebiscite, subsequently rebaptized "national consultation", in which every citizen was called upon to declare "if he backs the president of the republic", or if instead he supports the UN's pretensions "to impose upon us from the outside our future destiny".

As Trotskyist militants we do not place an ounce of confidence in the international organization of the bourgeoisies -- in which the representatives of the ruling bureaucracies of the degenerated and deformed workers states also participate. Moreover, this UN resolution is part of Jimmy Carter's anti-communist campaign of defense of "human rights". The principal target of this campaign is the Soviet Union and its satellites, and its aim is to "morally" rearm Yankee imperialism, weakened after its humiliating defeat in Indochina. In this context we reject the crocodile tears coming from one of the principal authors of the present situation in Chile and the main counterrevolutionary force on a world scale; and at the same time rejecting the jingoism of the "consul" Augusto Pinochet....

The muzzled Chilean press, entirely pro-government to one degree or another, was flooded with propaganda for a "yes" vote. The threat of violence against opponents of the regime was barely disguised. To prevent a massive boycott voting was made obligatory. At the time of casting a ballot each individual's identity card would be punched and marked with a special stamp; those who failed to present themselves at the



Junta chiefs (from left): Leigh, Pinochet, Merino.

deadly repression. In November copper miners at the huge El Teniente mine went on strike, obtaining payment of bonuses due to them. A week later 100 relatives of "disappeared" detainees gathered outside the foreign ministry. In response to the announcement of the plebiscite, for four straight days supporters of the Christian Democratic Party (DC) leafleted for a "no" vote, producing some arrests and small confrontations with the police. And on January 3 an estimated 500 leftists marched through downtown Santiago and demonstrated in front of La Moneda [the burned-out former presidential palace].

The farcical "national consultation" of the tyrant Pinochet constituted a setback for his ambitions of personal grandeur and discredited the junta as a whole. The exercise laid bare the bankruptcy of a regime which has embarked on a deliberate program of *deindustrialization*, perhaps the only country in the world where a government has produced large-scale starvation among the poor as a conscious policy; of a dictatorship which openly imitated the Nazi Reich, concentration camps and all, in its policies of exterminating left-wing opponents. This failure for the government will hearten opponents of the junta, and revolutionaries must make use of this to work for the political reawakening and rearmament of the Chilean proletariat.

However, far from awakening this powerful giant, the only social force which can put an end to military dictatorships, the reformist Communist (PCCh) and Socialist (PS) parties are working at a frenzied pace to forge new chains to tie the Chilean workers to the class enemy. This time the alliance is to include not only the radicals and dissident Christian Democrats but the DC itself, including ex-president Frei who played a key role in fomenting the 1973 coup; and "democratic sectors" of the officer corps, meaning any of the blood-soaked generals and admirals who are willing to ditch the sinking Pinochet and agree to a limited "liberalization" of the regime, roughly analogous to the Caetano continuation of the Salazarist dictatorship in Portugal.

It is our duty as revolutionaries of the working class to warn the tragically suffering laboring masses of Chile and the entire world

was applauded by the imperialists and the domestic bourgeoisie, along with important segments of the petty bourgeoisie, the military government has never enjoyed a broad base of active social support, in contrast to the fascist movements which took power in Italy and Germany based on the mass mobilization of enraged petty bourgeois....

For Marxists the Pinochet junta is a *bonapartist* regime, in which a narrow group or even a single individual attempts to set itself above the normal tugging and pulling of competing class forces, expressed through the mechanisms of bourgeois democracy, to act as supreme arbiter and protector of capitalist class interests. In the present case, it differs from a traditional Latin American caudillo (from Rosas to Somoza or Stroessner) in that the officer corps of the armed forces -- the very essence of the state -- directly assumed governmental power in the face of increasingly sharp class conflicts.

Moreover, the junta's economic model is sharply different from the corporatist regimes of fascist Italy and Germany. The "shock treatment" of Nobel Prize winner Milton Friedman, based on a program of "free market" liberalism (free trade and export stimulation, devaluations "mini" and otherwise), has been unable to overcome runaway inflation and despite optimistic government figures the foreign debt is reaching mammoth proportions. It all comes down to unloading the burden of the budget deficits on the backs of the working class and petty bourgeoisie.

While benefiting a few monopolies and of course the "multinationals", this policy has led to a serious decline in industrial production and large numbers of bankruptcies. Thus the policy of the "hard-line" sectors of the junta -- ie, Pinochet -- is being challenged by important sectors of the bourgeoisie and by small businessmen and property owners. Ironically these are many of the same forces who actively worked for the 1973 coup through their "destabilization" (employers' work stoppages by truck owners, shop owners, professionals, etc). The DC proposes to lead this movement and with his document, "This Is My Reply", Eduardo Frei made his public debut on the field of opposition. Even the criminal



Book burning in Santiago after coup.

polls (where "suspected subversives" could be easily arrested) had one week to explain why to the authorities or else their papers would become void....

The Christian Democrats came out against the referendum because it was not "clear and legitimate, nor does it represent the sovereign will of the people"... Rather, the Christian Democrats' passage into active opposition over the issue of the plebiscite was most likely an integral part of the opposition to Pinochet's maneuver by a section of the junta. And it was certainly not unrelated to the occasional notes of displeasure emanating from the State Department. The picture of an emerging alliance running from the fascists through General Leigh to the DC should not be surprising. Both Patria y Libertad and the Christian Democrats have received fabulous sums from the US in the past, and Frei (together with other DC leaders) started his political career in the fascistic Falange. During the Allende period the DC's ties to the *gremios* provided the meeting ground between these enthusiasts of the "Alliance for Progress", the CIA and open fascists.

The left and the Pinochet plebiscite

Likewise the parties of the UP [Unidad Popular, Salvador Allende's popular front] and the MIR came out against the plebiscite at various levels. According to press reports the Communist Party, the MIR and the Radical Party called for a "no" vote, while the Socialist Party called for a boycott of the plebiscite. A joint statement of the UP (signed by the PCCh, the Radicals, MAPU [United Popular Action Movement -- a "Marxist-Leninist" split-off from the DC], the IC [Christian Left -- a later Christian Democratic split from the DC] and independents) denounced the "vote" as "a simple masquerade of the purest Hitler-Franco variety". However, the UP, like Frei, made clear that its orientation was toward the opposition against Pinochet's maneuver within the junta. "The armed forces", it said, "cannot continue lending their support to this demented policy, which has brought about such a dangerous situation ... choosing the path of provoking the international community" (quoted in *Mundo Obrero* [Madrid], 5-11 January 1978)....

There is no doubt that the plebiscite was unilaterally called by Pinochet and represents his last card in this game to strengthen his position and overcome his current crisis. The "consultation" is nothing but a monstrous fraud and the Chilean working class and other exploited sectors can only repudiate this masquerade, whose result, of course, was known beforehand. Where possible, revolutionaries would seek to express this repudiation in boycotting the phony plebiscite. But the government announced that whoever did not



El Teniente miner's strike in 1973 - denounced by Stalinists as "fascist".

participate in the referendum would thereby void his identity card. A general slogan of boycott could bring serious consequences, involving isolation from workplaces and legally could also lead to prison and/or deportation. Where it is not possible to boycott the plebiscite, the proletariat and all the exploited should express their rejection of the Pinochet farce by casting a blank ballot. In no case can we vote "no" since this would endorse the electoral procedure.

It is basically the political and organizational situation of the working class which at present makes it impossible to advance more resolutely in mobilizing against the junta. And it is due to the betrayals of the workers' leaders who seek an alliance with the bourgeoisie that the proletariat today finds itself politically disorganized....

On October 12 the DC issued its first formal declaration of opposition to Pinochet, entitled "Patria Para Todos" (Fatherland for All). This statement calls for a gradual transfer of power to a civilian government, the first step being the lifting of the state of siege. While rejecting any "illegal conspiracy" against the regime, it says a constitutional assembly should be called within a year to reform the 1925 constitution. Following this a new government would be elected to succeed the junta. In other words,

the military dictatorship would be recognized as legitimate and it would continue to rule throughout this period! The "constitutional assembly" proposed by Frei would have no more power than the tsarist Dumas; when the autocratic regime which holds the reins of power digs in its heels, this sand-box assembly could either acquiesce or be dissolved.

In response to the Christian Democrats' "Patria Para Todos" declaration, Corvalan, speaking in Paris in December, proposed the following: "... a democratic government, widely representative, on the basis of an understanding, an al-



Cops tear-gas leftists during Allende period.

liance between the UP and the DC, and with the participation of democratic sectors of the Armed Forces". This is the same treacherous line which these gentlemen imposed during the Allende government, only then it was the "constitutionalist" officers who received their praise; among them one of the most prominent was ... Augusto Pinochet.

The UP is seeking an alliance with Frei and the Christian Democrats just as they did in the last months before the coup. But the MIR, which still wants to play at "ultra-leftism", is also a vital part of this anti-working-class chorus. In a MIR bulletin of September 1977 we read: "The interior secretariat of the MIR ... renews its call to the parties of the UP and democratic sectors of the PDC to make the greatest effort so that 1977 can be the year of the definitive consolidation of the unity of the people and of the resistance". The Chilean Castroists think they can fool the proletariat with references to the "democratic sectors" of the DC. But didn't these "democrats" participate, directly or indirectly, in the preparation of the military coup? If one didn't already know the politics of these appendages of Stalinism one could think that they had been hoodwinked. Not at all! Comrades of the MIR, one does not fight the bourgeoisie with a bourgeois program, and it is just such a minimum program which you signed with the UP in August 1977. Falling into line with the Christian Democrats' call for a glorified Duma, this joint platform even dropped the revolutionary democratic demand for a constituent assembly.

The proletariat must not allow itself to be dragged down by popular frontism. Democratic and trade-union rights will not be voluntarily granted by the bourgeoisie, but must be wrenched from them by the workers mobilized together with all the exploited. We demand freedom for all prisoners held under the rightist repression, legalization of the workers' political and trade-union organizations, as well as amnesty and the right to return to Chile for all those forced

into exile by the junta's repression. Counterposed to reformist adaptations to the bourgeoisie's program, as Trotskyists we raise the demand for a constituent assembly with full powers, directly and secretly elected by universal suffrage. A genuine constituent assembly by definition could only be convoked under conditions of full democratic liberties, permitting the participation of all the parties of the working class. Thus it requires as a precondition the revolutionary overthrow of the junta, something which the DC and the reformists, despite their lengthy list of democratic demands, fail to mention.

Not by democratic demands alone ...

The proletariat does not turn its back on other social sectors that want to struggle alongside it. However, our espousal of revolutionary democratic demands is set in the framework of a program of transitional demands incorporating the needs and aspirations of the peasantry and other exploited sectors of the petty bourgeoisie and leading to the historic objectives of the proletariat: destruction of the bourgeois state through the taking of power by the workers and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

We fight for the power of soviets, or workers and peasants councils. This type of class organization was represented in embryo in Chile by the *cordones industriales* (industrial belts) which arose after November 1972. But the *cordones* appeared at a time of mounting workers struggles (and despite the treacherous misleaders). Conditions prevailing in Chile today are very different from what existed in early 1973; we presently face the full fury of a counterrevolutionary regime, under which even the most minimal democratic liberties have been abolished. Under one of the harshest reactionary dictatorships history has known, the political reorganization of the working class must take place against the bourgeoisie which is supported by the reformist bureaucracies.

A dramatic proof that the struggle against the junta cannot be limited to democratic demands was provided by the 12-day strike by the El Teniente copper miners in November. This walkout involving hundreds of workers took place against the efforts of the puppet "union" leaders imposed by the junta. While granting demands for payment of productivity bonuses due the workers, Pinochet subsequently exiled several of the Christian Democratic miners union leaders to the far north of the country. Today the reformists and centrists hail the latest El Teniente strike as a symbol of "the resistance". Yet the Stalinists and social democrats raise no demands for working-class struggle, such as the fight for a sliding scale of wages and hours to protect against inflation and open jobs for the unemployed.

When the El Teniente workers struck during the UP regime (April-May 1973) in defense of their sliding scale of wages (cost-of-living escalator), the Trotskyists of the international Spartacist tendency were among the very few working-class organizations which defended the miners' just struggle to protect this union gain, won from the former US bosses through hard fights, against the popular front's anti-working-class austerity and speed-up program (see "Defend Chilean Miners' Strike", *Workers Vanguard* no 23, 22 June 1973). A revolutionary leadership of the unions would have extended the strike, demanding a workers government and expropriation of all industry. This would quickly scuttle the reactionaries' attempts to use the strike for their own purposes. In contrast, Allende denounced the strikers as a "privileged sector" while the Stalinists called them out-and-out "fascists" and told their militants to break the strike. Thus only the Trotskyists can stand before the El Teniente miners today and tell them to place no confidence in their Christian Democratic misleaders; the parties of the UP and the MIR would simply be dismissed as scabs.

For Leninists democratic demands are a subordinate part of the workers' *class* program. As Trotsky wrote of the role of democratic demands in fascist-ruled countries: "But the formulas of democracy (freedom of press, the right to union-

Continued on page six

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DECLARACION DE RELACIONES FRATERNALES entre la Organización Trotskista Revolucionaria de Chile y la tendencia espartacista internacional....2

Chile . . .

Continued from page five

ize, etc) mean for us only incidental or episodic slogans in the independent movement of the proletariat and not a democratic noose fastened to the neck of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie's agents (Spain!)" (*Transitional Program*). In countries with a bourgeois-democratic tradition and a politically advanced working class, such as Chile, the demand for a constituent assembly is not a fundamental part of the proletarian program. Thus following the junta takeover, the IS did not raise this slogan. We raise it tactically at present against the bourgeoisie's efforts, aided by their agents in the workers movement, to make a pact with sectors of the military. Our purpose is to expose the bourgeoisie's fear of revolutionary democracy.

While calling for a constituent assembly, Marxists must point out that the bourgeoisie fears this revolutionary democratic demand, preferring deals with the "democratic" generals; and that even if it were convened, the exploiters would seek to frustrate even the most fundamental

Sydney Uni witchhunt Defend anti-Eysenck protestors

The Sydney University administration launched a widespread witchhunt against the student left over the summer vacation. Sixteen students — including supporters of the Communist Group (CG — associated with the Communist Party), International Socialists (IS) and the ex-Communist League (now part of the Socialist Workers Party), as well as a number of independent leftists — were "tried" by the administration for alleged involvement in demonstrations against visiting racist academic, Hans Eysenck. So blatant was the frame-up that even the charges which the administration concocted — among them "impeding the dissemination of knowledge", "insulting a distinguished academic visitor", "chanting", "shouting" and "assault" — can only be taken as a provocation to anyone concerned with democratic rights.

The spurious "knowledge" disseminated by this "distinguished academic" racist consists primarily of charlatan psychological "theories" which seek to justify the oppression of racial minorities under capitalism by pointing to their supposedly lower, genetically determined "intelligence". In other words, says Eysenck, if you are a victim of capitalist oppression, it's your own fault! The Sydney University Spartacist Club solidarised with the demonstrations against this thoroughly insulting apologist for racial oppression, but opposed the strategy of preventing him from speaking. Unlike fascists and racist action groups, whom the workers movement must whenever possible deny a platform from which to mobilise their race-hate gangs, racist ideologues like Eysenck are simply peddling a cruder version of what all bourgeois "social science" amounts to. The scientific pretensions of ideological flunkies of the bourgeoisie can and must be torn to shreds through trenchant materialist refutation, just as Marx discredited the reactionary economist Malthus. However racist ideology is but a reflection of material oppression, which can only be ended through a proletarian revolution.

The star-chamber "trials" were deliberately held over summer vacation to avoid student opposition and played out behind closed doors with a self-appointed judge, jury and executioner all in the person of the acting vice-chancellor, O'Neill. "Severe reprimands" and fines up to \$100 were meted out to the student defendants; particular students were singled out for suspensions of up to two years. While individual students plan to appeal the sentences, it would be foolhardy to place any reliance in such "legal" processes. The administration must be forced to reverse these outrageous sentences through the mobilisation of effective, vigorous protest actions. The witchhunt must be stopped!

When the Spartacist Club proposed at a 6 January defence meeting that a demonstration be organised and protest telegrams solicited, CG leader Gary Nicholls argued against both, on the basis that such actions would only harden the administration's stance! CLer Liam Gash, obviously warming to his imminent future in the "peaceful, legal" Socialist Workers Party, joined the CG in opposing any action proposal. Gash later admitted to Spartacist Club members, "I don't want to lose my neck". The IS, prominent in the original protest against Eysenck, opposed a demonstration for fear that it might be small — "a show of weakness" as one ISer later put it. But no clearer show of weakness could be transmitted than the IS's own complete dive on defence of the victimised students — their own members included — failing even to mention it in the *Battler* which appeared following the administration proceedings.

It is a dangerous reformist illusion that the bourgeois university administration will soften in its resolve to suppress the left if it is not met with vigorous opposition. It is not only the necks of the present defendants which are at stake but of all left-wing tendencies on campus. A massive campaign must be mobilised now to force the administration to back down! Drop all the charges! Reverse all the sentences! Stop the witch-hunt!

democratic measures until their class dictatorship is finally broken (witness the fate of the timid Portuguese agrarian reform, for instance). Therefore we simultaneously call on the proletariat to struggle for the total eradication of the latifundia through agrarian revolution, expropriating the estates and handing over the land to poor peasants and agricultural workers; for the expropriation of industry and finance; for workers control of production; for a soviet workers government.

Build a Chilean revolutionary Trotskyist party!

The working masses cannot spontaneously achieve these things; it is essential first of all to break from the class-collaborationist bureaucracies who are responsible for the defeat, with those who delivered the proletariat, bound hand and foot, to the butchers of the junta. In the struggle to construct an authentic Trotskyist leadership a major obstacle is the centrist conglomeration, those half-way "critics" of popular frontism who are afraid to make a sharp break with the reformist traitors. Thus while the MIR continually tailed the UP, the Liga Comunista de Chile (LCC — a group created out of thin air by the United Secretariat of Ernest Mandel) crawled after the MIR. The LCC refuses to characterize the Unidad Popular as a popular front (labeling it reformist), and follows the line of their French comrades, the LCR, who will call for votes to candidates of the Union of the Left in the March elections. The Mandelites' periodic adventurist excesses, such as calling for a "revolutionary general strike" in the period after the coup, only serve to cover their political capitulation....

As Chilean Leninists our struggle is based on the application of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, the understanding that only the proletariat under a revolutionary leadership can accomplish the fundamental democratic tasks — beginning with the revolutionary overthrow of the murderous Pinochet junta — and achieve socialism through an uninterrupted process of struggle against capitalism. The revolutionary vanguard of the working class will be constructed by wrenching the masses from the reformists, not by capitulating to them as do the centrists. The demand "Break with the bourgeoisie!" — raised in a contradictory manner by the *cordones industriales* in the last few weeks before the coup — is a call to break the working class from the death-grip of the social-traitors and embrace the program of permanent revolution.

- No To Pinochet's Electoral Farce!
- For a Constituent Assembly -- Smash the Junta Through Workers Revolution!
- Build a Chilean Revolutionary Trotskyist Party! Toward the Rebirth of the Fourth International!

Organizacion Trotskista
Revolucionaria de Chile,
sympathizing section of the
international Spartacist tendency

January 1978

(excerpted from *Workers Vanguard* no 190, 27 January 1978)

ALP . . .

Continued from page eight

reforms even in the short term. But in this epoch no lasting reform can be secured short of proletarian revolution.

On the other hand, precisely because the ALP is a bourgeois workers party whose historic function is to mediate the class struggle into "safe" parliamentary channels, the present right shift in the shading of the leadership is hardly permanent. When faced with a significant upsurge of working-class activity the ALP will dust off its "socialist" rhetoric and push "left" fakers like Uren to the forefront in order to limit the workers' struggles. The left Laborism of the CPA, IS, Socialist Workers Party et al will only help the social-democratic betrayers carry out such a manoeuvre.

The right-wing character of the present ALP leadership, particularly in the event of an upsurge of economic struggle, may well induce the emergence of syndicalist trends hoping — under the guise of touting rank-and-file militancy — to ride the coattails of seemingly "militant" union bureaucrats reacting to pressure from below. But the trade-union bureaucracy is the other head of the social-democratic hydra, and trade-union economism goes hand-in-hand with parliamentarist reformism. The Callaghan Labour government was able to impose the bitter austerity measures of the "social contract" upon the British workers only because Callaghan's partners in the trade-union bureaucracy assured its enforcement. In the absence of a revolutionary leadership, "the trade unions of our time", as Trotsky noted, "serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing

revolution" ("Trade unions in the epoch of imperialist decay", 1940).

The proletarian vanguard must not become mesmerised by the everchanging hues of Labor reformism. But exposing the parliamentary treachery of the ALP — using every genuine opportunity to set the base against the top — necessitates a simultaneous political struggle to replace the trade-union bureaucracy with a revolutionary leadership firmly committed to the overthrow of the bourgeois state. The communist revolution can only be made over the political corpse of social democracy — "left" or right, parliamentarist or economist. ■

Indochina . . .

Continued from page two

action may well have been affected by the apparent collapse of Hanoi's hopes for the emergence of a more amenable pro-Vietnamese regime in Phnom Penh. In denouncing "a small group of traitors at the service of the Vietnamese and the expansionists" who had attempted to overthrow the government in 1975 and 1976, Samphan's statement virtually confirmed consistent reports that a savage blood-purge swept through Khmer Rouge ranks last April-May. Apparently the last of the thousands of Cambodian Stalinist cadre trained in Vietnam were annihilated and total power consolidated in the hands of the clique around party secretary Pol Pot.

Whatever the truth of recent reports that the SRV has established rival administrations staffed by pro-Vietnamese Cambodians in the occupied areas, there remains plenty of raw material for such a project. In the last two years tens of thousands of Cambodians have fled to southern Vietnam. This unprecedented migration is testimony that despite the centuries-old national animosities, conditions in the SRV appear vastly preferable to masses of Cambodians when compared to the total regimentation of the far more backward workers state there (see "Cambodia: Peasant Stalinism run amok", *ASP* no 49, December 1977). Little wonder that the present Khmer ruling group so fears a Vietnamese-backed "resistance" movement — a fear expressed in their constant refrain that Hanoi is attempting to swallow "Democratic Kampuchea" in a Vietnam-dominated Indochina federation. Within the framework of Stalinist rule such a federation would indeed mean the chauvinist domination of the Vietnamese.

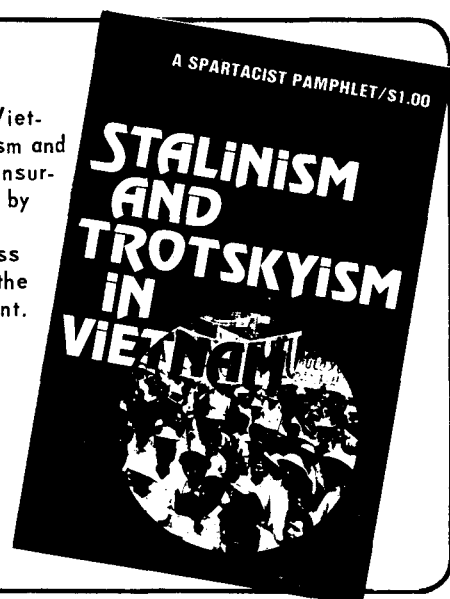
Devoid of a Trotskyist analysis, yesterday's cheerleaders of the Indochinese Stalinist "liberation fighters" can only throw up their hands at this bloody squabbling among their tarnished heroes. Thus the "independently" social-democratic Communist Party of Australia moans that, "The present conflict saddens socialists and national liberation supporters" (*Tribune*, 18 January). Not that some so-called "Trotskyists" are not afflicted by this problem. After years of peddling illusions in the "revolutionary" butchers of the Vietnamese Trotskyists, French Mandelitte leader Pierre Rousset now asks plaintively: "The death of Internationalism?" (*Rouge*, 2 January). How "bitter", anguishes Rousset, as he pleads with the Stalinist nationalists for a "systematic refurbishing of true internationalism"! The Healyite Socialist Labour League, on the other hand, operating on the assumption that its readership suffers from permanent amnesia, has finally decided, after years of lauding them to the skies as "revolutionaries", that the now-discredited Indochinese Stalinists are indeed ... Stalinists (*Workers News*, 13 January)!

It was in large measure the prevalence of such opportunist counterfeit "Trotskyism" that enabled Maoism to attract many subjectively revolutionary New Left anti-war activists. In the closing months of 1977 a split occurred in Australian Maoist ranks, with apparently a number of the "Cultural Revolution" generation being

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purged from the CPA (ML). While the political basis of the split is still unclear, the dissident Maoists appear to remain locked into an essentially Stalinist worldview. But there could be no more dramatic and clearcut confirmation of the Trotskyist analysis of Stalinism as anti-internationalist and counterrevolutionary than the truly obscene spectacle of Indochinese toilers being sent to die and to kill each other in the cause of protecting "sacred national territory". For those dissidents who maintain a revolutionary impulse, who may be recoiling in horror at the reactionary logic of Mao's "Three Worlds Theory", there is a path to proletarian internationalism. They must break from the nationalist-Stalinist doctrine of "socialism in one country", and its menshevik two-stage conception of revolution, toward Trotskyism.

Throughout the period of the anti-war movement, only the international Spartacist tendency upheld the banner of revolutionary Trotskyism, standing solidly with the Indochinese masses against the brutal imperialists and their hirelings while relentlessly exposing the class-collaborationist betrayals of their Stalinist misleaders. We rejoiced over the stunning defeat of US imperialism in Indochina in 1975. But while the rest of the left was simply adulatory toward the victorious Stalinist parties, we warned our Indochinese class brothers and sisters against the anti-proletarian role of the Stalinists:

"The regime which they establish does not, and cannot, base itself on organs of proletarian democracy, but rather on the fiat of a bonapartist bureaucracy. The task of Marxists in Vietnam and Cambodia today is to take forward the revolutionary struggle by fighting for a workers political revolution to overthrow the bureaucracy, demanding the creation of democratic workers councils as the basis of the new state apparatus, and freedom for all parties which defend the revolution from counterrevolutionary attack. Above all, the struggle to go forward to the final victory over capitalism requires the construction of Trotskyist parties, in Indochina and throughout the world, as part of a reborn Fourth International." (*Workers Vanguard* no 68, 9 May 1975) ■

Communist League . . .

Continued from page three

abashedly open violation of workers democracy, she was peremptorily *dis-invited* to the conference! But not one member of the SWP/CL rose from the floor to demand an accounting from Percy for calling in the cops against another working-class tendency. More than any of the documents or discussion, this one incident demonstrated both the thoroughly social-democratic character of the fusion and the timid nature of the opposition.

Overall, the opposition within the CL was a pale (and rather farcical) reflection of the "Principled Fusion Tendency" which arose within the Canadian Mandeliste Revolutionary Marxist Group in opposition to the reformist fusion there earlier last year. But the pathetic CL dissi-

Lift the ban on Horta!

On 9 January, the Fraser government announced its refusal to grant a visa to Jose Ramos Horta, United Nations representative of FRETILIN. The ban on Horta comes on top of the government's continuing efforts to shut down the Northern Territory radio transmitter which is FRETILIN's sole link with the outside world. While opposed to the petty-bourgeois nationalist politics of the FRETILIN leadership - which has helped seal off the Timorese masses from the Indonesian proletariat which alone has the power to destroy the Suharto dictatorship - the Spartacist League (SL) vigorously denounces this disgusting attempt to silence FRETILIN. The SL sent the following telegram to the minister of immigration, Mackellar:

"Demand visa be granted immediately to FRETILIN U.N. representative Jose Ramos Horta. Ban on Horta is an affront to Australian workers as well as oppressed Timorese masses."

The Horta ban was a prelude to Canberra's 20 January recognition of the Indonesian takeover of East Timor. Much of the Australian "left" has denounced this act as a new "Munich", with the Communist Party calling it an "infamous" and "unprincipled betrayal" of both Timor and Papua New Guinea. Indeed! How shameful for the Australian bourgeoisie to "betray" Timor and its very own New Guinean neo-colony and thus blot an otherwise exemplary record of "democratic goodwill" towards Asia, ie Malaya and Vietnam. Mini-imperialist Australian capitalism, whether its prime minister be a Whitlam or a Fraser, has been and cannot be anything but the most willing and ruthless exploiter and oppressor of the working masses of Asia and the Pacific region.

dents were incapable even of organising themselves into a tendency, confessing an inability "to clarify our areas of political agreement and disagreement" ("Call for the formation of a caucus", *JDB* no 9, December 1977)! By its refusal to base itself firmly on a *programmatic* struggle against the SWP and the reformist fusion, the opposition proved not only to be completely ineffectual, but wide open to cynical attacks for its unprincipled cowardice. CL top Ron P hypocritically pontificated that "It would be a serious mistake on the part of those hesitant about or opposed to the present course of fusion if any organisational question ... was seized upon to regroup people into any oppositional current. What is needed is clarity on the political issues through a stated position on the fusion" ("A reply to David F", *JDB* no 7, December 1977).

Among the oppositionists, only one, David F, made even a lame attempt to characterise the SWP: "I once held that they were reformist. Now I'm not sure and think that they're centrist..." ("Two weights, two measures?", *JDB* no 3, November 1977). Chiding David F for his bashfulness in characterising the SWP after years of observation, a reply to his document presented him with convincing "proof" that the SWP could not be reformist: "A study of the history of the FI will reveal that it is not at all inclined to tolerate reformist organisations in its midst.... The fact that no one is proposing to expel the SWP from the International may therefore be taken as evidence of the SWP's credentials" ("Use the other eye, Nelson", *JDB* no 3, November 1977). Determined not to be cornered into so foolhardy a position as denouncing the USec, the harried David F vehemently denied that he considers the SWP reformist and besides, "Even if [!] the SWP is centrist, since when has it been 'unprincipled' to fuse with such formations?" ("Shadow boxing as an art: the politics of Allen M and Ron P", *JDB* no 8, December 1977).

While the central CL leadership lauded the fusion to the skies, more trepidatious elements expressed the "need to discuss not only tendency rights but also faction rights and ... to be quite clear on what sort of airing the politics of the FI [ie the USec majority] would receive" ("On fusion", *JDB* no 2, November 1977). Finally, the real "intransigents" supported the "caucus", whose sole basis of existence was to plead for another six-month stay of execution. Accused of attempting to postpone the fusion interminably, they replied by proclaiming undying support for a "principled fusion" and unflinching commitment to a "united section".

Refusing to transcend their ingrained Pabloist opportunism and thus unwilling to break from the big-time (on a small scale) USec, the anti-fusion elements were reduced to arguing a pathetic series of organisational gripes about the "fusion process" and laying out petty, procedural criteria for what in their eyes would constitute a "principled fusion" between these two patently *unprincipled* organisations. Needless to say, the bloc of three arrayed against them -- the SWP leadership, the CL leadership and the SWP ranks -- was scarcely sympathetic to their appeals. Indeed, by the time of the conference the two leaderships were virtually indistinguishable politically.

The question of postponing the fusion never even came to a vote. The few remaining dissidents then made their pathetic last stand: attempting to have the SWP constitution amended so as to clearly specify that the newly fused organisation would abide by the international decisions of the USec and allow for factional rights outside pre-conference discussion. However such elementary Leninist norms as democratic centralism and factional rights have no relevance to the federalist, anti-Leninist USec, and an infuriated Jim Percy denounced them as the worst amendments ever put before the party!

A serious struggle against the fusion would have required a critical examination and repudiation of the politics not only of the SWP, but also of the no less opportunist CL. The SWP's staid reformism expresses its appetite to become the "left wing" of mainstream social democracy, itself a conduit to the liberal bourgeoisie. But the at-times "militant" centrism of the Mandeliste CL never got further than a difference in adaptation, attempting instead to pressure a politically undifferentiated "new mass vanguard" momentarily and empirically estranged from the mass party of reformism. The ease with which much of the ex-CL, "oppositionists" included, came to repudiate the original 1972 split from the then Socialist Workers League itself underscored the CL's failure to pose a revolutionary alternative. The CL dissidents thus found themselves in the unenviable position of fighting a thankless (and toothless) rearguard action for Mandelism, with Mandel poised against them.

The proletarian revolution will not be led by those who reject programmatic clarity and political honesty in favour of short-term expediency. The SWP and the USec can build only obstacles to the creation of a revolutionary workers party in Australia and to a genuine, re-

forged Fourth International. The SL's intransigent adherence to Trotskyist principles is the only road to those goals. ■

Letter . . .

Continued from page three

ence being held simultaneously at the same facilities -- the SWP made no attempt to have them expelled. For years our US comrades have set up literature tables at US SWP conferences; no charges of "spying" or "harassment" have ever been raised. In any case, it was the SWP leadership who endangered the security of both the SWP and the SL by running to the bourgeois authorities. It was Percy who blithely discussed "security" in the presence of the administrator and his security cop. No amount of self-serving lies propagated by your organisation can obscure this simple fact: the SWP *crossed the class line* to set the SL up for victimisation by the forces of bourgeois repression.

The real reason for the SWP's concern was revealed when an SL representative explained to Percy and the administrator that "Youth Alliance" conference participants were of course welcome to come to our room. "You see, you see", said a beaming Percy to the administrator, "Enough said!" Yes, we see ... that you are so concerned about any political contact between your followers and the Trotskyist SL that you are prepared to have the bourgeois cops intercede on your behalf!

Outrageous as Percy's actions were, they come as little surprise from one whose political tendency called for the US army, just returned from its slaughter of the workers and peasants of Indochina, to "protect" the black masses of Boston from attacks by racist thugs. From the tendency which went before a bourgeois court in the US and solemnly swore never to violate bourgeois legality and waded as a badge of good conduct its summary expulsion from its ranks of supporters of the then ersatz-guerrillaist Mandeliste wing of this farcical "International". The SWP's class-neutral reverence for the bourgeois state and its hirelings is a classical, definitive symptom of its social-democratic politics -- of the politics of the fusion consummated last Sunday. And Percy's virtually single-handed direction of the vendetta perpetrated against our comrades that day leaves no room for doubt as to who will be calling the shots and how in this newly fused organisation of small-fry Scheidemanns and Noskes.

Fraternally,
Marie Hotschilt
for the Spartacist League

US Healyite denied visa

According to an account in *Workers News* (12 January), the paper of the Healyite Socialist Labour League (SLL), Fred Mazelis, a leader of the Workers League -- the SLL's co-thinkers in the United States -- was refused a visa to enter Australia over the Christmas period. The sectarian Healyites, notorious for their political dishonesty, have flatly refused to tell us anything about the case. Nonetheless a ban upon any representative of a working-class tendency must be seen as an attack upon the working class as a whole. The Spartacist League vigorously protests against this thoroughly anti-democratic and anti-communist exclusion by the Fraser government.

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Whitlam quits, "lefts" routed: new fakers replace old

Is Labor moving right?

Gough Whitlam's resignation as parliamentary leader of the Australian Labor Party following its December election debacle was the occasion for a stream of eulogistic articles and editorials focusing on the "flawed grandeur" of the Whitlam era. End of an era or not, Whitlam had indeed been the dominant figure in the parliamentary party ever since his election as leader in 1966. It was Whitlam who revamped the party's policies to lead the ALP to government after 23 years of opposition, stood at the head of the Labor government for three years, and then led the ALP into two successive crushing defeats at the polls -- the worst in its history.

Labor's ignominious 50-seat defeat in December, coupled with the election of dour ex-cop Bill Hayden as Whitlam's replacement, has led to varied speculations in the bourgeois media on the electoral and political future of the ALP in this "post-Whitlam" period. But the self-serving advice of the daily newspapers that the ALP exorcise its "socialist" demon and sever its ties with the unions is intended primarily for mass consumption, a form of pressure on union bureaucrats and Labor politicians alike to behave themselves. Those publications aimed at a narrower bourgeois audience are more candid: "Never has there been less radicalism, less socialism, in the Labor Party than there is now" (*Financial Review*, 30 December 1977). The *Financial Review* adds:

"That is why 1977 has been such a watershed year for Australian politics and economics. We now have both major parties espousing what are in effect bipartisan economic policies. Each has to phrase its statements to reassure its own constituency but there is little difference in their actual views."

The ALP's would-be advisors on the "left" have come forward with their own suggestions for Labor's future in articles headed, "Why Labor lost" and "Which way forward for Labor now?" To those who are forever straining to push "socialist policies" on their cherished ALP, the deepening conservatism of the Labor tops expressed in Hayden's rise and the virtual rout of the ALP "lefts" is cause for bereavement or alarm. Hayden is "a man who must surely be in the Labor Party by accident", complained the International Socialists' (IS) *Battler* (17 December 1977), as though there is some reason



Whitlam as leader of the opposition with Australian imperialist troops in Vietnam.

for Hayden to feel unwelcome in the company of such staunch anti-capitalist fighters as Hawke and Whitlam and the rest of the ALP tops. The Communist Party's (CPA) *Tribune* (18 January) automatically registered pain at the demotion of ALP "left" Tom Uren, formerly deputy ALP leader, bemoaning it as a "conservative knee jerk".

The present Labor leaders -- Hayden, Bowen, Wriedt and Button -- certainly represent a more conservative style corresponding to a rightward

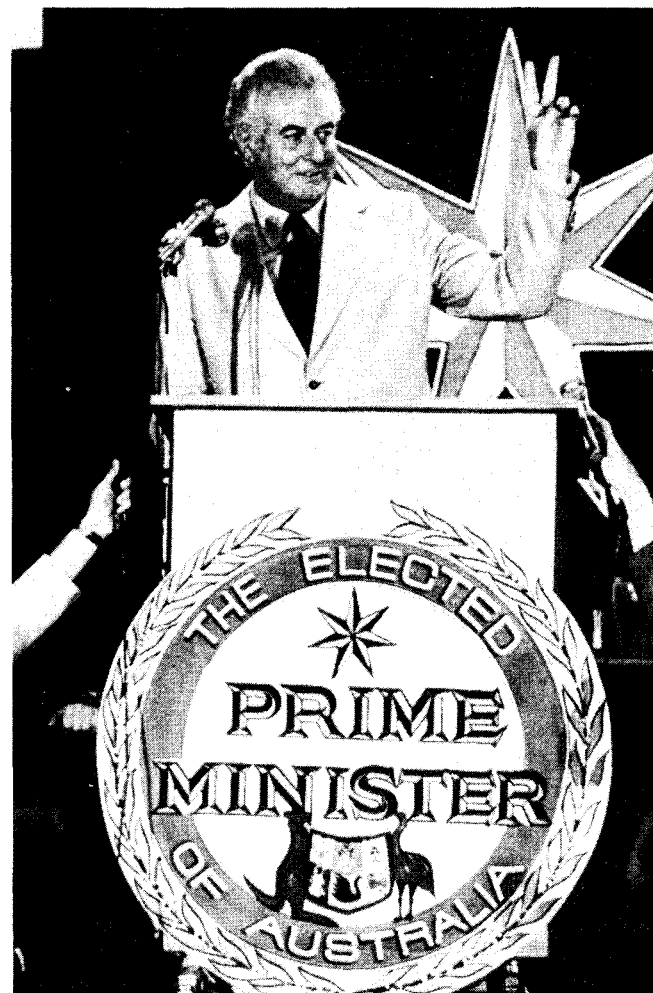
shift in ALP policies, though the change was fully supported, indeed inaugurated, by Whitlam. Thus Hayden denounces ALP policies of the past as "quasi-utopianism" and stresses that Labor must prove itself to the ruling class as "competent economic managers". But the indignation of the ALP's loyal "left" supporters notwithstanding, the leadership and policy shift changes nothing for the working class -- Hayden represents the same reformism adapted to different circumstances.

The Labor Party came to power in 1972 at a time of relative prosperity, riding a wave of enthusiasm as Whitlam promoted his populist-flavoured "new nationalism" and promised "innovative social planning". Labor promised to end the use of the anti-union penal powers (which meant little in practice -- the working class had already successfully defied them when Clarrie O'Shea was freed), to abolish conscription, to restore full employment.

Important elements of the ruling class -- including the ALP's current *bete noire*, Rupert Murdoch -- also backed Whitlam's bid for office. Following the volatile clash over penal powers in 1969 the capitalists feared another confrontation with the restive trade unions. The Labor Party, with its organic ties to the trade-union bureaucracy, promised to be a better instrument in power for policing the working class (through mediation) than the visibly exhausted L/NCP coalition led by the openly despised McMahon. At the same time, after 23 years of staid, conservative government, a large number of overdue reforms were required mainly to update Australian capitalism -- a less slavishly pro-US foreign policy; tariff reform; more money spent on social welfare, education, migrants and aboriginals; equal pay for women etc. None of these reforms posed any challenge to capitalism, and Whitlam went out of his way to reassure the bosses, by declaring for example that taxes on the wealthy and corporations were "already high enough". It was for the task of bourgeois reform that Whitlam had groomed the ALP, and it was that which he came to represent.

But the onset of the recession proved to be the "flaw" in the dubious "grandeur" of the ALP's reform promises. Already in late 1973 the Labor government had tried to lay the basis for a wage freeze through its Prices and Wages Referendum. By 1974, in the midst of an upsurge of strikes,

Clyde Cameron was bashing "sections of the union movement" for "bloody-mindedness", "selfishness" and for causing "hear anarchy", while Cairns was lecturing workers that they would just have to "accept" mass unemployment (see *ASP* no 12, September 1974). By 1975 Whitlam was blaming unemployment on "excessive wage demands": "Every increase in income for one man takes the job of another man" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 January 1975). The 1975 Hayden austerity budget cut deep into precisely those areas of expenditure and



Whitlam on the way out (1975).

reform which had been the government's proclaimed reason for existence back in 1972.

The change of gear demanded by a capitalist economy in recession threw the government into confusion as it sought to implement austerity and still maintain at least the appearance of a reform orientation. Dissatisfied with the ALP's insufficient control over its working-class base, the bourgeoisie demanded harsher measures to slash state expenditure and cut real wages -- measures for which its own parties were better suited. By late 1975, the government gave the appearance of a fumbling, directionless rabble -- an image both reflected in and moulded by the bourgeois press. Coming to power in 1972 Whitlam was presented as the cultured, intellectual leader confidently bringing Australia into the twentieth century. Now he was a clumsy buffoon, unable to control his team of reformist tinkerers. It was this growing press vendetta that set the stage for the deposing of Whitlam in late 1975.

Hayden, far from being a right-wing aberration in the ALP, is the natural heir to Whitlam. This is the ALP leader, Hayden assures the bourgeoisie, who best absorbed the lesson of attempting to go "too far, too fast". Himself once loosely associated with the "left", Hayden the architect of Medibank -- Whitlam's most vaunted reform -- became Hayden the architect of austerity.

To presently demand a "left" ALP leadership, as do the small-time reformists, as a means of resuscitating the ALP's reform orientation, is like trying to treat the measles by covering up the spots. The ALP has shifted right (and not very substantially) precisely because this makes more sense in the framework of reformism under current recession conditions (which include a working class demoralised by the toll which the recession has been allowed to take without any response from the bureaucrats). Thus the conservative tack of Hayden, Whitlam and company confirms the simple Marxist truth which the pseudo-revolutionaries -- committed to ever greater reforms as the path to "socialism" -- refuse to recognise: in the epoch of imperialist decay, reformism is a bankrupt strategy. Whitlam's reforms proved eminently reversible, as is true of all reforms under capitalism. Only a militant, mobilised proletariat can defend needed

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