

DIRECT ACTION

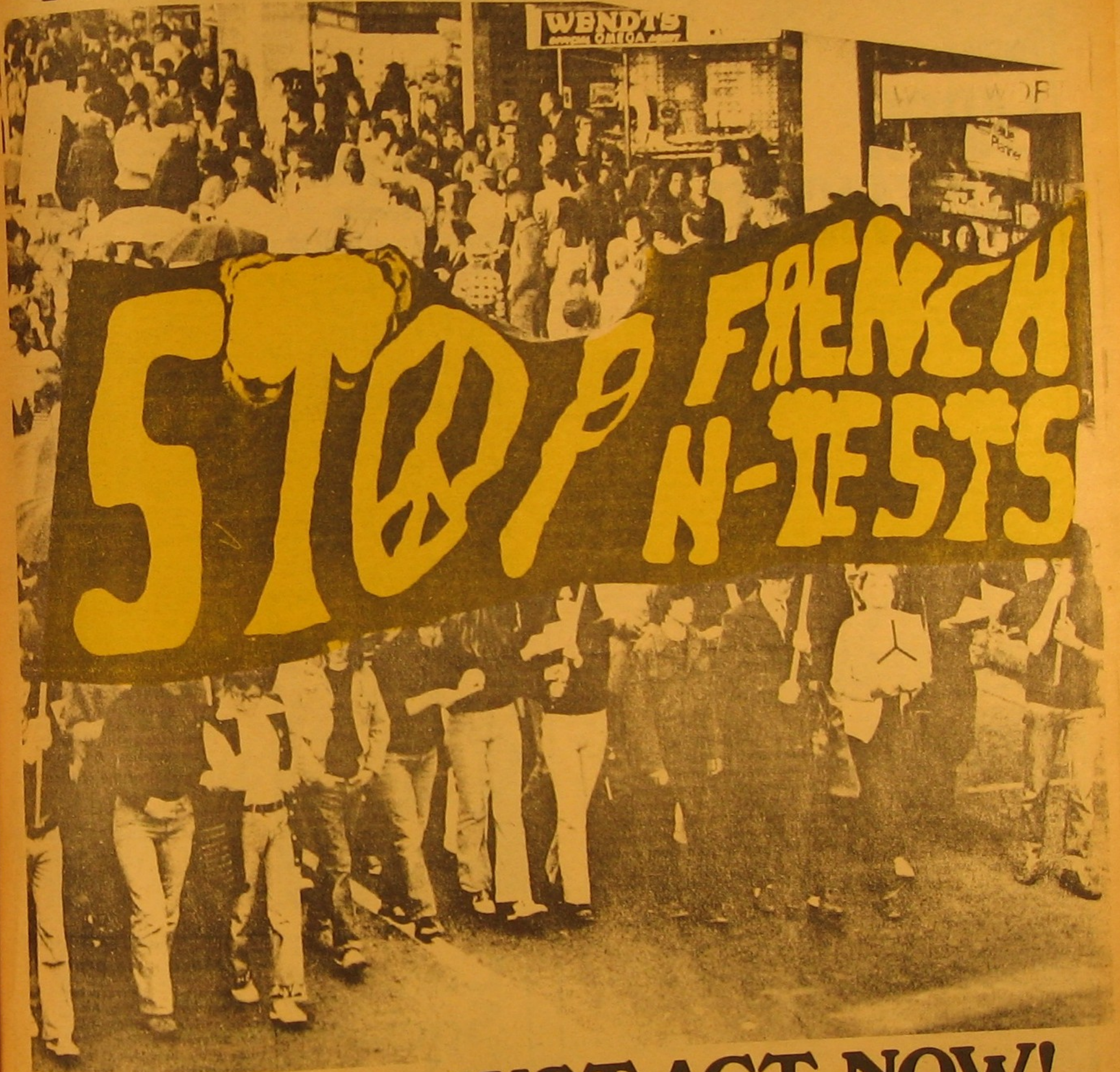
NO. 41

MAY 24 1973

20 CENTS

A SOCIALIST FORTNIGHTLY

NO MORE HIROSHIMAS!



LABOR MUST ACT NOW!

Abortion demo
set for June 30

Watergate Exposures
Unmask Capitalism

Why Labor Lost
Victorian Election

DIRECT ACTION

No. 41, May 24, 1973

Editor: John Percy. Managing Editor: Nita Keig.
Editorial Board: Minnie Cherry, Chris Graham, Tina Harsanyi,
Nita Keig, Jim Percy, John Percy, Sol Salby, Frans Timmerman.

All correspondence to: 139 St John's Rd, Glebe, 2037. Ph. (02) 660 6672

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EDITORIAL

LABOR MUST FIGHT!

The decisions to be made by the Labor Government in the coming period are of crucial importance. History will judge them as more important than the whirlwind of the first one hundred hours. The whole course of the Whitlam Government could depend on its coming actions. The choice to be made is between carrying out the programme on which it was swept to power or retreating under capitalist pressure.

The dilemma of which side to choose is reflected in the matter of double dissolution. Labor's actions in carrying out its programme are being frustrated by the Opposition's hostile majority in the Senate. The only way to overcome this obstruction is to go to the masses by having another election for both houses of Parliament. The alternative to a new election is a permanent state of impotence with no real power.

Even with Labor in control of both the House of Representatives and the Senate its power is severely limited. The experience of the Asio affair has already taught Labor the bitter lesson. The state machine is not neutral. It is the instrument of the class which is in power, not the party which is in office.

The Senate Opposition has so far been using its powers selectively. It does not object to every piece of Labor's legislation but just to those which represent concessions to mass pressure from the working class. With the exception of the Electoral Bill which threatens bourgeois politicians, the other measures they oppose concern the rights of the working people.

A double dissolution followed by a Labor victory will deprive the capitalist class of an instrument to maintain control over the ALP while in office. This is why the capitalist media has argued strongly against a double dissolution.

The ALP leadership has seen and understood the nature of those who are frustrating and obstructing its programme. Speaking to an audience in the St Kilda town hall, Prime Minister Whitlam described the obstructionists:

"This rabble, this mish-mash of vested interests, factions, bitter old men and frustrated new ones, this motley crew of incompetents still believe themselves to be our natural heaven-born rulers. . . They must not succeed."

Whitlam's strong words correctly describe his opponents. The words are unfortunately not matched by deeds. Following the Victorian election defeat (which reflected little, if at all, on Labor's Federal policy) it has been suggested that the ALP leadership will be more prone to compromise. Opportunist considerations of this kind can only lead to a state where the differentiation between Labor and the Liberals becomes blurred. With their vastly

superior resources the Liberals are much more likely to be returned in the following elections if there is no clear distinction between the programmes of the two parties.

At this stage, however, the Federal Opposition Leader Billy Snedden and his deputy Philip Lynch are clearly bluffing when they talk about their willingness to fight an election around the right to strike.

Socialists, of course, do not support Labor's programme. In any election campaign the Socialist Workers League and the Socialist Youth Alliance are going to campaign around a socialist programme, not a reformist one. In future we will keep on fighting for socialist policies. But, an election fought around the issue of workers' demands is a class issue. Socialists cannot remain aloof from real working class struggles. Nor do they oppose any reforms which reduce the plight of any oppressed group.

It is not the reformist nature of Labor's measures which is at stake. It is the real demands developed out of the workers' struggles which are involved.

Any retreat by Labor from any part of its programme will increase the confidence of the employing class. The balance of power will swing immediately against the working people. When a wage freeze is projected any loss of the rights of the working class to defend itself will be of vital importance.

What is involved at the moment is a test of strength both inside and outside the ALP. A Labor retreat could lead to another attack on the working class. All the working class organisations are in danger.

Labor should not retreat. Nor should its fight be a passive one in the next period. Labor must not restrict its activities to the bills it has already introduced. It must move to repeal the National Service Act, not just suspend it. It should push through its national health scheme and reintroduce the divorce regulations. Labor should respond to the real demands thrown up by the movements of the oppressed.

If the Opposition persists in obstructing Labor's legislation or rejects any bill, the Labor Government must arrange for a double dissolution immediately!

Labor must not and cannot be passive when the main pillars of its programme are being destroyed. The time for action is not April or May next year as is being projected. The earliest time for a double dissolution is two months from now. Labor's programme should not be allowed to be frustrated by the ruling class. If any obstacles are created Labor should organise a mass movement with the cooperation of the ACTU to overcome any of them.

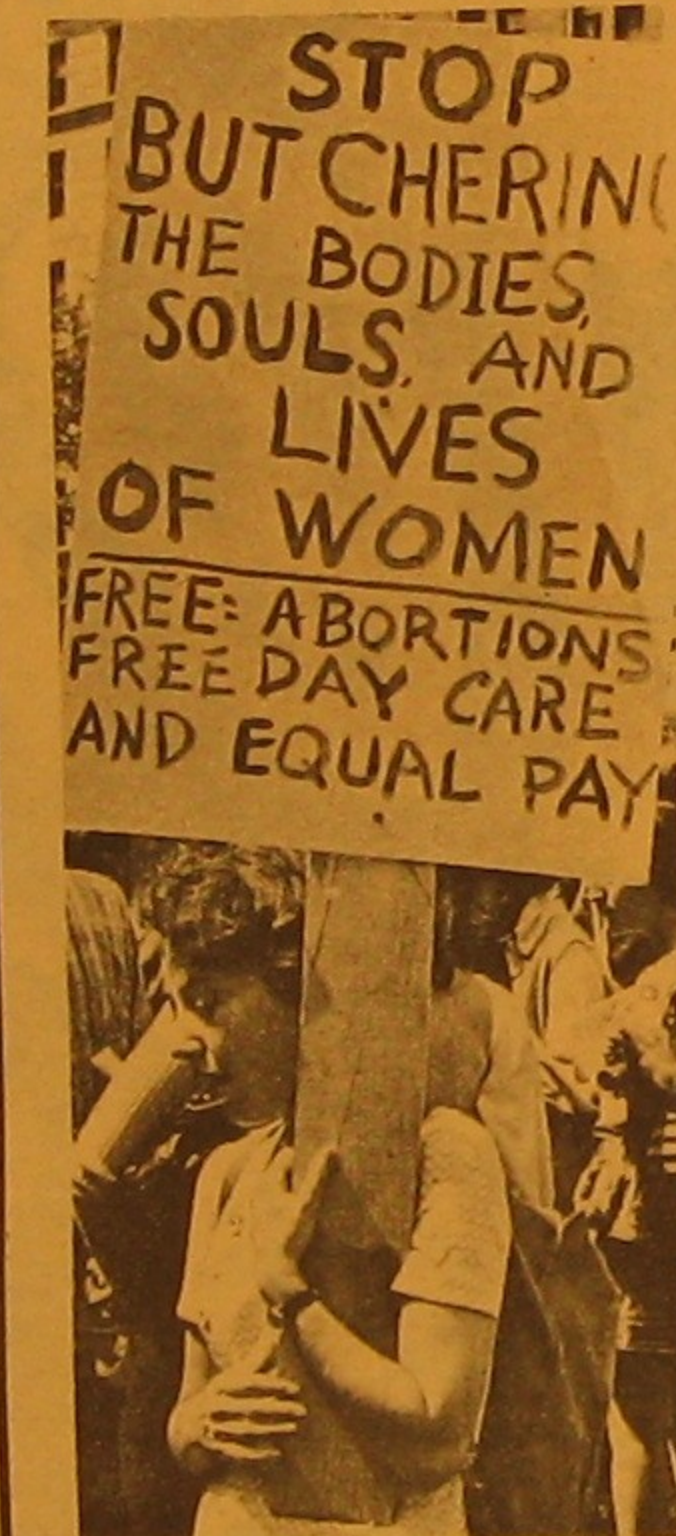
Repeal All Abortion Laws MARCH SET FOR JUNE 30

BY NITA KEIG

The debate and activity which surrounded the placing of the Medical Practice Clarification Bill relating to abortion before Federal Parliament helped to set in motion a struggle which has been brewing for some time.

It has only been in the past few years that women in large numbers have begun to demand the right to abortion and the right to full control over their bodies, and to deny emphatically that abortion is a subject of secrecy and shame. The growing readiness of women to act upon their needs reflects the widespread influence of feminist ideas, and the confidence that women are gaining in their collective power to change the conditions of their lives.

MARCH JUNE 30!
Assemble
Sydney Town Hall 10am



The struggle of women for the right to abortion has emerged internationally as an important political struggle. It is an issue which is dividing society, exposing the most reactionary sectors for their oppressive attitudes towards women in all respects. It has also exposed the hypocrisy of those who champion the rights of the foetus but who, at the same time callously support the slaughter of people, including children in wars like that in Vietnam.

Through participation in the fight for the right to abortion thousands of women have received a whole new understanding of the nature of patriarchal capitalist society and its institutions.

Already in the United States, through the January 22 Supreme Court decision, women have won virtually unrestricted right to medically safe abortion up to 24 weeks of pregnancy. This ruling was preceded by more than two years of consistent organising on the part of women to educate and win the repeal of the law: an abortion. Today in France fierce struggles have broken out over this issue. Recently, 1000 people were arrested there while demonstrating for changes in the archaic French laws. In Belgium and also in Italy there have been campaigns for the right to abortion and for improved contraception which have received international coverage by the news media.

In Australia the struggle has been spurred on by the presentation of the Medical Practice Clarification Bill to Federal Parliament by Labor members Lamb and McKenzie, and the energetic campaign of opposition to it by the "Right to Life" movement, led by the churches. This campaign, which roused the anger of many people, took the women's movement somewhat by surprise. It pointed out the need for women to organise in defence of their rights and for the repeal of all restrictive laws relating to contraception and abortion.

As a step towards mobilising the thousands of women whose power is needed to secure the repeal of existing laws, a demonstration has been called in Sydney for Saturday June 30. This action will demand the repeal of all abortion laws and freely available, safe contraceptives. It will be one of many similar actions which will be carried out, along with a range of other educational and agitational activities, to convince women to join in this fight until it is won and women gain complete control over their powers of reproduction.

BADGES Available at 20c
MARCH JUNE 30 To Repeal All Abortion Laws
Write to WAAC, 25 Alberta St, Sydney 2000.

Contact Socialists In Your Area

SYDNEY: SWL, SYA, 139 St. Johns Rd., Glebe 2037. Ph 6606672
MELBOURNE: SWL, SYA, 136 Queensberry St., Carlton 3053. Ph 3473507
ADELAIDE: SWL, SYA, 287 Rundle St., Adelaide 5000.
BRISBANE: SWL, SYA, 40 Union St., Spring Hill 4000.
CANBERRA: SYA, P.O., Box 1733 Canberra City, ACT 2601. Ph 477306 (John).
HOBART: SYA, P.O., Box 12 55N G.P.O., Hobart 7001.

... I would like to get in touch with the Socialist Workers League
... I would like more information about the Socialist Youth Alliance
... I would like to join the Socialist Youth Alliance

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Builders Laborers Fight For Permanency

BY CHRIS GRAHAM

The builders laborers' strike, commencing May 28, promises to be the first major industrial confrontation since the election of the Federal Labor Government. Its importance is therefore twofold. Firstly, in this struggle will be posed more sharply than ever, the struggle will test the capacity to fight of all involved parties: the unions and their leaderships, "the left and above all, the Whitlam Government.

This factor will be of vital importance in the struggle. The employers have already indicated their willingness to take the unions on. Sydney's newspapers have recently been filled with full-page advertisements taken out by the Master Builders Association of NSW. "Can you really trust your union leaders?" they asked, appealing directly to the union members with their lies and distortions.

For the MBA the biggest bogey was "worker control". In the May 23 edition of the Sydney Morning Herald we were treated to an "analysis" of "worker control" which claimed that "The issue is worker control and the cost of it will cripple the industry". The advertisement held that permanency was just a "smoke-screen" behind which lurked evil reds plotting to enslave the workers by urging them to take control of their jobs.

The Builders Labourers Federation has certainly played a prominent role in bringing the issue of workers' control forward. Struggles like the work-in at Sydney Opera House have been instrumental in this. Builders laborers have been particularly receptive to the ideas of workers control, partly as a result of the extremely poor conditions they must contend with in their industry. Faced with the mounting discontent and more importantly the focussing of this discontent around the issue of workers' control, the MBA decided to provoke a confrontation with the BLF to show who was "boss".

Their first move was to ban all weekend overtime. The MBA maintained that the ban would remain in force until the BLF dropped their demands for workers' control. The BLF retaliated by demanding a \$30 per week rise to compensate for the ban or a lifting of the ban itself.

The MBA moves are clearly an attack on the right to work. But this is no simple "redundancy" situation which simply poses the right to a job. The current radicalisation reflects demands for control of society by the people, highlighted by the demand for workers' control. It was around this theme that the BLF launched its counter-offensive.

The concept of "permanency" and "union hire" were based on attempts to apply this "permanency" affirms the right to work for all builders laborers who wish it. "Union hire" raises the question of workers and not the bosses controlling hiring and firing on the job.

"UNION HIRE"

The BLF held mass meetings on May 16 to discuss the dispute and to decide on what action to take. The meetings overwhelmingly adopted the following executive resolution:

"The immense amount of money the Master Builders' Association is spending indicates that they really want to take on the builders laborers' union and it is significant that all their advertisements highlight the activity of the builders



Builders laborers at Paddington town hall meeting

laborers, particularly around workers' control and union hire aspects.

"Considering that the master builders and other employer groups in Sydney, for the past fifteen years have worked a six day week, naturally there is confusion when all of a sudden the MBA decides to 'ban' weekend overtime.

"Therefore we propose the following:

a) "As a first step to permanency, we impose union hire on all organised projects. This means that all builders laborers obtaining work on organised jobs must go through the union officers and obtain a stamped employment card, additional to the current OK card, before any job organizer can allow a member to start. . .

"... Transfer from job to job to be encouraged as all forms of continuity are steps toward permanency. . .

b) "... We request all building unions to throw their full weight behind winning permanency.

c) "A deputation to . . . confer directly with the Minister for Labour Cameron. . . for the purpose of requesting the Federal Government to initiate action for . . . permanency in the building industry."

With the battle lines now quite fully drawn, the Master Builders' Association presses on with the assault. They had threatened a shut-down of the building industry if the BLF continued with their demands and now they proceed to carry out this threat.

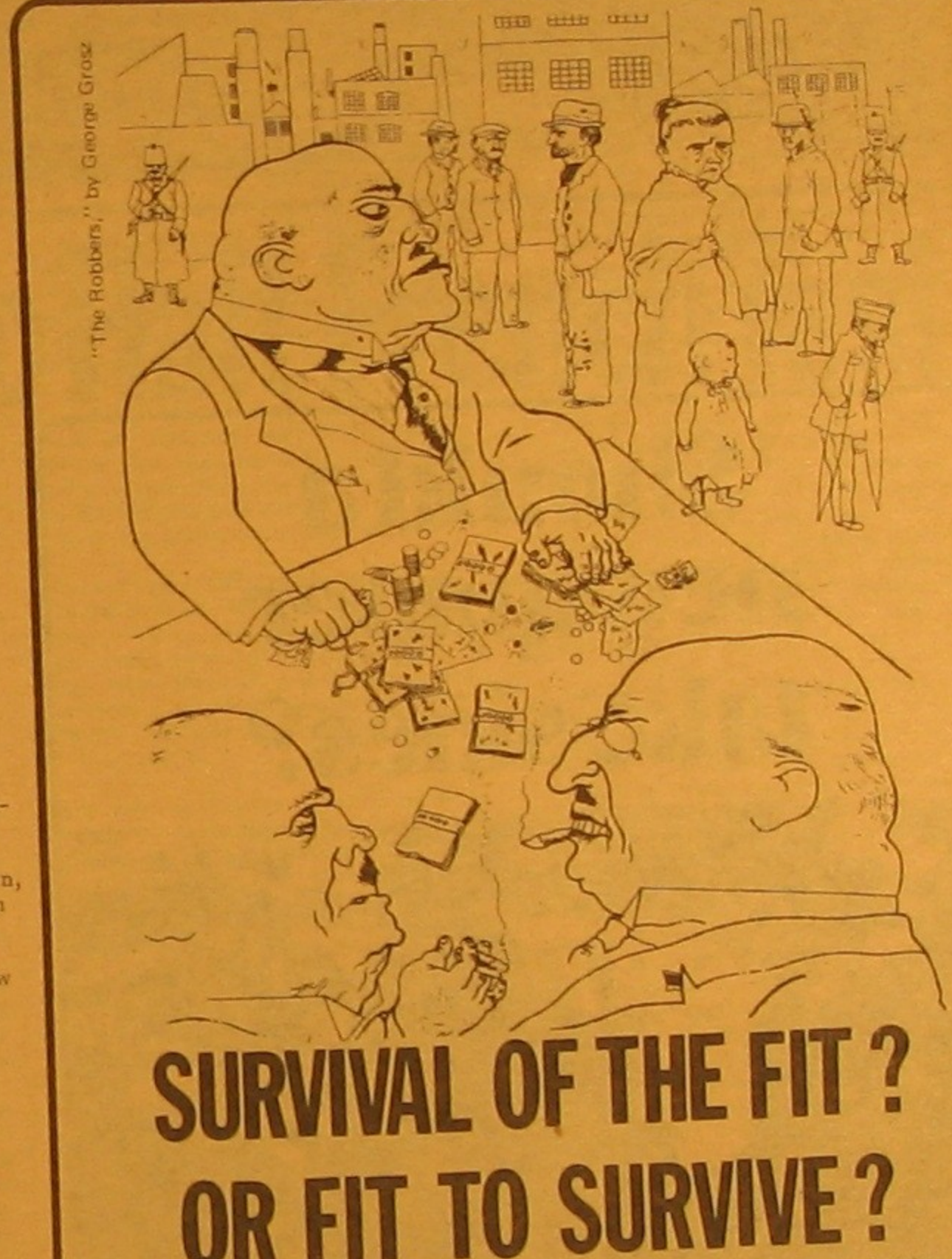
LAY OFFS

Several dogmen on jobs employed by Mainline Constructions were laid off. These lay offs mainly affected work on the AMP and HCF buildings in Sydney. The lay offs have slowed work down to the point where the bosses can "justify" continued sackings. Thus the MBA's latest move amounts to a lock-out.

The MBA added fuel to the fire by imposing vicious cuts in the wages of crane operators. The MBA reduced their wages from at least \$117 per week to the "award" rate of \$68 per week. The crane drivers went on strike in protest against this repressive action which was clearly aimed at bringing about a major confrontation.

The BLF held a meeting to discuss these developments on May 21. Following this meeting the BLF executive called a strike of all building workers in NSW. This will involve 12,000 members of the BLF, and 50,000 builders laborers contending those in other unions. Of these, only the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association (FEDEFA) has firmly supported the BLF. The other building unions, such as the Building Workers Industrial Union, have offered little more than token support to the builders laborers struggle, but as the MBA has retaliated to the strike with sackings of workers in all unions, the leaderships of these unions will be under tremendous rank and file pressure to support the strike. Nevertheless, this remains to be seen.

The past struggles between the MBA and the BLF have reflected the sharpest clashes between workers and capitalists in Australia. This struggle may be the most important to date. Its outcome will not only affect the building industry but the political situation as a whole. It is vital that all avenues are exploited in supporting the builders laborers against the arrogant attack by the MBA. A defeat for the MBA will be a gain for the whole working class.



By the law of the capitalist economic jungle DIRECT ACTION shouldn't be able to survive. Without advertising and without vast infusions of capital, it is hard for newspapers to exist in Australia.

It is a question of survival of the fittest and the fit are those with the cash.

By the law of revolutionary necessity, however, DIRECT ACTION must survive. If a time ever existed for a newspaper putting forward a clear socialist analysis, that time is now. With the war in Indo-China still continuing in spite of all the illusions sown - with inflation rampant in the whole capitalist world - with the French bomb tests about to commence - with the continuous oppression of the working people, women blacks and gays - with the crisis of leadership for the working class and the Labor Party - with all this the necessity for our existence becomes ever stronger.

We can't rely on rich backers. For our continued publication we rely on you, our readers. If you think that DIRECT ACTION is fit to survive if you understand the need for a paper to expose and organise against all the evils of this capitalist system, then you should assist us in our tasks.

DIRECT ACTION is currently organising a fund drive to purchase some badly needed equipment. A new composing and a headlining

Send to DIRECT ACTION Fund Drive, 139 St Johns Road, Glebe 2037.

Illusions Persist Over Viet 'Peace'

BY JIM PERCY

The Sydney Anti-war Action Coalition held a march of some 60 people through city streets on Saturday May 19 to demand the withdrawal of all US forces from South East Asia, recognition of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam, the release of all political prisoners by the Saigon regime and an end to the bombing of Cambodia and Laos.

Although the demonstration was small it was militant with marchers chanting "US Out of South East Asia Now" throughout the march. But it must be asked: Why is the anti-war movement at such a low ebb?

The answer lies first in an analysis of events leading up to the "ceasefire" accords and the peace treaty, and the international context in which they were signed.

When Nixon commenced his massive terror bombing of Hanoi and mined Haiphong and other North Vietnamese ports in May, 1972, he did so on the eve of a diplomatic trip to Moscow. With the stepped-up bombing, the world watched for Moscow's reaction. Already in February Nixon had been welcomed in Peking while US bombs continued to fall on North Vietnam.

However, the Moscow bureaucrats seemed more concerned with finalising the details of Nixon's visit than with his escalated bombing of Vietnam. Nixon's gamble had paid off. While posing to the world as a peace maker, he was able to pressure the bureaucrats in the Kremlin to do what

they could to guarantee a "peace" in Vietnam.

So on October 26 last year, Hanoi radio announced that they had come to an agreement with Kissinger in Paris. So began the great illusion that peace was at hand. These illusions were partly shattered when Nixon stepped up his terror-bombing in December. Protests erupted throughout the world. Some of the biggest demonstrations occurred in Europe with 50,000 marching in Utrecht.

Finally Nixon signed the accords in late January. Further concessions had been extracted from the Vietnamese which made the final agreements very different from the original 7 point peace plan of the Vietnamese.

Therefore the major movement internationally lies with the signing of the accords and the widespread illusions about their nature. The Vietnamese leadership has publicly stated that it supported the accords and would attempt to implement them. This, plus the fact that the Soviet and Chinese leaderships and Nixon had all collaborated to bring about this "peace" inevitably led people to feel that somehow the issues of the Vietnamese struggle had been resolved.

The second set of factors which led to a demobilisation was the reaction of some tendencies within the anti-war movement to the signing of the accords. The Communist Party of Australia, Socialist Party of Australia, Association for International

Cooperation and Disarmament and some other groups began to call for the US to "Sign Now".

While it is obviously the right of the Vietnamese to sign any accords they see fit, it is not the duty of those who defend their struggle in other countries to support these accords. We are under no compulsion to do so, as we are not under the gun as the Vietnamese are. To support the demand "Sign Now" is to support the concessions extracted from the Vietnamese by force.

With the accords signed and proclaimed a victory, surely the war must be over. Our task is only to reconstruct Vietnam. This is the CPA's line of argument. True, there are still demands to press for, they say, but the main thrust of our activity must be to collect money for Vietnam and organise tours of Australia for Vietnamese delegations. This perspective led to their walkout from the Sydney Anti-war Action Coalition.

To many people however, it is plain that the war is not over. The US has even begun to bomb and harass areas in South Vietnam under the Provisional Revolutionary Government. They have steadily maintained bombing over Cambodia and Laos. The US continues to prop up the Thieu regime in Saigon to the tune of millions of dollars. Thieu continues to ignore conditions of the ceasefire and has waged a purge of suspected Communists and suppressed all democratic and civil rights.

While the US remains entrenched in South East Asia, there will be no "peace". The anti-war movement must continue to demand the total and immediate withdrawal of the US from the area. It must continue to explain what has happened in Vietnam and publicise and expose the US continued aggression. To be effective this must go hand in hand with activity aimed at mobilising people once again to defend the rights of the Vietnamese and other peoples of South East Asia to self-determination.

The situation in Vietnam will not be stabilised while two opposed armed forces exist in Vietnam, in Cambodia and Laos, representing conflicting class interests. The work that the anti-war movement can do, however, in preparing for the inevitable future upsurges in the conflict which will once again make people aware of the real situation in South East Asia, is of great importance. Our task is not over yet, and will not be until the US gets right out of South East Asia, militarily, politically and economically.

These different perspectives were discussed by speakers at the rally following the march on May 19. The speakers stressed that the march was the beginning of the process of reeducating and rebuilding the anti-war movement. People must be made aware of the political significance of the ceasefire and the continuing state of war. In coming months others, including those who have the biggest illusions now, will come to see the need to continue to rebuild the mass actions which have defended the Vietnamese in the past.



Official photograph of a French atomic test on Mururoa last year

Labor Must Act to Halt French Tests

BY FRANS TIMMERMAN

As the date approaches for the beginning of the next series of French nuclear tests in the Pacific, opposition to them is growing in Australia. This opposition is now mainly emanating from the trade union movement, which is using industrial action in defiance of the wishes of the Australian Government.

On Tuesday, May 15 the ACTU executive met to consider a recommendation from a meeting of forty Federal unions held on May 10, which called for a ban on all transport and communication links with France and on the handling or purchase of French goods.

On May 9 ACTU president Bob Hawke met Prime Minister Whitlam who asked that the trade union movement take no industrial action. Whitlam was concerned that the French Government would be able to use it to prejudice Australia's case before the International Court of Justice in The Hague. But Hawke said that the French were showing contempt for the ruling of the international court and so the trade union movement was following the only effective line of action it could see. He added, "We are not tools of the government".

The contrast between the forms of protest action taken by the Australian Government and those taken by the trade union movement point to the half-hearted attitude the Government has adopted in opposition to the tests.

Whitlam's approach is to use 'respectable', though largely ineffective, means in an attempt to halt the tests. The French Government has already indicated that it considers the international court has no jurisdiction in the matter, and accordingly will go ahead as planned.

However, the unions have adopted a different approach and are taking direct action aimed at stopping the tests. The ACTU executive decided to go ahead with its bans on French shipping, communications and manufactured goods. This move was made despite Whitlam's appeal not to go ahead.

It is clear that by opting for a very hollow 'legal' approach, the Labor Government has rejected the most effective course of action available; that is, joint actions and initiatives with the trade union movement on an industrial and governmental level.

On Monday, May 14, Whitlam sent a telegram to the ACTU executives urging them not to call for the imposition of the bans. He argued that since Australia's case before the international court was based on alleged breaches of international law by France, then Australia should appear before the

court with 'clean hands'. He said that the ACTU action could be in contravention of the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Relations and the Universal Postal Convention of 1964. Whitlam even publicised this appeal by appearing on television. But the ACTU executive rejected these legalisms, deciding that all bans would remain until the tests were either called off or completed.

The Amalgamated Postal Workers Union responded to the ACTU decision by banning all communications to and from France. The May 16 meeting of the union's Federal executive decided to ban all mail and telegraphic services. However, a spokesman for the Commonwealth Telephonists and Phonogram Officers Association, which is not affiliated with the ACTU, said that members of its union would not impose any such bans. Hence, Australia's telephone operators will continue to put through trunk line calls to and from France. The Union of Postal Clerks and Telegraphists also imposed a ban on all cable and telegraphic traffic between Australia and France.

The executive of the APFU said normal communications to and from the Australian Embassy in Paris would be maintained. Unfortunately, communications to and from French firms in Australia would also be maintained. But no transit mail to or from France would be handled. Already there have been massive build-ups of incoming and outgoing mail in all major cities.

As reported in DIRECT ACTION 40, May 10, Australian maritime unions had already placed bans on French goods and shipping. The Plumbers Union, the Vehicle Builders Union and building unions had also decided to impose bans. The French airline UTA had to suspend all services to Australia, and the French-owned car manufacturer Renault, was forced to slow down production at Melbourne plant. The move will push the company further into unprofitable conditions, after losses in recent years.

The Federal president of the Shop Assistants and Warehouse Employees Federation said about 110,000 shop workers would refuse to sell French products. AAP reported that France's two main trade union groups supported Australian trade unions in their stand against the tests.

Whitlam responded to the communications ban by saying in Parliament that the Government was considering legislation to penalise people who break international agreements to which Australia is a party. The proposed legislation would make it an offence to break or incite a breach of Australia's international agreements.

A report in The Australian on May 18

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Protest on Prices

BY DAVE DEUTSCHMANN

More than forty Victorian trade union organisations combined to help organise a rally of some 750 people to protest spiralling prices. The rally, held on Friday, May 18 in Melbourne's city square, was addressed by Allan Best, Victorian secretary of the Australian Insurance Staff Federation, John Halpenny, state secretary of the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union and Federal Treasurer, Frank Crean. It was also addressed by representatives of pensioner and social service organisations.

The trade unions have also formed a coalition which aims to defend the right to fight for wage claims and also to campaign for an immediate price freeze.

At an organising meeting just before the rally, more than 175 shop stewards and union representatives attended. This meeting, held on Monday, May 14, was initiated by the unions to launch the campaign against rising prices.

When John Sanders, Victorian state secretary of the Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Associations (ACSPPA), opened the meeting, he said: "This is going to be the beginning of something big. Since the last war, wage increases have been savagely attacked by price increases. Today marks the moment when we really begin to do something about it. We, the workers of Australia, have to take action to control prices ourselves". Sanders went on to say: "All workers and needy people have to be organised into mass actions. It was mass-

ive protests which took us out of Vietnam, and it will only be massive public reaction that will enable the government to control prices - to combat the bosses! "Price control without a wage freeze, that's what we want!"

This dual nature of the message was emphasised by Sanders as well as by Best and Halpenny, who also spoke at the meeting. They proposed building an independent movement of Australian working people to bring about control of prices.

The delegates meeting went on to set perspectives for the "Price Freeze Campaign" in coming weeks. Organised industrial action, boycotts and rallies were stressed by most speakers from the floor as being the crux of any such campaign.

Following the delegates meeting DIRECT ACTION spoke to Gus Haddon, a leader of the Action Committee for Social Service Justice. In detailing the committee's plans for the next three months, Gus Haddon said that pensioners and the unemployed would be placing substantial pressure on Federal and State governments and local councils.

Haddon said that he was particularly pleased to see the trade union movement uniting in an effort to combat rising prices. Already various groups such as the Citizen Action Federation and numerous consumer organisations have come behind the protest movement against rising prices. These groups are working with the trade union movement in building future mass protests.



Prices rally in Melbourne's city square

DIRECT ACTION FORUMS

Sydney
at 139 ST JOHNS ROAD, GLEBE.

Friday, June 8, 8pm
"REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE IN LATIN AMERICA"
A talk on the revolutionary movements in Latin America, the role of guerrilla groups, mass movements and the different regimes with particular emphasis on Chile and Argentina.
Friday, June 22, 8pm
"THE REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE IN VIETNAM"
Jim Percy, national organiser of the Socialist Workers League, analyses the recent history, the leadership, and the perspectives for the revolution in Vietnam.

Melbourne
at 140 QUEENSBERRY STREET, CARLTON.

Thursday, June 14, 8pm
"A REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY FOR THE STUDENT MOVEMENT"
Peter Conrick discusses the revolutionary approach to campus struggles and the strategy of the "Red University" and its application in Australia.
Thursday, June 28, 8pm
"THE GAY LIBERATION MOVEMENT"
Gay socialists discuss the development and revolutionary potential of Gay Liberation.



Holding, Whitlam, Hawke and Dunstan at the St. Kilda Town Hall meeting.

The Background to Labor's Defeat

BY JIM McILROY

Labor can't win elections with conservative policies. That is the main lesson to be drawn from the severe defeat suffered by the ALP Parliamentary Party in the Victorian State elections on May 19.

Few people had expected Labor to win sufficient seats to form a government. But very few had expected the ALP to lose so much ground from last December's overwhelming victory in the Federal elections.

Why did Labor lose? A whole series of factors are involved, but the central one is that the Holding leadership of the Victorian state ALP failed completely to offer solutions to the real issues thrown up by the campaign. No real alternative was offered to the working people of Victoria which would have differentiated the Labor Party, as the party of the working class from the Liberals, with their "new image" under Premier Hamer.

Hamer presented himself as a "progressive" man who was for social change. The Liberal Party, learning from the debacle of last December, based its campaign on a trick - the "Hamer Makes It Happen" trick. Realising the need to capture the youth vote in particular (18 year olds voted for the first time in Victoria in this election), the Hamer Liberals broke with the image presented by the openly reactionary regime of Henry Bolte. They took over large chunks of the ALP's state platform and effectively pre-empted the ground for Labor's challenge. Examples include the policy of ombudsman to investigate allegations against government departments, the freezing of all free-way construction, and an end to the building of low-quality, high-rise Housing Commission flats, rebates for pensioners, expressed "concern" on pollution and environment and other measures.

The right wing Holding leadership of the State ALP had no answer to this ploy. They were incapable of developing more radical policies, and unwilling to do so. Labor's programme was comprehensive, but limited in its perspectives. Very few people in the end knew what it was. The issues that were really strongly felt by wide sections of the electorate were not articulated in the Labor campaign.

The best example is on the question of abortion. This was the central issue thrown up during the campaign period. Thousands of women were mobilised to fight for the repeal of abortion laws, in demonstrations on May 4 and May 10, and in meetings like the huge one organised by the Women's Electoral Lobby on May 7. This was the largest and liveliest meeting of the campaign period, attracting over 2,500 women

to question the leaders of all parties on their attitude towards women's questions. While the politicians of the capitalist parties, including Hamer, emerged badly, it was the failure of Clyde Holding to take a stand on the key question of abortion which was most decisive.

Because of Holding's stated opposition to repeal of abortion laws, many women who would have campaigned enthusiastically for a Labor victory were turned away. The potential which a firm Labor pledge to repeal abortion laws would have had for mobilising massive support particularly amongst youth was lost. The key factor in the success of Labor in December last year was active support of young people, and their firm identification with the Labor campaign as a reflection of their demands on the Vietnam war and conscription, black and women's rights and other issues. On abortion, Gough Whitlam pledged himself personally to support abortion law reform.

The Holding leadership managed to alienate other forces as well. The attitude it has taken on education alienated many teachers' and parents' organisations. The opposition by leading right-wing spokesmen to a motion by Socialist Left figure Bill Hartley at the Victorian ALP General Assembly caused a furore.

The motion called for urgent financial aid from the Federal Government for education, and made reference to "an election promise by Mr. Whitlam and Bertley to provide \$1,443 million for State education by the end of 1975. The motion called on the Federal Government to start the emergency grants right away.

The organisations which initiated the claim for the grant were the Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association, the Victorian Teachers Union, the Victorian Council of School Organisations, the Victorian Federation of State School Mothers' Clubs and the Technical Teachers Association of Victoria. The rejection of the motion alienated their members, the very people who played a vital role in supporting fellow teachers McKemie and Lamb and working for a Labor victory last year.

Labor wasn't prepared to fight on the question of prices either. The proposal for a prices justification commission was easily countered by the Hamer Liberals. Prices commissions never work, they argued. No serious answer was provided to a question which figured so prominently in the minds of workers. On this particular account Holding had a justified gripe against his Federal colleagues. No action has been taken on prices by the Whitlam Government. Even worse, Whitlam has allied himself on this question with Rupert Hamer. Responding to an initiative of the Victorian Premier, Whitlam called a special Premiers' Conference to discuss an "incomes and prices

policy". This threat of a wage freeze discouraged many working people from actively participating in the campaign. By calling the Premiers' Conference only nine days before the elections Whitlam showed how little he cared for the return of a Labor government.

By calling this conference Whitlam showed that if Labor was to take any action on price rise, it will not be materially different from any action taken by a Liberal government. Clyde Holding was forced to attack Whitlam Publicly over the planned wage freeze!

Labor's leadership both on State and Federal level has to carry the main burden of responsibility.

Holding and the State leadership are even more to blame. Their complacency and lack of organisation has revived memories of the Canberra Liberals last year. One election meeting didn't have a venue up to a week before it was due. Rank and file members were also complacent following the December victory. The success on the Federal level made them content and unwilling to take on the work again.

The lack of support was reflected in the trade union movement. Neither personnel nor money was forthcoming. The resulting lack of finance was undoubtedly a contributing factor to the defeat.

The vacuum created by the lack of activity by the right wing leadership wasn't filled by the left. Neither the Socialist Left nor any other forces were prepared to move in. No alternative programme was presented in contrast to Holding's conservative effort. It is the responsibility of the left to present alternative leadership all the time. It is even more important when the right opts out as was the case on this occasion. The Socialist Left's inertia, its lack of activity even in assistance of SL supporters Ian Cathie and Joan Coxedge can not be swept aside. A part of the blame for the lack of enthusiasm for Labor must be apportioned to the SL for its inactivity.

Labor's loss wasn't only due to the failures of the leadership. It was also forsaken by some of its "friends". The leading lights of the ruling class who flocked to Gough Whitlam's camp last year (with their money and press) have once again deserted the ALP. At this stage, no section of Australian capitalism is prepared to allow Labor to govern in all States as well as Federally. The risk is too great. It is preferable to have a State or two handy to obstruct anything which is "too progressive".

In the case of Victoria there are even more difficulties. The editorial of Labor's best friend during the Federal elect-

ions, The Age of Melbourne, summarised this particular "problem" (for the bourgeoisie) very succinctly on May 20, 1973: "Mr Whitlam managed to convince the electorate that he had hegemony over the party machine. It seems that Mr Holding being forced to live and work much more closely with the men of the Socialist Left, has not yet been able to rid himself of the 'ey'."

So the capitalists were scared of a labor government in Victoria. The press reflected this attitude. The Age told its readers to vote for Hamer. "Making a better way happen" they called it using both Labor and Liberal election slogans.

"Hamer makes it happen" - the Liberal party slogan seems to have worked effectively. The Liberal Party deception succeeded in convincing a large number of people that pseudo-progressive Hamer was really the progressive Premier adjusting to the winds of change. The Liberals managed to ride the wave for change that the ALP "radical reformists" rode so effectively last year.

Labor countered this with "a better way". Unfortunately we were never told in which way it was better. Labor's programme, comprehensive as it was, didn't appeal to anyone. No one is prepared to plough through a 95 page pamphlet. The result no explanation of Labor's policies. So the "reconstruction" of the Victorian branch of the ALP hailed last December as the chief cause of the swing didn't seem to have much effect on the electorate.

There was some awareness in the Labor leadership of the need to put radical rather than conservative policies. The last major rally of the elections held at the St. Kilda Town Hall bore this out. Here we had all the heavy ALP politicians trying to outflank each other from the left. South Australia's Don Dunstan announced the freezing of all land prices without the freezing of wages. Whitlam attacked the capitalist parties for their obstruction of Labor legislation. Bob Hawke explained to the audience that the only thing workers have to sell is their labor power and why there should be no restrictions on workers actions. Unfortunately this performance was belated. It couldn't save the elections.

The lesson to be drawn from the elections result should be clear even to Holding and people of his ilk. A reformist conservative programme which poles even in comparison with the "radical reformism" of the Federal ALP can't win elections. Labor win office. The left, in particular, the Socialist Left, must mobilise for an alternative programme and alternative leadership.

Labor Loses Victorian Elections

BY SOL SALBY

In what amounted to a fairly heavy defeat, the Labor Party lost the Victorian State elections. The Labor Party's chances in the May 19 elections were not rated particularly high at any stage, but it was expected to match, if not improve on, last year's Federal election figures. This it failed miserably to do.

The fact that Labor's vote was up on the last State elections was regarded as only a minor consolation. Last December it managed to overcome the substantial obstacles in its way and record a victory. Although Labor's figures in Victoria were the lowest in Australia the large swing recorded by the Federal ALP was regarded as quite a victory. If this swing was to be repeated in the state election Labor would have been successful even if it did not win a majority. As a substantial Opposition it could force a coalition between the Liberal and Country parties. Such a coalition in most likelihood couldn't even complete a full term in office. It would have certainly led to Labor victory in the following elections.

As is always the case the final figures will not be available for some time. Postal and absentee votes could change the final results slightly. The holding of the election in the middle of school and university holiday means that these votes are less likely to follow any predictable trend. At the end of the initial counting on election night with approximately 80 per cent of the votes counted Labor had 42.3 per cent of the vote against 47.3 per cent in the last Federal election.

The Liberal vote was 33.6 per cent in Victoria last December. It shot up to 42.09 per cent in this election. In comparison, in the last state election back in 1970 the Liberals gained 36.6 per cent and Labor 41.3 per cent.

The fall of approximately five per cent in Labor's popularity over the last five months since the Federal elections constitutes the real defeat. As the architect of the defeat Labor leader Clyde Holding pointed out, the gerrymandering would have defeated Labor even if they won a majority of the vote. The gerrymandering becomes evident when one considers the relationship between votes and seats. Labor won 42.3 per cent of the vote but only 18 seats, the Liberals with one per cent less won 46 seats (a majority), the Country Party, with 5.74 per cent won 8 seats.

The most encouraging feature of the election result was the decline of the Democratic Labor Party. The DLP vote plummeted from 13.6 per cent to 7.6 per cent. This slashing of its vote by half signals the end for the DLP. No party so aligned itself with the "Right to Life" forces as the DLP. The performance of its state leader, Frank Dowling, in the largest campaign meeting called by the Women's Electoral Lobby, certainly bore this out.

There were other indications that reactionary policies on social issues, but particularly on abortion, had an unfavorable impact on the election. The performance of the Australia Party, on the other side of the Capitalist political spectrum to the DLP is just one example. Its vote was significantly up on last December, from 5.0 per cent to 6.5 per cent in the seats it contested. For the first time ever it outpulled the DLP in six out of the 21 seats they both contested.

The marked swing against Chief Secretary Meagher, notorious for his reactionary views is another indication of a turn away from conservatism. At one stage during the counting, Meagher, who achieved his notoriety for his extreme views on censorship and his anti-woman outlook looked like losing his seat of Frankston.

On the other hand Labor candidate and Socialist Left supporter Joan Coxedge, who campaigned strongly around abortion, actually increased the Labor vote in the safe Liberal seat of Balwyn by one per cent. Coxedge had to campaign against heavy odds. Her campaign in favor of women's rights to control their bodies was received with extreme hostility by the ALP Party brass. For her campaign to support the State ALP policy and move a private

members bill in Parliament to legalise abortion, she received a hostile phone call from Opposition leader Holding. Holding threatened to withdraw her endorsement and, failing that, to "throw her off the side of a mountain" if she didn't stop her activities.

Despite this hostility and despite a vigorous campaign against her by the Victorian branch of the National Right to Life Organisation, Coxedge was more successful than most ALP candidates in Liberal-held seats. In their vigorous campaign, the good citizens who support "the Right to Life" had apparently broken the law. They distributed a how-to-vote card which said "Support Life-Vote Against Abortion" and put the number 3 against her name without numbering the other two candidates - a breach of the Electoral Act. Coxedge is planning legal actions against these reactionaries.

The turn away from Labor was uneven. It was strongest in the more affluent suburbs. These include the areas in which Labor made its major gains last December. On the other hand, in the more working class areas, Labor gained some significant swings. In traditional Labor seats there was a substantial swing to Labor which strongly consolidated its vote. One factor which may be involved here is a reaction to the Federal Government whose actions on the sphere of regional development are yet to be seen but whose achievements generally are more popular in the working class areas. Also, Hamer's "progressive" image had much more impact in the outer suburbs than Holding's boring campaign.

The Victorian election as a whole cannot be seen as a rebuff to the Labor Government's series of confrontations with Opposition senators. On the very

day of the Victorian elections the latest survey of national voting attitudes carried out by Australian Attitudes Opinion Polls had different results.

According to the ANOP, which predicted very accurately last year's Federal election, 54 per cent of electors would vote for the ALP if the elections were held now. This is an increase on last December's figures. Support for the Liberal Country Party was at 40 per cent. This is 1.3 per cent below the vote the McMahon Government received when it was defeated last December.

Despite this defeat in Victoria the anti-Labor forces can not gain too much satisfaction from the Victorian elections. It was a Labor defeat rather than a Liberal victory. A well organised campaign on a radical platform could easily return Labor to the victory trail it has been on since last December.



BOOKS BY GEORGE NOVACK

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LOGIC OF MARXISM	144pp	\$1.50
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The books listed above may be ordered from Pathfinder Press. Send cheque or postal note for the appropriate amount, adding ten per cent postage, to Pathfinder Press (Aust) P.O. Box 151, Glebe, 2037. A catalogue of our wide range of socialist literature is available on request.

George Novack, one of the foremost Marxist scholars in the world today, is currently undertaking a speaking tour of Australia. His tour is being sponsored by the Socialist Workers League and the Socialist Youth Alliance in conjunction with DIRECT ACTION. The tour got off to an excellent start with nearly 300 people attending the first lecture by Novack in Sydney. Novack will also give public lectures in Brisbane, Adelaide and Melbourne, as well as addressing meetings at various universities. He will also be

giving lectures on the Transitional Programme and Building the Revolutionary Party at Socialist Education Conferences in Sydney and Melbourne. We will carry a full report on the tour in the next issue of DIRECT ACTION.

PUBLIC MEETING

THE MEANING OF LIFE: A MARXIST VIEW

A LECTURE BY

GEORGE NOVACK

ADELAIDE
MELBOURNE

Wednesday, May 30, 7.30 p.m.

SYA Hall, 287 Rundle Street, Adelaide.

Thursday, May 31, 8.00 p.m.

Guild Theatre, Melbourne University.

\$1.00 DONATION, 50c SEC. STUDENTS



Pentridge Prisoners Go on Strike

BY STEVE PAINTER

News has gradually filtered into the daily press concerning a series of events which have shaken Pentridge Gaol in recent weeks. Pentridge is Victoria's largest gaol, accommodating around 1100 prisoners.

The State authorities are anxious to conceal the situation inside the gaol. Victorian Social Welfare Minister Ian Smith has attempted to discourage press inquiries about the situation with statements such as "..... It's a very low key situation. If I was running a newspaper I wouldn't even put it in." The State Government also appears unwilling to release the findings of the Jenkinson Report concerning conditions at Pentridge until after the state elections.

The Jenkinson Report contains the findings of an inquiry held last year into allegations of brutal treatment of prisoners at Pentridge. Victorian Attorney General George Reid says that the report is being examined by State legal officers to decide whether criminal charges should be laid as a result of the findings.

Whatever the findings of the report may be however, it is unlikely that they will shed much light on the real situation inside the gaol. Prisoners were at a disadvantage in presenting evidence to the inquiry because they were at the mercy of the warden whose activities were the subject of the inquiry. They were defenceless against bashing by wardens and unable to prevent seizure by wardens of any evidence of brutality which may have existed.

Prisoners were also denied access to legal counsel during the inquiry and were offered no protection from recriminations arising from their testimonies. Wardens had legal counsel, including access to the crown solicitor, as well as access to transcripts of the proceedings at the inquiry and access to all regulations.

So, while the Jenkinson Report may uncover some of the worst abuses which have occurred at Pentridge during recent times, it is not likely to get close to the truth

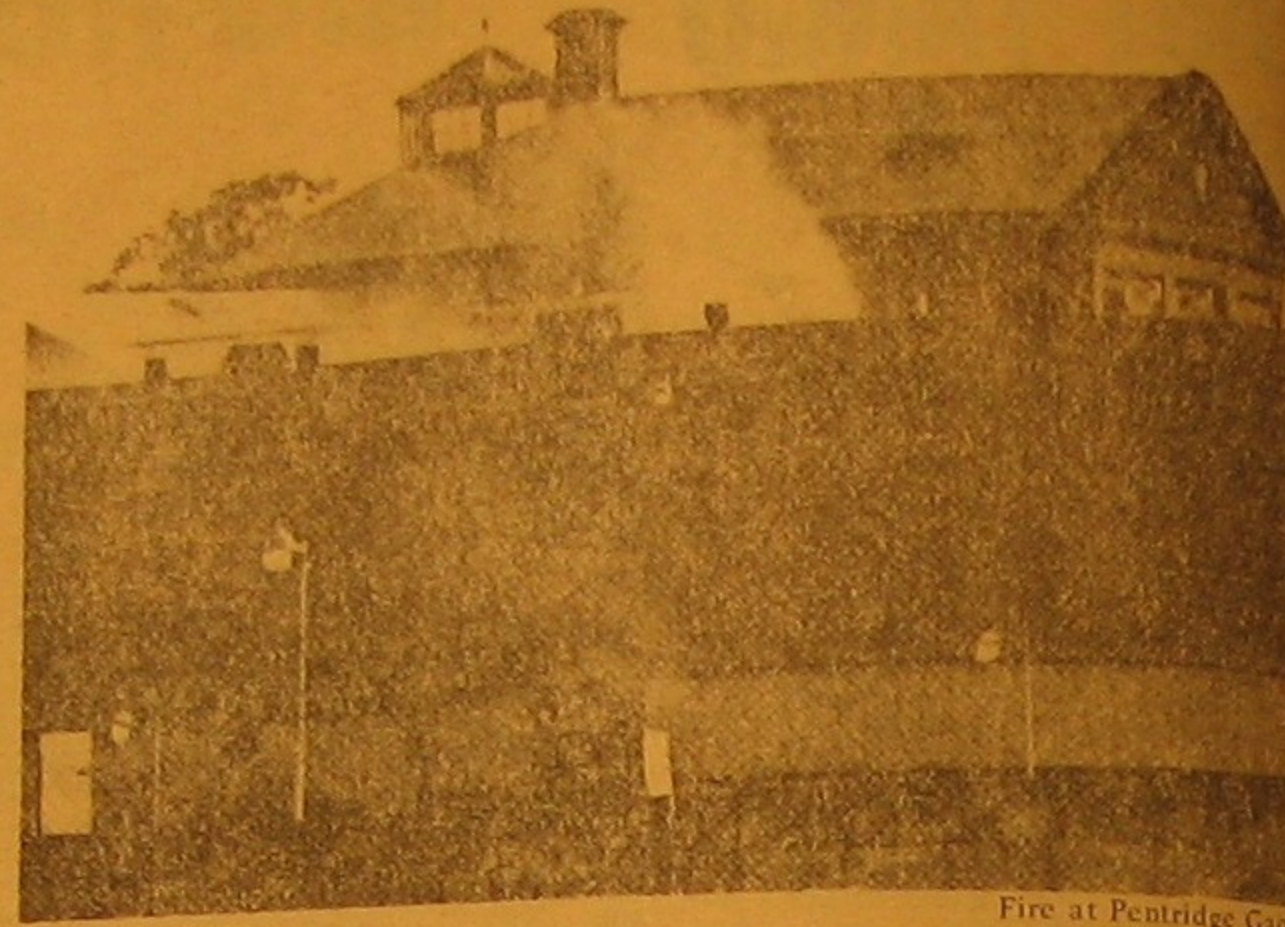
about conditions in the gaol or to provide any protection for prisoners.

Early in May prisoners in Pentridge staged a strike. They refused to go to work in the prison workshops. Estimates as to the numbers of prisoners involved vary. J.R. Andrews of the Victorian Public Service Association said that about 700 prisoners participated while Social Welfare Minister Smith claimed that only about 150 prisoners were involved. As mentioned previously, Smith has gone to some lengths to minimise estimates of the seriousness of the situation. The Melbourne evening paper The Herald of April 2 reported that the prisoners were demanding increased access to television, a dietician to examine gaol menus and concessions on matters such as courts within the gaol, parole conditions and remissions.

However, the demands mentioned by The Herald are not the only ones being raised by the prisoners. During the course of events leading up to the strike other grievances have come to light. Probably the greatest single factor in forcing the prisoners into a position where they felt that they had no alternative but to take direct action despite the fact that they knew that such action would certainly be met with vicious reprisals, was the abolition last year, by Smith, of the prisoners' representative council. This action left the prisoners with no vehicle by which they could even communicate grievances to the authorities which control every facet of their lives.

On April 9, thirty four prisoners in J division of the gaol barricaded themselves in their dormitory and held off wardens for twenty one hours. The daily press said that the thirty four were protesting against the gaol food. Later the Director General of Social Welfare A.G. Booth said "We have checked their complaints about the food and unfair treatment and have found them completely unjustified." What other conclusion could a body inquiring into complaints against itself be expected to draw?

Tension at the gaol mounted further when a young prisoner just sentenced to seven



Fire at Pentridge Gaol

years imprisonment attempted to commit suicide by jumping from a seventy foot high gallery, and two prisoners were badly burned when they set fire to their cell.

Another large rebellion occurred on April 17 when 175 prisoners in D division, the remand section, went on a hunger strike. A prisoner released from D division told The Age newspaper that many of the hunger strikers were prepared to starve to death if prison officials refused to discuss their grievances. He went on to say "The men claim they are treated as convicted criminals when in fact they are still innocent and their cases have not been heard in court."

Some prisoners were still continuing with the hunger strike on April 23 when Smith claimed that the number of participants had dropped to fifty. Smith also denied reports that six of the strikers were being kept alive by injections and that one man had collapsed and been hospitalised through malnutrition.

The hunger strikers raised demands for visits in which the prisoners would not be separated from their visitors, better facilities for legal consultation. They also wanted to see the Minister for Social Welfare and the Director of Prisons. They were also reported to be angry at the lack of bail for remand prisoners and delays in court hearings.

On April 30, after a fire had damaged the prison flour mill, wardens made a baton charge on a group of prisoners in B division. About eighty wardens were involved. Prison authorities claim that the fire was deliberately lit and it is possible that some prisoners, made desperate by the refusal of the authorities to even listen to their grievances, may have resorted to such action.

By May 1, B division prisoners were being confined to their cells according to Smith. However a warden who spoke to the press said that between 250 and 300 prisoners from B and C divisions were on strike and that the previous night's baton charge had been made when B division prisoners refused to return to their cells. On May 1, some B division prisoners were also reported to be on a hunger strike. The strike broadened to involve almost 700 of the gaol's 1100 prisoners, according to some reports.

Smith claims that all is quiet inside Pentridge - that the events of the past month are the invention of "outsiders" trying to create an impression that there are troubles inside Pentridge. He comments on the events "It was better than normal. It's not what you or I would like to think is normal - but we've got thirteen prisons to look after in Victoria. There's always something happening in some prison or other. This was a very low-key incident."

Meanwhile The Australian newspaper of May 15 reports that thirty prisoners returning from strike rioted the day before. The information coming out of the gaol is sketchy because the government is doing all that it can to suppress the facts. Nevertheless it is clear that prisoners in Pentridge, many of them imprisoned unjustly by a system which places protection of the property and privileges of the wealthy above the needs of masses of people, can no longer tolerate a situation in which they are denied all human rights and dignity. No amount of bluster by Smith and his like can change that fact.

The demonstration reflects the growing realisation by gay people that only by united action can they begin to roll back the social prejudices which perpetuate their oppression. The growth of organisations such as the Gay Liberation Front is laying the foundations for a social movement which will destroy the superstitious ignorance fostered by those who seek to maintain their positions of social privilege by inflaming divisions among the oppressed.

DA Sellers Attacked

BY PETER CONRICK

Over the past two months sellers of DIRECT ACTION have been subject to harassment when attempting to sell in the union building at Melbourne University.

During that period DIRECT ACTION sellers were continually ordered to leave the union building. Apparently it is an offence against union council regulations to sell within the union building, the building most widely frequented by students at that university.

On a recent Friday night two members of the Socialist Youth Alliance, including a leading La Trobe University student activist, were physically pushed down some stairs in the union building while attempting to sell DIRECT ACTION.

After making official complaints against such use of physical violence, the SYA activists were warned that the grant to the Melbourne University SYA Club may be cut, and the club itself may be dis-affiliated from the union council. Even though these threats were eventually withdrawn the intimidatory regulation still remains. The union council directed the porters in the union building to place no restrictions on DIRECT ACTION sellers until May 28. On that date the union council next meet and will discuss the future of the regulation which presently prohibits the sale of radical literature in the union building. At that meeting the Socialist Youth Alliance will make a submission which will include a call for the immediate removal of that regulation.



Socialist Youth Alliance 4th National Conference

Over Easter the Socialist Youth Alliance held its Fourth National Conference, which was attended by young socialists from all parts of Australia. They came to plan a strategy for the upsurge of youth. A strategy which didn't just repeat the time worn idealistic phrases or offer token support for the struggles of colonial peoples, women, homosexuals, students and working people, but one which expressed itself in action by fighting the demands of the oppressed as part of the struggle for socialism.

The Socialist Youth Alliance doesn't just talk about the ideals of socialism, but does something about it!

For example, the conference outlined a programme for revolt in the secondary schools. This programme will be printed in the form of a document adopted by the conference, in the next issue of DIRECT ACTION.

Of great importance to us is that we see

the tasks of revolutionary youth as being internationalist in character. The international consequences of the Vietnam war and the crucial role of the international anti-war movement graphically illustrates this fact. Once again we don't merely mouth our internationalism but express it in practice through our support of the Fourth International - the world party of socialist revolution.

The greetings printed here were some of those received by the conference from international co-thinkers and are representative of the international movement of which SYA is part.

If you wish to join in the movement for a socialist Australia you should join SYA. For young people who realise what is happening in the world today nothing is more important than laying their ideals on the line and fighting for them. SYA is doing just that!



Тов. Ленин ОЧИЩАЕТ
ЗЕМЛЮ ОТ НЕЧИСТИ.
Lenin sweeps away the filth of the world.

Help us sweep. JOIN SYA!

I would like more information on the Socialist Youth Alliance

I would like to join the Socialist Youth Alliance

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

PHONE..... POSTCODE.....

Send to 139 St Johns Rd, Glebe, NSW, 2037.

Gay Rally Marks Death of Duncan

BY BRIAN GREEN

On Friday May 11, a rally was held in Melbourne to mark the first anniversary of the death of Dr George Duncan, a lecturer at Adelaide University and a homosexual. Duncan drowned after being bashed and thrown into the Torrens River on Thursday May 10 last year.

In addition to the Melbourne rally other acts of protest occurred throughout Australia. The "In Memoriam" column of the Adelaide newspaper the Advertiser carried a total of 32 memorial notices for Duncan. One of which read: "DUNCAN, George Ian Ogilvie, a suffered and died because of his homosexuality. How many more Duncans? Slogans like "Duncan was murdered one year ago by SA police - remember." were also painted around Adelaide on May 10.

The Torrens Bank where Duncan was murdered is used by gay people in Adelaide as a meeting place. Gays at the Torrens Bank have quite often been subjected to bashing and being thrown into the river. The police have never afforded any protection to the gays and in fact many people believe that members of the police force may be responsible for the victimisation of gays in the area and more particularly, the death of Duncan.

The mystery surrounding Duncan's murder has never been solved despite police "investigation", the offer of a



Slogan pointed on wall in Adelaide

\$5,000 reward by the government and a special investigation by police from Scotland Yard in Britain. The British police were called in because of the possible involvement of South Australian police in Duncan's murder. No action has been taken by the government as a result of the findings of the Scotland Yard investigation. However these members of the SA police force resigned soon after Duncan's murder. They were seen on the night of the murder within three hundred yards of the spot where the murder occurred.

The rally on May 11 was organised by the Melbourne Gay Liberation Front. Up to two hundred people participated in the rally over a two hour period. After a meeting in the City Square, the demonstration marched through the streets behind a coffin. Banners, placards, flags and chants reflected the feelings of solidarity, pride, and anger that gays all over the world are beginning to feel. One of the protesters' chants was: "two, four, six, eight, gay is just as good as straight", "three, five, seven, nine, try it our way just one time." Another was "Who killed Duncan? You killed Duncan", meaning that public ignorance and hostility toward homosexuals make murders such as Duncan's possible. Because gay people are outcast by other sections of the society and discriminated against by the law they are forced to meet secretly and thus are open to victimisation and blackmail.

GREETINGS TO CONFERENCE

ARGENTINA: Socialist Workers Party

Comrades, The Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (Socialist Workers Party) sends its fraternal revolutionary greetings to the Fourth National Conference of the Socialist Youth Alliance.

We hope that this conference will mark a leap forward for your organisation and a strengthening of the world Trotskyist-Leninist movement, the Fourth International.

With fraternal revolutionary greetings.

JAPAN: Revolutionary Communist League

Dear Comrades, We are very sorry that we cannot send our young representative to your Fourth National Conference, but we sincerely hope that your conference will be a real success for the Australian Trotskyist movement as a part of our worldwide international movement.

Since the heroic fighters of Vietnam have given a serious blow to the U.S. imperialism, the whole situation of Asia and the Pacific area has begun rapid and big changes, objectively in favour of the oppressed toiling masses of the area, in spite of the betrayal roles of the Chinese and Soviet governments. We must fight for a real unity of the Asian and Pacific oppressed masses against the U.S.-Japanese joint-imperialism and native ruling forces, independent from the Moscow and Peking lines.

Total withdrawal of ALL the U.S. armies from Indo-China and all the Asian and Pacific areas!

Complete victory for the Vietnamese people! Victory for the

three Indo-Chinese peoples!

Down with the U.S.-Japanese joint-imperialism and the native

ruling forces in this area!

Long live the Socialist United States of Asia and the Pacific area!

Long live the Socialist Youth Alliance!

Long live the Fourth International!

VENEZUELA: Venezuelan Trotskyist Group

Dear comrades of the Socialist Youth Alliance, From Venezuela we send you revolutionary greetings and our best wishes for a successful National Conference. Your struggle for the construction of an independent revolutionary youth organisation in Australia is part of our common objective: the building of mass revolutionary workers parties integrated in the International, capable of leading the working class to power.

USA: Young Socialist Alliance

Dear comrades, The Young Socialist Alliance sends revolutionary greetings to the Fourth National Conference of the Socialist Youth Alliance. We regret that we are unable to deliver these greetings in person.

We have followed with great interest your activities aimed at providing revolutionary leadership to the struggles of students and youth in Australia. The growth and development of the Socialist Youth Alliance are an inspiring example for the entire world Trotskyist movement.

Although our two organisations are at opposite ends of the globe, we have been able to carry out important joint campaigns particularly in defense of the Vietnamese revolution. Events of the three months since the signing of the cease-fire accords have exposed the fraudulent nature of this "settlement". The U.S. is giving full support to the puppet dictator Thieu in his attempts to wipe out the revolutionary forces, and Nixon has even threatened to resume U.S. bombing if the Vietnamese resist! We applaud the efforts of the Australian anti-war movement to force the Labor Government to end all complicity with the U.S. war machine. Here in the U.S. we recently helped organise nationwide demonstrations against a visit by Thieu. These actions demanded: U.S. Out of Southeast Asia Now! End All Support to Thieu! No U.S. Imposed Regimes in Vietnam!

In recent months we have witnessed a new rise in student struggles around the world. These range from the South African students' struggles against apartheid to the Greek students' fight against the junta for basic democratic rights to the Egyptian students' militant actions. We should particularly note the mass upsurge of French high school and university students, the largest since May-June 1968. The Communist League, French section of the Fourth International, is right in the centre of these struggles and is playing a key leadership role. These struggles reconfirm our assessment of the breadth and scope of the worldwide youth radicalisation.

In this country, the most significant recent development is the spontaneous emergence of a powerful movement against skyrocketing inflation. The meat boycott in April, in which tens of millions of Americans participated, showed the depth of anger against rising food prices.

A national day of protest against high food prices has been called for May 5 and the Y.S.A. is throwing itself into building these actions. We think they can provide an important action focus for this movement. We are helping to organise students, who have been hard hit by Nixon's economic policies, to join in this protest themselves and build support for it in the communities and the labor movement.

The masses of American workers have demonstrated that they are willing to take direct action to defend their standard of living, but the trade union bureaucrats persist in cooperating with Nixon's wage controls and refuse to participate in this struggle. This contradiction can help expose the misleadership of the bureaucracy and begin to impel the American workers toward militant, independent class struggle.

The Young Socialist Alliance is enthusiastically participating in this movement against inflation, and raising transitional demands that point the only way forward in this struggle.

We send you best wishes for success in your conference. Forward to the world socialist revolution! Long live the Socialist Youth Alliance! Long live the Fourth International!

THE ROAD TO FREEDOM

Freedom and U.S. capitalism

Over the past half millennium the overwhelming determinism of the capitalist forces through all chance deviations from the main line of progress has also been effective on the world arena. The road traversed by the United States was the rule, not the exception, for the major capitalist countries both in relation to their precapitalist past and to the colonial peoples.

What happened to freedoms as this process of historical determinism worked itself out in North America? The Native Americans who had hunted, fished, gardened, and practiced their communal customs were decimated and driven out as the newcomers asserted their right by force of arms to settle, farm, lumber, trap, trade, mine, and engage in other occupations that proved incompatible with tribal life. The loss of Indian life and liberty was the bloody price paid for the colonization and exploitation of the continent by private proprietors.

The next large-scale confrontation between new freedoms and old took place in the last quarter of the eighteenth century when the claims of the colonists conflicted with the established rights of the British crown. The rebels wanted the freedom to trade without restriction with foreign nations, to occupy and own the Crown lands, to have their representative institutions, and decide their affairs as a sovereign power. They won these freedoms by fighting seven years against the armed might of the overseas ruler. Thanks to their internal revolutionary struggles the Americans secured still other democratic rights in the bargain.

The Blacks were excluded from the benefits derived from the first American revolution which was led by Southern planters together with the Northern merchants and moneyed men with whom they shared power in the republic. It required the spurt of commercial agriculture and capitalist industry over the next seventy-five years to forge a realignment of social and political forces that finished off chattel slavery, legally emancipated the slaves, and vested complete supremacy in the capitalist class. The planters were forever deprived of their odious privilege, sanctified by the original Constitution, to own and trade in human beings, the freedom they fought to preserve.

After the Civil War and Reconstruction, the jubilant bourgeoisie took full advantage of their unrestrained freedom to plunge into business enterprise. They were freer than ever to invest, exploit, trade, and despoil the resources of the state and the nation. V. L. Partridge dubbed this plundering period "The Great Barbecue." The giants of capital were free to gobble up and shove aside the lesser ones. The United States became a veritable paradise of bourgeois-democratic freedoms.

In class society the freedoms of that part of the population on top are based upon the oppression of the majority on the bottom. And so capitalist America lorded it over the Blacks, Chicanos, Native Americans, Filipinos, and Puerto Ricans. Moreover, everyone, regardless of station, was subjected to the remorseless laws of the capitalist system. The small farmers were at the mercy of the vicissitudes of the capitalist market. While the capitalist rejoiced that he was a free agent in the freest of countries, as a private owner of the means of production he had to conduct his business according to the dictates of profit making or he would not long remain an entrepreneur.

The wage workers had incomparably less freedom of choice. If they were to survive and take care of their families, they had to submit to the terms of payment and conditions of labor laid down by the boss—or else suffer the dire consequences of unemployment and poverty.

The all-pervasive determinism of the capitalist sys-

tem ramifies from its economic roots into all aspects of social and cultural life. It forces people desiring news and entertainment to listen to repugnant TV and radio commercials. It forces the poor to crowd slums and ghettos while the upper classes live in luxury apartments and comfortable suburbs. It forces imperialist wars and comfortable suburbs. It forces imperialist wars and comfortable suburbs. It forces imperialist wars and comfortable suburbs.

However, every determinism, like every freedom, runs up against its opposite and continually contends with it for living space. In the contemporary world two main determinisms come to grips with each other. One is the determination of the profiteers to hang on by any means necessary to their property, privileges, and power and defend these to the death. The other is the growing determination of the working people and the oppressed to curb and abolish the sources of their misery.

The Russian Revolution

On a world-historical scale the determinism that enabled the capitalist forces to sweep everything before them suffered a momentous reversal in 1917. With the victory of the socialist revolution in Russia the workers and their allies asserted their mastery over all the powers of the old order, the autocracy, generals, landlords, and capitalists alike.

The events of 1917 and their sequel inaugurated a new birth of freedom and the higher form of self-determination of the popular masses made possible by the overthrow of capitalism. By 1970 this process had spread to thirteen other countries.

The victory of the Bolsheviks was regarded as an aberration that would not be repeated and might even be erased by the counterrevolution. This supposition appeared plausible so long as the first workers' republic stood alone and isolated in capitalist encirclement, as it did for almost three decades.

The revolutionary developments following World War II have confirmed the fact that the seizure of power by the Russian workers and peasants was not an odd deviation but a lawful expression of the main trend of historical progress in our time. Naturally the imperialists and their hangers-on who believe that their system has an everlasting lease on life still refuse to face up to this fact. Although they now know that the October Revolution was a prologue to the colonial revolution, they reject the inference that both are parts of a worldwide revolution. Their partisans hug the notion that the anticapitalist sentiments and movements that have agitated and transformed backward countries from China to Cuba will never become strong and impudent enough to break their hold over the highly industrialized nations. And they stand ready to take whatever practical measures are required to ensure that such will be the case.

However, it takes no great gifts of prophecy to foresee that the inevitable processes of social and political change will catch up with these arrogant plutocrats, as they did with the Russian czar, the Chinese gentry, the British Loyalists, and Southern slaveholders. When the War of Independence took place, the colonial rev-

olution on the Atlantic seaboard was likewise viewed as a marginal historical occurrence by the reigning feudal monarchies in Europe. Yet it prefigured their own downfalls. The American monopolists and militarists are similarly short-sighted today. They, too, will turn and in time will confront more opposition than they can handle on their own home grounds.

The core of freedom to the capitalists is their right to maintain private ownership and control over the state that enables them to perpetuate the conditions of exploitation at home and abroad. The elementary rights demanded by the masses in this country and the world over run counter to these necessities of capitalist domination. The people want to work at agreeable and productive occupations and earn enough to have a decent and improving standard of living. They want to enjoy their leisure, breathe clean air and drink fresh water, live at peace, and look forward to a secure and brighter future. These needs cannot be guaranteed or granted by the existing masters of society, no matter how often they are promised by glib politicians. Capitalism creates far more demands than it can satisfy.

Hence the deepening division between the two combatants. Their irrepressible conflict keeps breaking out at all levels of social and political life, ranging from struggles for democratic rights and antiwar demonstrations to protests over the befouling of the environment. What represents freedom for the one side, the right to poison the atmosphere for profit or explode atomic weapons, is a deadly and intolerable infringement on the right of survival for all humankind.

The deliverance of the dispossessed from such evils necessitates the destruction of the dominance of the capitalist class. This conflict of necessities forbids any enduring reconciliation between the contending camps, whatever compromises and concessions are arrived at along the way. In the end one must yield to the other.

This was the kind of situation that led to the confrontations issuing in the War of Independence and the Civil War. It is emerging once again at the highest stage of capitalist development and decadence. This is the central fight for freedom against servitude today.

The ordinary person does not think of freedom in this historical and sociological manner. They approach its problems in a more individualistic way than the broadly based class struggle method of the Marxists. They are mostly concerned with what they as private persons can or cannot do under the given situation. Such an attitude is not only understandable but warranted in a certain sense. Freedom is not some abstract entity floating in empty space but the specific rights and powers that actually belong to flesh-and-blood human beings and are exercised and enjoyed by them.

But personal freedom is a function of the social situation as a whole and cannot transcend the state of collective freedom. Whatever needs, expectations, plans, and desires individuals may have, the chances of their realization are determined not by themselves alone but by their environment and conditions of life. Such might be supra-personal factors as the social structure of the nation, the correlation of class forces, and the trends of development that give rise to explosive economic and political crises, wars, and revolutions. These not only shape and reshape the course of history but fundamentally determine the amount and character of the freedoms allowable and attainable to the individual.

Sometimes these factors produce very anomalous assortments of freedom and unfreedom. The Russian economists, thanks to the achievements of the October Revolution and the participation of the Soviet government in the space race, were free to fly around the earth and the moon. Yet Soviet citizens do not have the right of travel and are not permitted to go abroad without permission of the secret police. Unofficial flight over the borders is an act of treason punishable by imprisonment or death. While the physical constraints upon locomotion previously imposed by the laws of nature have been overcome, the Soviet people remain in a straitjacket of state coercion.

If we are subject to natural and social necessities then what room is there for freedom of choice? Marxism answers that our lives are not exclusively determined for us by external and uncontrollable forces but also by us as consciously acting and reacting beings. Human activity is a synthesis of external forces and self-determination. There are three main acting levels of determination in the total historical process: social determinism, class determinism, and individual decision. The choices and conduct of individual enter as a component into the self-determined actions and reactions of the classes determining the direction history will take.

The recognition of natural and social determinism and the necessary character of historical development does not negate any actual freedom of choice that individuals or groups have or dispose of in their responsibility. It rather defines and delimits this freedom in which decision must operate.

Marxism affirms both the reality of choice and the possibility of extending its scope in everyday life. We are conscious, willing, rational beings, not manipulated by external mechanisms. In situations

PART 2 OF A 2 PART ARTICLE

limiting real alternatives, we are not only capable of selecting one course over another but can be held morally accountable for our decisions and their consequences. We are responsible for whatever can be changed by our will and actions.

But the power of choice is limited to situations over which influence can be exercised. Persons cannot be held liable for something beyond their control, as the law recognizes.

The problems of individual conduct, conscience, and accountability that preoccupy the moralists have their place and importance. But these should be viewed in their essential connections with the overriding social-historical processes that decide the fate of nations, classes, and humanity. "The logic of the class struggle does not exempt us from the necessity of using our own initiative, talent, energy, and heroism into the framework of historical necessity, has not grasped the philosophical secret of Marxism."⁴

Social determinism is made up of a multitude of small individual decisions. This can be verified in the routine as well as the exceptional incidents of everyday life. In the metropolis hundreds of thousands of persons wake up five or six mornings a week and decide to leave for work in offices, factories, or shops. Some few will choose for one reason or another not to go to the job that day. But the vast majority have little margin of choice; they must work in order to make a living. This regularity can be briefly broken if workers take the conscious decision to defy the bosses or the government and call a general strike. Their class will and interests are then counterposed to the interests and will of the ruling powers.

The decision-making process has both an objective and a subjective side as well as a public and private side. Each individual makes up his or her mind about what to do or not to do under given circumstances. But the main stream of events is determined by the sum total of these private choices which then becomes a public fact. It is the storm, not the raindrop, that uproots trees and refreshes the earth.

The necessities involved in decision-making can have a conflicting character. This can be dramatically demonstrated in military life. Unconditional obedience to orders from a superior is mandatory in an army. The prime purpose of military training is to instill habits of unquestioning discipline in the ranks. Under normal conditions soldiers will carry out commands from a sense of duty or fear of punishment.

But this categorical rule can be disregarded and disobeyed when the men become mutinous and break discipline. The old necessities are no longer coercive under the influence of a different psychology induced by changed circumstances.

When rebellious soldiers go over to a revolutionary army, they can again become disciplined. There is a distinctive difference in the necessities at work in the two cases. One has been imposed from above and is obeyed under the weight of official authority; the other is consciously assumed as an obligation for the promotion of social and political aims. Actions motivated by conscious conviction stand on a different footing than those governed by external coercion.

Carliss Lamont points out that the word intelligence originated in the Latin *inter* (between) and *legere* (to choose).⁵ The functions of reasoning and choosing are linked together not only by etymology but in action. Reasoning and knowledge are essential elements in decision-making, whether the choice is a trivial one of what to wear or a crucial one of engaging in a strike or leading an insurrection.

The choices we make are not arbitrary, capricious, and impulsive, as the Existentialists would have it, even though some do belong to that category. But most of our practical decisions and certainly the most significant made by masses of people, are prompted by factors and considerations that are historically conditioned, socially determined, and rationally explicable.

This brings us to the most important decision an individual has to make today. That is the answer to the question: with which side should I be aligned in the ongoing struggle between the capitalists and their opponents? Many Americans first felt the urgency of this choice in regard to the Vietnam war. But it will continue to be posed in one crisis after another.

4. Trotsky, Leon, 1905. New York: Random House, 1972, p. 37.

5. Lamont, Carliss, *Freedom of Choice Affirmed*. New York: Horizon Press, 1967, p. 33.

BY GEORGE NOVACK

Individuals and the class struggle

The person who wishes to be in step with progress and not struggle in its rear is obligated to become fully aware of the necessity, lawfulness, rationality, and realism of the struggle between the class contenders, just as the mid-nineteenth century Americans had to judge the merits and justice of the conflict between the slave South and the North. In order to participate in the events of our time with the utmost clarity of consciousness and practical effectiveness, it is essential to know which class is the agency of social progress and which embodies reaction.

Marxism asserts that the proletarian producers of wealth, not its capitalist appropriators and mismanagers, are the social force determinative of the future. This conclusion, derived from its analysis of history and the structural characteristics and tendencies of contemporary capitalism is the pivotal principle of its economics, sociology, politics, and moral teachings.

Since the working class is the chief vehicle of advancement and the monopolists are its foremost obstructors, it is imperative to choose between them. This is the gravest decision any mature thinking person can make because it can not only mold one's career but contribute to the success or failure of the contending camps.

Existentialists are not wrong in attaching importance to the act of choice and stressing the consequences of the commitment that flows from it when great issues are at stake. They err in the assumptions that such choices are made by totally autonomous individuals severed from the conditions of life and labor with unrestricted capacities to choose in a void. Personal choices are made under concrete conditions by people with definite characters and class allegiances which impel them in one direction rather than another, toward one goal rather than another, and which determine whether the decision is right or wrong, good or bad, false or true.

The real options available at this juncture of American and world history are not ambiguous or unlimited; they are quite clear and specific. We cannot go back to tribalism, feudalism, slavery, or tiny cooperative colonies. We can either go from bad to worse under monopoly capitalism—or go forward with the rest of advancing humanity toward socialism. There is no intermediate path, whatever the confusions think or say.

The decision of revolutionary Marxists to fight for socialism against capitalism is far removed from the specifications of Existentialism. It is not an arbitrary, inexplicable, purely subjective option taken in fear and trembling out of desperation. It is a course adopted after objectively appraising the history of the past and the current situation and weighing the alternatives. This reasonable position generates a confidence born of conviction that the cause is just.

Everyone's decisions are made under the pressure of external circumstances. The point is that they can either act blindly under the sheer compulsion of events or in accord with forethought and foresight. Scientific socialism seeks to equip the individuals it educates and the movements it guides with the maximum knowledge and consciousness about historical developments.

The class struggle cannot be halted, though it may be diverted. It unfolds with a relentless determinism regardless of the degree of awareness and organization attained by either side. Its events and vicissitudes have varying effects at different stages upon the members of society, depending upon their socioeconomic situation and their personal characters. Workers can respond more readily and energetically to economic pressures in the struggle for survival and make their choices accordingly as they enhance their political consciousness. Persons in a more comfortable situation may be immediately motivated by other considerations. Both feel the effects of the class struggle, react to its pressures and influences, and can arrive at similar conclusions from different starting points. When an outmoded order enters into visible decay, diverse elements can find its continuance intolerable and come over to the revolutionary cause.

As a nation radicalizes, the sharpening class consciousness among the oppressed heightens problems of conscience among their potential allies. What is one's conscience among their potential allies. What is one's duty in a social crisis when the fate of a nation is at stake? What is to be done in regard to it?

This moral and political dilemma is now confronting more and more Americans. Three possible lines of conduct are open. One is to remain passive and inert, immersing oneself in private pursuits and thereby becoming the plaything or the helpless victim of the powers that be. Another is to serve and help prop up the forces of reaction.

The best course is to support and participate with all one's resources in the struggles of the oppressed for a better world. Anyone who hopes to find a private road to freedom is deluded. The road to liberation leads through the emancipation of all the oppressed



on this planet. That has to be a collective revolutionary endeavor along socialist lines.

This class alternative defines the criteria of what is good and bad in public affairs. Whatever promotes the success of the movements for liberation from capitalist servitude or bureaucratic domination is worthwhile; whatever obstructs or weakens these aims is to be condemned. Thus the use of violence by the U.S. imperialist interventionists in Vietnam is morally, politically, socially, historically wrong whereas the defensive counter-measures of the Vietnamese freedom-fighters are eminently justified on all these counts. Moreover, there is no other way for the Vietnamese to achieve their national independence, unification, and social liberation. Their voluntary revolutionary struggle is a necessary one.

The individual and collective will is not inescapably thwarted by the causal conditions and connections of things as the Existentialists teach. The will can coincide with and cooperate with natural and social necessities. In the process of social determination personal decision is one link in a chain of events that begins with objective circumstances and ends in objective consequences. A subjective act of choice made in accord with objective needs and circumstances can not only be decisive for the individual but for history as well when a sufficient number of like-minded individuals make the same choice and act upon it.

The opponents of socialism and many Existentialists contend that to become part of a revolutionary mass movement or join a vanguard party is to endanger or forfeit the most precious of all goods—one's distinctive individuality. They fail to understand that the deliberate choice of participating in an organized and disciplined way in the struggle for socialism can be the highest assertion of personal freedom. Such a commitment is necessary if humanity and its environment are to be rescued from destruction.

No one has expressed the relationship between the demands of historical necessity and the fulfillment of the personality more felicitously than Leon Trotsky. At the close of the introduction to his autobiography he wrote: "To understand the causal sequence of events and to find somewhere in the sequence one's own place—that is the first duty of a revolutionary. And at the same time, it is the greatest personal satisfaction for someone who does not limit his tasks to the present day."⁶

"But how am I to know, how can I be assured that the way forward for humankind is through the world socialist revolution when so many fearsome difficulties and uncertainties loom up along the road?" This dilemma is stressed by the empiricists who are wise only after all the returns are in. It can be resolved in theory and by practice. Genuine scientific knowledge enables us to be foresighted and intelligent before the event so that small affairs as well as great can be directed toward the desired goal. Marxism offers such a scientific method of comprehending historical processes and engaging in living politics.

Revolutionaries in all ages have not been mere spectators of the struggles of their time; they have assisted them toward the most favorable outcome by their conscious intervention and organized action.

People who can produce and reproduce something and bring about a preconceived result through their deliberated activity really understand its essential nature. Their freedom is real, not fanciful. This principle of the Marxist theory of knowledge is especially applicable to the anticapitalist struggle. A class that can make a successful revolution and a party that can organize and lead one to victory know where current history is heading and what it is all about.

Practice is the supreme test of truth. The only effective way to refute the sceptics is to prepare for the anticipated offensive of the masses against capitalism, carry it through to the conquest of power by the workers, and then reconstruct human relations according to socialist standards. By redirecting history and releasing freedom from the deadly determinism of imperialism and its class relations, the forces of socialism will be able to prove the worth of their ideas and the correctness of their perspectives.

6. Trotsky, Leon, *My Life*. New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970, p. xxxv.

ON THE PICKET LINE



Insurance Workers Win Pay Rise

BY ANDREW JAMIESON

As a response to the vociferous demands of many white collar unions for substantial salary increases to combat rising prices, 10,000 public servants in Victoria were granted a 15 per cent rise to be introduced from May 27. This is in addition to the national wage case rise.

The decision handed down on Tuesday May 4 affects State public servants in the middle income bracket - a salaries from \$5,300 to \$13,000 per annum. Other sections of the public service such as tradesmen were excluded from the decision. They had previously been granted over award benefits totalling \$12.90 per week.

The decision to grant the rise has given a real boost to many other white collar workers, such as the insurance workers (see the article on this page). The increasing militancy of white collar unions in fighting for wage rise, in spite of the national wage case decision, is indicative of the feelings of the trade union movement as a whole.

The relative piñance granted by arbitration in the national wage case was seen as no final solution to the problems of rising prices. Already unions in the Commonwealth Public Service have lodged claims demanding substantial salary increases. With the favorable decision for the State Public Service the case for Commonwealth public servants has had considerable weight added to it.

After Reilley announced the offer, the federal secretary called for a motion supporting the offer, together with all the strings attached, which was seconded only after a few silent minutes. Discussion was then called for. John Hall, a rank and file militant, got up and spoke strongly condemning the pay offer as inadequate, explaining it did little to alleviate the plight of junior clerks and women.

He pointed out that the offer did not amount to much due to the rate of inflation, and because the percentage rate meant little for the lower paid clerks - only a dollar per week more in most cases. He moved that the pitiful offer be rejected.

That the life assurance and general insurance companies announced record dividends and c in an effort to build huge office blocks meant little to the union officials. These same companies claimed they could not afford to pay their employees an eight per cent salary rise.

During his speech the federal secretary attempted to dampen down the enthusiasm and militancy imparted to the meeting by a call for industrial action. Other speakers were spurred on pointing out what the offer meant. Women brought up the important equal pay issue which the union brass had continually avoided. Speakers in favour of the officials were received very coldly.

Faced with increasing opposition to the companies offer, a compromise motion was introduced supporting the pay offer "with regret", and warning that further claims would be sought should prices increase. With no discussion allowed,

the union leadership has failed to act on in a consistent way. By taking up all these issues and organising around them a real alternative can and will be posed to the present leadership. Hopefully a leadership that represents the real interests of the rank and file will be successful in the coming election instead of one that merely pays lip service to this ideal.

By taking up all these issues and organising around them a real alternative can and will be posed to the present leadership. Hopefully a leadership that represents the real interests of the rank and file will be successful in the coming election instead of one that merely pays lip service to this ideal.

Militant Victimised

BY JOHN COLEMAN

Ray O'Shannassy, a former secretary of the ACT Trades and Labour Council, was sacked from his position as canteen employee of the Department of Labour ostensibly for combing his hair over a wash basin after finishing work. This was so despite the fact that no hygienic washing and changing facilities are provided for the staff at the kitchen. However the issues involved go much further.

O'Shannassy, who is a member of the Communist Party of Australia, has had a long history of persecution as a union militant and has been blacklisted by government departments and private employers in the ACT. In addition he has been active in other areas where radical action has been taken, being gaoled last year for handing out leaflets in defiance of The National Service Act. He was also active in the struggle around the Aboriginal Embassy and moved for the expulsion of the Police Association from the TLC for failing to carry out council decisions.

Protesting the sacking, O'Shannassy staged a sit-in at the canteen, whereupon police were called in to remove him. He returned the next day to address staff but was prevented from entering the canteen by police. Eventually, after making it clear that he would non-violently persist in his attempt to enter and that to stop him they would have to arrest him, the police were removed. After talking with the 15 canteen staff it was decided to strike indefinitely until he was reinstated.

It seems that it is not only government departments that are after O'Shannassy. In contravention of union rules, his union, the Liqueur and Allied Trades Union, didn't report the dispute to the TLC. The TLC then tried to avoid any action over it by resorting to technical matters of procedure when O'Shannassy himself brought it to their attention.

Trainee Teachers

BY JOHN REYNOLDS

The recent Sydney Teachers College strike, over the non-payment of trainee teachers' salaries, has gained many more concessions than previously known.

The most important was obviously the granting, or solving, of all pay disputes within a 48 hour period. The STC dispute, which involved over 2000 students, also displayed the weakness of the Education Department when under pressure. The Director of Teachers' Education, Muir, capitulated very readily to trainee demands. In fact, trainee negotiators were caught off guard and probably could have achieved much more had they been prepared.

Muir and his boss, Minister for Education Eric Willis, were apparently unsettled by the appearance of 2000 trainees on their doorsteps. Willis reacted with accusations of "political motives" when answering questions related to the strike in Parliament. Neither the department nor the colleges were willing to accept responsibility for the multiple bungles and incompetence, which was behind the failure to pay salaries.

It was apparent, however, that strike action was the trainees only practical method of forcing the departments hand. Taking direct political action against Willis and the department is the only method by which trainees can gain equitable working conditions.

Workers Control Conference

BY JIM McILROY

"Workers' Control: The Way Forward", the first of the Newcastle Workers' Club, scene of the first National Workers' Control Conference held over the Easter weekend of April 21 and 22. The conference registered only halting steps toward the realisation of this aim. Nevertheless, it showed the great breadth of interest which the ideas of workers' control have created among trade union militants, students and other radicalised groups in Australia.

The conference organisers announced an attendance of about 450 people. A large section of these were young people, particularly young workers and students. This widespread receptivity to the experiences thrown up by workers' control struggles in Australia and overseas is another indication of the depth of the current radicalisation. Young workers particularly are seeking alternatives to the over present exploitation and alienation of advanced capitalist industry, the threat of unemployment, of speed-ups, and so on.

The idea of breaking down the power and authority of the boss by taking over management of production is very appealing. But how is this to be achieved without solving the basic question of private ownership of the means of production and control of the state machinery? How are concepts of "workers' participation" in management and "workers' control" to be distinguished in practice? Most importantly how do we relate the concept of workers' control to a general strategy for socialism?

These were some of the vital questions which were raised, but certainly not resolved at the conference.

WORKERS' CONTROL AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM

Workers' control is an old demand of the working class. It was raised during the Russian Revolution. The Communist International adopted it at its third congress. Trotsky incorporated it into the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International.

Workers' control is a transitional demand which most readily demonstrates the determination of the workers to overthrow capitalism and institute socialism.

The demand for workers' control acquires particular importance under neo-capitalism today. Because capitalist control of industry is so intimately bound up with its management of the economy as a whole, the demand for workers' control, to be made a meaningful, immediately raises the question of workers' management of society as a whole - socialism.

For these reasons, workers' control cannot be isolated from the struggle for socialism. It must be set in the context of this struggle. To confuse actions in individual factories with "workers' control" is totally misleading. Yet this is precisely what the Communist Party of Australia, (CPA) did at the conference.

The fruits of this deception were revealed in the discussion of a work-in at a glove factory in South Australia. A work-in was staged to prevent the factory's closing down owing to bankruptcy and obsolete machinery. As a result the workers have been left high and dry trying to find orders so that they can compete with other, more efficient factories. This has done more to defuse the issue of workers' control than to maintain it in its eat to capitalism.



Miners at South Clifton colliery during work-in

THE DEBATE ON WORKERS' CONTROL

The conference was divided into four sessions over two days. The first day was taken up largely with discussion of recent experiences with the "work-in" tactic, in particular the examples of the Harco, South Clifton mine and Sydney Opera House work-ins.

The organisers of the conference however, in preparing the agenda and the principal draft resolutions, made no provision for discussion aimed at defining workers' control. Most speakers from the CPA had no clear answer to this question and even adopted a hostile attitude to those who attempted to bring it before the conference. Many were openly derisive of speakers who raised the question of nationalisation of basic industries such as the building industry. The call for nationalisation was denounced in the general enthusiasm for the work-in as the new and all-embracing strategy for the future.

It is true that merely raising the call for nationalisation will not in itself result in achieving this aim, but there was general unwillingness on the part of the lead speakers and the majority of CPA members to discuss the theoretical problems and the means of bringing about nationalisation.

Indeed the CPA counterposed workers' control to nationalisation. The sectarian Socialist Labour League committed this error in reverse by counterposing nationalisation to workers' control.

In reality, nationalisation and workers' control are directly inter-related. Workers' control under nationalisation distinguishes workers' control under socialism from workers' control under capitalism. The demand for nationalisation thus provides workers' control with its revolutionary thrust. It provides the bridge from workers' control as a transitional step to socialism where the workers actually do control. Neither the CPA nor the SLL saw this. Both tendencies mechanically separated workers' control from nationalisation and, inevitably, from the struggle for socialism.

The thrust of most CPA speakers' contributions was that the work-in was a new form of struggle, which had the potential of being the leading force in the socialist movement. Criticisms of this perspective were condemned out of hand. In a report on the conference in the CPA newspaper Tribune, Denis Freney went so far as to brand these criticisms as an attempt to "disrupt" the conference.

THE NEED FOR A PROGRAMME

As Gordon Adler, a dissident CPA member and frequent contributor to DIRECT ACTION pointed out, there was no real attempt by the CPA representative to confront questions of theory about the work-in tactic and workers' control in general.

Comrade Adler explained that while he disagreed with many of the ideas of the Socialist Labour League, who opposed the work-in on principle as a "sell out", he was disturbed by the attitude of the CPA leadership which seemed to want to talk about individual struggles and experiences and not about workers' control as part of a strategy for socialist revolution.

Comrade Adler pointed out that for workers' control to become a reality, a programme of demands which the workers could see as being relevant to their needs, yet which struck at the basis of capitalist power, was necessary.

Such a programme would include demands

for a reduction of the working week with no loss in pay, sharing the available work among all workers; automatic monthly wage rises to cover increase in the cost of living; workers' control over the Consumer Price Index; the opening of all company books to public scrutiny by elected representatives of the workers; the right of the workers to veto hiring and firing; the right of women to work, on equal pay; control of safety measures to be in the hands of the workers; and other demands thrown up by the workers themselves.

In addition this programme should take up the demands of the mass movements, support for the demands of the anti-war movement, repeal of abortion laws, black control of the black community, repeal of anti-gay laws and support for the demands of the student movement are integral to the demands raised by the working class and its allies in the class struggle.

These demands are part of a transitional programme which will ultimately unite all anti-capitalist movements in a revolutionary challenge to the capitalist state.

WHAT KIND OF "WORKERS' CONTROL INSTITUTE?"

Unfortunately, the CPA rejected the whole concept of such a programme of concrete demands and counterposed their concept of a "workers' control institute". What this institute would do was not defined. Its only definite function appeared to be the encouragement of research and the provision of information to those who cared to seek its assistance. The workers' control movement would be effectively diverted away from the path of militant struggle, into an academic exercise under CPA guidance.

What was completely lacking in the considerations behind the formation of this institute was the perspective of building a revolutionary party, a combat organisation inspiring, supporting and participating in workers' control struggles. Workers will not be aroused to struggle by the mere existence of an institute, but only by a fighting organisation determined to win their demands, and able to organise and educate the working class with the perspective of carrying out a revolutionary struggle for power.

THE WORK-IN: TACTIC OR STRATEGY?

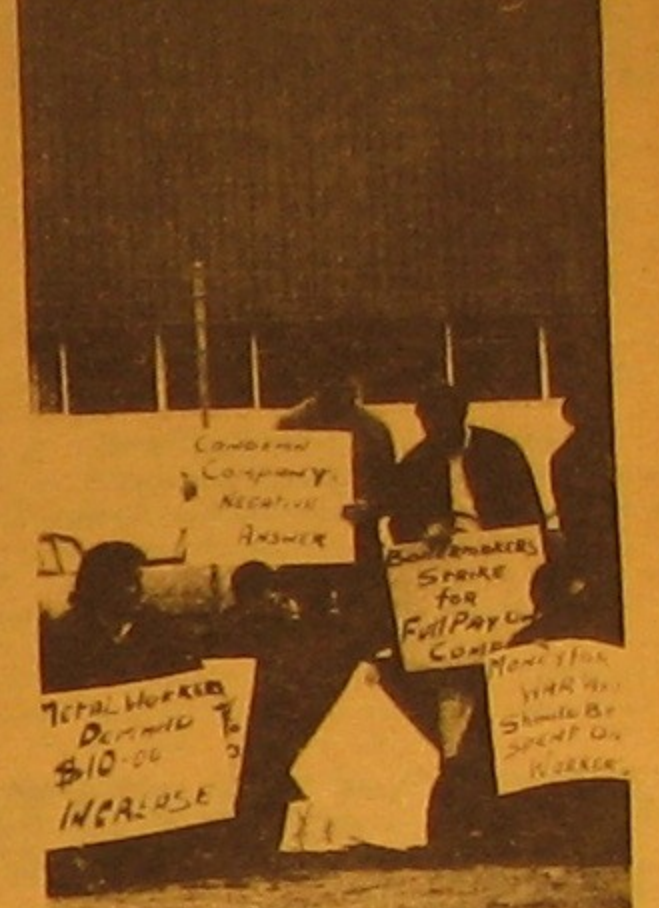
The work-in is a tactic which has been increasingly thrown up in struggle by groups of workers. In such a confrontation between exploiter and exploited, socialists should support the workers, but not uncritically. The work-in tactic should not be raised to the level of a strategy. It might or might not be the most effective method depending on the circumstances.

A whole range of other tactics are equally effective in various situations. Strikes, demonstrations, pickets, occupations and combinations of these are only examples of other forms of action which when used effectively have won great gains for the working class.

The work-in should be seen in this context. In addition, it should be used flexibly, not as a panacea, so that if circumstances such as a lock-out make it difficult to carry out a work-in then the necessary tactical adjustment can be made without disorienting the workers - a very probable outcome if the work-in is conceived of as a cure-all for all workers' struggles. These considerations, which flow from the necessity to analyse the



HARCO STEEL



Top:Costain work-in Above:Harco work-in

work-in in the context of the struggle for socialism, preclude its adoption as a strategy.

THE WAY FORWARD FOR WORKERS' CONTROL

The CPA leadership makes a fetish of the work-in by its uncritical approach. It is most apparent that they see an important role for the work-in as a means of reasserting themselves in the trade union movement. Hence their emphasis on the compatibility of workers' control with the trade union movement, and their implied confinement of the workers' control struggle to trade union methods of struggle.

The workers' control movement must not be used as a substitute for the fight for correct trade union leadership, or as a diversion of the workers' movement from struggle. Rather the workers' control movement should see the necessity for, and the inevitability of, a struggle against the trade union bureaucracy which stifles radical initiative and is particularly hostile to any suggestion the workers should be able to control industry themselves.

Only a revolutionary party with a clear political programme can effectively take up this struggle. Unfortunately the CPA moved away from this perspective at the workers' control conference. If anything, the decision of that conference to set up localised institutes detracts even further from the effective organisation of workers' control struggles than did the initial proposal for a national institute.

Thus the effect of the conference has been to raise awareness of workers control, but not to provide any solid organisational and programmatic basis on which to struggle. It is to be hoped that the next workers' control conference will set clearer perspectives.



Meeting of 2000 insurance clerks in Myer Music Bowl

Vic. Public Servants Mass Meeting

BY HARRY TERBETT

On May 17 the Australian Insurance Staff Federation (AISF) held a mass meeting to consider a pay offer by the employers of a 5 per cent increase from April and a further 3 per cent from October. The conditions to be imposed upon acceptance included among other things, no union campaigning for equal pay, higher overtime benefits, of maternal and paternal leave for the next thirteen months!

About 2,000 insurance clerks gathered to hear the general president of the AISF, Phil Reilley, introduce the offer, and reject a move for an across the board flat increase of \$12 as unrealistic. Reilley came out strongly against any industrial action as futile, thus completely ignoring the successful strike carried out by insurance workers late last year.

the motion was put and narrowly passed, much to the relief of anxious union officials. However, over 40 per cent of the meeting voted for the motion moved by John Hall.

Vic. Tramways Women Continue to Fight

BY DOUG JORDAN

DIRECT ACTION 39 reported the fight for equal job opportunities for women in the Victorian Tramways Union. Since then there has been a further series of developments. The basic issue centres around a ban imposed by the union against training women as tram drivers, thus effectively closing off promotion to higher-paid jobs.

After a union meeting on April 1 to discuss the removal of the ban failed to attract a quorum, many of the rank and file decided to attempt to force the

leadership. At the moment there is no real co-ordination between the rank and file groupings in the various depots. Each has tended to operate purely on an individual depot basis without taking an overall view. The construction of a viable rank and file committee will increase greatly the pressure on the union leadership. With union elections due in about fifteen months there should be enough time to build such a committee. Already several women have indicated that they are going to run in the elections.

The rank and file committee will also take up other issues affecting the conditions of tramway workers. These include compulsory overtime which results in a six-day 48 hour week. There should be a demand for a 35 hour week with no compulsory overtime. Also for a massive recruitment of new staff to relieve the heavy pressure on tramworkers. There is also an urgent need to confront the Tramways Board over its harsh discipline rules which can result in instant sackings or suspensions for trivial offences. These are issues which

The World Revolution

US Demonstrations Protest Inflation

BY CHRIS GRAHAM

Demonstrations in a dozen cities marked the beginning of a mass campaign against inflation in the United States. The actions took place on May 5, in response to a call from the National Consumers Congress on April 11.

The largest action took place in Detroit, where 500 marched, a quarter of them Black people. 400 marched in New York, and 200 each in Boston and San Francisco. The modest numbers were attributed to the short notice given to organise them. In spite of this they succeeded in mobilising people from a broad spectrum of society, encompassing the trade unions, consumer

groups, women's organisations, Black people and the anti-war movement. The May 5 actions laid a viable basis for building a mass movement against inflation.

THE RECESSION IN THE US

The results of a survey taken by the University of Michigan fully bear out the need for such a movement, as well as the significant potential support for such a movement which exists in layers of society.

According to the survey, half of those questioned anticipate a recession in five years. Trends in the US economy fully justify this pessimism. The industrial sector of the Wholesale Price Index for April

rose by 1.3 per cent, the highest rate in 22 years. This will inevitably lead to an increase in prices. Unemployment remains at 5 per cent.

About the only people who have little cause to complain are the capitalists. Richard Gerstenberg of General Motors and Henry Ford II of Ford, presently "earning" \$875,000 a year, may get a rise this year. In the first three months of 1973, overall corporate profits were up 24 per cent!

THE ROLE OF THE TRADE UNIONS

The predominant part played by trade union locals (branches) in the May 5 actions reflects the deepening of the radicalisation

in the working class. Trade union locals provided much of the organisation for the protests, their members predominating amongst the participants and speakers at the rallies.

A week before May 5, the United Labor Action Committee organised a rally of several thousands in San Francisco.

Unionists were also quick to grasp the lessons of the struggle against inflation and the need for building mass actions against it. The importance of these actions was emphasised by Cleveland AFL/CIO head Frank Valenta who said, "People are sick of sending letters to politicians." He added that mass actions were the most effective way to win demands. Valenta commented that the union movement would have to re-learn the lessons of its past struggles.

Many trade union speakers refuted Nixon's claim that inflation was caused by wage rises. They pointed out that even if wages were frozen, workers could still not afford to eat adequately. One unionist also drew attention to the fact that since World War Two, while the price of foodstuffs had increased by 100 per cent, wages had only increased by 50 per cent.

ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT'S ROLE

Anti-war groups such as the National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC) and the Student Mobilisation Committee (SMC) played an important part on May 5. NPAC and SMC speakers pointed to war spending, particularly in Indo-China, as a major cause of inflation. A popular chant at the Boston demonstration was, "Drop prices, not bombs!"

Speakers took heed of the lessons provided by the anti-war struggle. Emphasising the potency of mass actions like the 1970 student strike, Paula Reimers recalled at the Detroit rally that "In May of 1970 Richard Nixon marched into Cambodia and we marched him out!"

An important aspect of consumer struggles is the fight for improved social services, which suffered particularly severe cuts in Nixon's "War Ethic" budget. Many groups involved in this struggle took part in the May 5 action. Organisers viewed the protest as the initial step in building an ongoing mass movement against inflation. In Australia, where consumer protests are also gathering momentum, we can do well to absorb the lessons of the May 5 protest in the United States.

conflict. While acting as chief errand boy implementing the Russification of Ukrainian economic, cultural and political institutions, he was forced to bend somewhat under the massive Ukrainian pressure from below. His book is an example of the kind of lip service he was compelled to render.

But even lip service endangered the position of the Kremlin clique. Shelest's token gestures toward Ukrainian nationalism had the effect of fostering a mini-cult consisting of those who saw Shelest as the lesser evil to the Russification advocates in Moscow.

But Shelest was no oppositionist. Shelest personally presided over the mass arrests in the Ukraine in early 1972 as the Kremlin launched its intensive campaign to crush the growing Ukrainian resistance movement. Among the hundreds of victims of this repression were the most articulate opponents of the Moscow bureaucracy and its Russification policies. Quite clearly then, the slight concessions Shelest felt compelled to make were aimed at stabilising his own position, not challenging Kremlin authority.

Shelest was caught in the middle of this



Terror Bombing of Cambodia

BY FRANS TIMMERMAN

Four months after the signing of the Vietnam ceasefire agreement, the United States is still at war in Indo-China. Each day brings new indications that the Nixon administration is ready to escalate its aggression in the area.

Since the January 27 signing of the truce, US forces have probably dropped over a quarter million tons of bombs on Indochina. This conservative estimate is based on figures released by the Defence Department on April 25.

In February US planes dropped 70,000 tons of bombs on Cambodia and Laos. In March, they dropped 39,000 tons on Cambodia alone. Correspondents' reports indicate that during April the bombing of Cambodia has significantly increased. Bombing was intermittent during February, but started on a daily basis in March. By the end of March, the average daily number of bombing sorties had increased to eight times the daily average for February. This bombing level was maintained during the first half of April.

It is interesting to note that from 1966 to the end of March this year, US and puppet forces have dropped 7.3 million tons of bombs on Indo-China. This is more than three-and-a-half times the total dropped by US planes during all of the second world war.

While the bombing has intensified, it has also become more indiscriminate. On April 16 and 17, US planes bombed villages and other populated areas of Laos around Tha Vieng, southeast of the Plain of Jars. In Cambodia, Nixon's problem is that even massive bombing has not been sufficient to get dwindling forces of the corrupt Lon Nol regime to take the offensive against the Cambodian rebels. Usually, the bombing has served only to protect the retreat of Lon Nol's forces, and to terrorise the population in liberated areas.

In a dispatch to the April 23 Christian Science Monitor, Daniel Southerland described a typical bombing attack on a

Cambodian village, Prek Youn on the Mdong River.

"According to villagers from Prek Youn, and they all agree on this, the bombs hit the village several hours after the Cambodian insurgents had left. The only people hurt by the bombing of Prek Youn, therefore, were civilians."

Villagers told Southerland that the rebels had entered the village one night after firing on a patrol boat of the puppet regime. They urged villagers to leave because of the threat of US bombing. The next morning, two US jets began bombing the village, destroying or damaging half the houses in it. On the following nights, more planes bombed an area nearby where the villagers had taken refuge.

Shake-Up in the Kremlin

BY CHRIS GRAHAM

Nixon's cabinet is not the only one where heads are rolling. A shift of considerable importance is taking place in the upper echelons of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union.

These changes are not simply due to chance. They reflect the pressure caused by the upsurge in the world revolution which is being increasingly brought to bear on these pillars of the status quo.

On May 25, 1972, Pyotr Shelest lost his position as First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party. Two days later he was removed from the Politburo. Shelest was purged for "concessions to nationalism" and "serious breaches of discipline".

Obviously Shelest had serious disagreements with the Kremlin. He was a supporter of the "hard-line" section of the bureaucracy. That is, he opposed the current détente being engineered with Nixon, and was one of the staunchest supporters of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

Students and Unionists Mobilise in France

Interview with Michel Field

Michel Field is a member of the Ligue Communiste, French section of the Fourth International, and of the national high-school strike committee, the highest elected body of the current high-school movement. He was one of the student leaders selected to negotiate with the trade unions about the organisation of the massive April 9 demonstration in Paris. On April 3 he appeared on national television to debate Minister of Education Joseph Fontanet.

(The following interview with Field was obtained for Intracontinental Press in Paris on April 10, the day after the united demonstration.)

Question. First, what was the significance of yesterday's demonstration?

Answer. Yesterday's demonstration was an important step forward for the movement in that it broke the isolation the youth movement had generally suffered from. The youth had demonstrated in the streets alone several times, March 22 and April 2, for example. The turnout was very good, more than 200,000 demonstrators. But the trade unions had called for a united demonstration; the first time the trade unions agreed to meet with the "ultra-leftist" leaders who organised the strike movement in the high-schools and universities.

This is very important, because it means the movement is being extended to other layers of the population, especially to the workers, to the working class in struggle, in the Renault plants, for example, or at Peugeot, where the workers are occupying their factories. There is now a movement of workers in solidarity with the youth, and of youth in solidarity with the workers.

Q. How did the agreement with the CGT (Confédération Generale du Travail-General Confederation of Labor) to have a united demonstration come about?

A. This was very difficult, because the CGT demanded as a precondition for any demonstration that certain organisations led by the French Communist party, specifically the CP's high-school and student unions, have a privileged place in the demo. Since these unions are in fact only one tendency in the movement, it was out of the question for us to grant them any privileges.

The CGT made this a precondition, but in fact, our conditions were accepted, and it was on this basis that no tendency,

not the CP's or any other, would have any special privileges, that the demonstration was able to take place.

Q. What political groups play the greatest role in the leadership of the movement right now?

A. First of all the Ligue Communiste, which took the initiative by calling for the Committees Against the Debre Law as long ago as February, before the movement started. Then the other groups joined in, like Revolution, an ultra-leftist group, and the Alliance des Jeunes pour le Socialisme (Alliance of Youth for Socialism), a Lambertist group that had ignored and even opposed any high-school mobilisation and which has just latched on to the movement, representing sort of the far right of the movement. But anyway, they're in it.

Q. Do the Communist students participate in these strike committees, and how are they received?

A. It varies. In some places CP high-schoolers and students have participated in the strike committees and have abided by the rules of the movement. But most of the time they have just tried to push forward their own groups, the UNEF and UNCAL, and when they do that, they are repudiated by the movement.

They tried to organize their own demonstrations, without even proposing them to the movement, and these resulted in big setbacks, not many demonstrators showed up. This was one of the considerations that forced the CP to make a big tactical turn and come into the movement, and this in part explains the attitude the CGT took yesterday.

Q. How widespread are the strikes in the high schools at the present time?

A. The movement affected nearly all the high schools. Tens of thousands of high-schoolers were organised into the general assemblies, the rank-and-file base in the schools, and into the strike committees.

The delegates that came to the national coordinating meetings represented all the provincial cities, all the Paris high schools, and in these high schools, a huge proportion of the students were on strike or otherwise active in the struggle.

Q. I understand that there have been confrontations with both the police and the fascists. How great a problem is that for the student strikes?



Michel Field

A. The fascists have never attacked the movement head on because they are too weak in France today to get away with clashing with a movement as massive as the one going on now. They tried a few actions and some counterdemonstrations held the day after the big high-school demonstrations.

But these turned out to be failures, partly because they were much too small, and partly because antifascist militants made them understand that the time for them to demonstrate has passed and that the growth of fascist groups would not be tolerated.

As to the attitude of the police, that has gone along with the attitude of the government, which has been contradictory. On the one hand, it has let the movement develop; on the other hand, it has attacked it and at some points has tried to smash it. There was very severe repression as the March 22 demonstration disbanded, and our comrades in Strasbourg, where there had been serious clashes with the police, have been hit by repression too.

As to repression in general, it is now starting to come down heavily. The government is making threats, and the apprentices of the CET (Colleges d'Enseignement Technique, technical education schools) and the high-school students are now being expelled and hit by repression.

Q. When it is decided in the high-school meetings to go back to school, how do the strike leaders respond to that?

A. If the high-schoolers decide the strike has to be stopped, then we stop the strike. But when we've happened, it's not the end of the mobilisation. We have already decided to organize for this June, when the next batch of youth are scheduled to be inducted. We are planning either a mass refusal to submit to the Debre law or else an anti-militarist action within the army. The point is that even if the strike does not start up again, the high-schoolers will remain mobilised, will stay alert, especially to government attacks and to the repression the government is threatening to unleash against them.

Q. It is still too early to tell whether another May '68 will erupt. I think it won't. You can't expect history to repeat itself that way. May '68 was basically at the beginning a youth movement. But that is not the most important thing. It was above all a pre-revolutionary crisis with a great development of social

struggles. Today, this development of social struggles has not yet taken place.

On the level of the youth alone, on that level, we can say that this movement is even more important than May '68—both as to the numbers involved (this time, we have had demonstrations of hundreds of thousands of high-schoolers, while in May '68 these demos had only tens of thousands), and, more important, as to the political level reached. This time, one of the basic pillars of the system, the army, has been challenged. And besides that, the movement's organisational forms have been much more democratic.

So, for the youth, the movement today is much deeper. As to the possible development of a social crisis, it is too early to tell how this will happen, but it is not likely that it will take the same form as May '68.

Q. Has the student movement in other countries, such as Belgium and Spain, been an inspiration for the student movement here in France?

A. Absolutely. Mainly the explosion in the Belgian high schools, which was over the exact same issue that the French students have mobilised around: draft deferments. In February some students from Belgium came to a meeting organised in France by the Ligue Communiste and the Red Circles, the Ligue's high-school organisation, to explain about their struggle. Three weeks later the struggle in France broke out.

Really, the Belgian comrades opened up the way for us and showed us how to fight.

Q. How would you estimate the role played by the various groups in this movement?

A. It is indisputable that the Ligue Communiste and the Red Circles played a very important role, both in terms of the slogans they advanced, which were accepted most of the time by the movement, and in terms of their insistence on respecting the democratic organisation of the movement. There were also other groups, as I said before, leftist groups, groups representing the right-wing of the movement, groups that always had an ambiguous attitude, a factional attitude, that put forward slogans that were not taken up by the majority. In fact, the Ligue has really played the most crucial role in this mobilisation.

Chilean Fascists Launch New Offensive

BY MIKE JONES

Fascism has reared its ugly head in almost every country in the world, but in Latin America it has posed a perennial threat every attempt of the masses for liberation since the depression. Chile is no exception to the rule. Due to the unique conditions of Chilean society, the tactics of fascism also take on unique forms, yet its social roots remain the same.

Chile's uniqueness is based on the nature of the Government which has been in power for the last 2½ years. Known as the Unidad Popular (UP-Popular Unity), it is a coalition of the Chilean Communist Party with "nationalist" bourgeois parties. The proposed aim of the UP is to achieve social reforms by nationalising certain industries and placing prices and wages under the control of the Government while leaving the economy in the hands of the bourgeoisie. The UP has large popular support and was returned with an increased majority in the elections earlier this year.

The "socialist" policies of the UP have led to a strengthening of working class organisations, and worker militancy has been growing rapidly. The Government's refusal to expropriate the local bourgeoisie, however, has resulted in a number of moves by the capitalists to get back what they have lost. In this milieu, fascism finds a ready foothold amongst right-wing sympathisers.

The most active fascist movement in Chile at the present time is known as the Frente Nacionalista por Patria y Libertad

(Nationalist Front for Fatherland and Freedom, commonly known as Patria y Libertad).

The group was formed approximately two years ago under the leadership of Roberto Thieme. Thieme was reported killed in a car accident in February but has recently turned up in the Argentinian city of Mendoza. During the elections this year, members of Patria y Libertad earned the reputation of "storm-troopers" by smashing up headquarters of left-wing organisations and assaulting militant workers and peasants. They were often aided in this by right-

wing Nationalist Party and the Christian Democrats.

At the second anniversary of the group's founding a gathering of activists was held calling itself the Expanded National Council. The Council adopted a document outlining what was known as the Sistema de Accion Civica Organizada (SACO-System of Organised Civic Action). Incorporated in the SACO document were a number of "black commands" for the Patria y Libertad activists. The commands



Fascist band prepares for an assault in Santiago

Zionists Celebrate 25th Anniversary

BY PETER NAGAR

The Zionist state of Israel is currently celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of its inception as an independent state in the Middle East. This anniversary has received enthusiastic publicity in the bourgeois press, whilst the question of the dispossessed Palestinian Arabs has once again been ignored.

It is appropriate, therefore, to examine the role of Israel and its relationships to world politics and in particular to the Palestinian struggle for national self-determination.

On May 5, several interviews with leading Australian Zionists were published in The Australian. These Zionists laid great emphasis on their contention that the growing anti-Zionist movement in Australia was the same as anti-Semitism. This malicious slander should be rejected out of hand.

Anti-Semitism is a racist ideology directed against Jews, whereas anti-Zionism is the struggle against the Zionist movement. Zionism is a political movement that developed for the purpose of establishing a settler-colonialist state in Palestine at the expense of the native Palestinian population, and rules Israel today in alliance with world imperialism.

The Zionists promulgate the lie that to be Jewish is to be a Zionist, and therefore a supporter of Israel and imperialism. Thus they make it easier for racists in other countries to foster anti-Semitism amongst the people. The Zionists and their imperialist allies, who were unwilling and incapable of fighting for the salvation of the Jews against Nazism, are incapable today of defending the interests of Jews where they are oppressed.

In fact, Zionists do not want Jews to become integrated into other societies, because then these Jews wouldn't want to go to Israel.

The establishment of Israel was the culmination of a unique struggle for "independence", for it was not the indigenous Palestinian Arabs who became liberated from British imperialism, but the immigrant Jewish settlers who "liberated" themselves from the indigenous Arab population.

Zionists chose to build their state in a tiny, poor and unfavourable terrain already occupied by another people, slowly awakening to its own national consciousness, which they then expelled by economic and military pressures, including wholesale massacres.

Before 1948, the Palestinians were oppressed by British imperialism. Since then they have suffered a worse oppression, this time at the hands of Israel. The Palestinian refugees have been continually crushed by poverty, unemployment, humiliation, despair and military attacks.

Ever since the 1956 attack on Egypt by



25th anniversary military parade in Jerusalem

Britain, France and Israel, and more so since the 1967 war, when Israel attacked Syria, Jordan and Egypt, the Middle East has held the attention of the whole world. In fact, politics in the Palestine area has been a central factor in international politics. One of the reasons for the strategic importance of the Middle East for world imperialism is its huge oil reserves.

In addition, by its strategic location in terms of trade and military routes, the Middle East has long been part of the international strategy of the imperialist powers. It was a key area to their strategy during both world wars, and more recently during the Suez crisis of 1956. Israel's role is not confined to its own expansionism, but must be placed in the context of imperialist counter-revolution, whereby Israel, as well as reactionary Arab regimes, must contain or roll back the Arab revolution. The struggle by the Palestinians for national self-determination represents the prelude for the Arab revolution in the whole of the Middle East and North Africa.

This struggle by the Palestinians has taken the form of a struggle to destroy the Zionist state and to establish in its place a democratic, secular Palestine where the full civil, cultural and religious rights for all nationalities in Palestine, includ-

ing the Israeli Jews will be guaranteed. Whether or not we agree with all of their programme, we should give unconditional support to the struggle of the Palestinians for self-determination.

One of the central arguments that the Zionists rely on is that victory of the Arab revolution will result in the oppression of Jews presently living in Israel. This Jews presently play on the tremendous horror and revulsion that people have over the Nazi holocaust, and the determination that such a thing must never happen again.

Firstly, anti-Semitism is independent of the existence or non-existence of a Jewish state. Secondly, it is totally false and slanderous to equate the Palestinian liberation struggle with Nazi-fascism. It is false both in terms of the stated goals of the Palestinian resistance organisations, and in terms of the objective political dynamic of national liberation struggles, which are directed against oppression. The entire history of national liberation struggles has borne this out.

These unjustified fears about the future of the Israeli Jews are psychologically based on the assumption that the Palestinians would do to the Israeli Jews what the Israeli state is now doing to the

Palestinians. They reveal a racist attitude towards the nature, motives, goals and aspirations of the Palestinian people as a whole. These unfounded fears are based on a fear of revolution itself, a fear which is incited by the imperialists and Zionists.

Attacks on the Palestinian resistance movement have not been confined to the Israelis. Many of the reactionary Arab regimes have hindered and tried to control the Palestinians. Jordan has even helped to try and wipe them out. The recent conflict in Lebanon must also be seen in this light.

On April 10, Israeli agents entered Lebanon killing three Palestinian resistance leaders and about forty other people, including many Lebanese civilians. Although this aggression was condemned by the United Nations Security Council, it was generally well received by the bourgeois press.

The Israeli raid came in the midst of a series of anti-government demonstrations by Lebanese university students and a series of strikes by teachers. The raid propelled the Lebanese youth mobilisation forward. Mass demonstrations protesting government inaction in the face of the Zionist attack were organised by students at Beirut's three main universities. The youth mobilisation, always sympathetic to the Palestinian movement, began to raise specific demands relating to the Palestinian struggle. About 150,000 Palestinian refugees live in Lebanon.

By the end of April, the student movement had reached a higher level of militancy than it had achieved in years. The Lebanese Government responded to this political crisis on May 1 by arresting several Palestinian commandos, and from May 2 till May 4 by attacking the refugee camps.

Government tanks fired on Shatila and Burj el-Barajneh camps and bombed Dibayeh and Tel Zaitar camps. They later attacked the refugees of Burj el-Barajneh with jet fighters. The decision to assault the refugee camps did not result from anything the Palestinians had done, but rather from the political situation that has developed among the Lebanese.

So while the Israeli state celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary, the former inhabitants of the land are facing increased repression from the Zionists and the reactionary Arab regimes.

Settlement Announced at Wounded Knee

BY SKIP BALL

MAY 9-On May 7, after 70 days, a settlement was announced ending the historic occupation of Wounded Knee by Oglala Sioux and members of the American Indian Movement (AIM). The struggle for Indian rights that motivated the seizure, however, goes on.

When arms were finally laid down on Tuesday morning, May 8, 30 occupants of the village were arrested by federal agents.

The legal office handling their defense estimates that bail will exceed half a million dollars.

Russell Means and AIM security director Stan Holder are each being held on \$125,000 bail. Bond for other key leaders, including traditional spiritual adviser Leonard Crow Dog, who was in Wounded Knee with government authorization at the time of his arrest, ranges between \$30,000 and \$70,000.

Pedro Bissonette, vice-president of the Oglala Sioux Civil Rights Organisation (OSCRO), is being held without bail.

A constant stumbling block in negotiations throughout the occupation has been the government's refusal to deal with any issues but the terms of the Indians' surrender. Government spokesman Kent Frazier told reporters that in the future, Washington would handle actions like Wounded Knee in the same way it now handles "bank robberies or hijackings."

Despite this federal arrogance, which brought on the Wounded Knee action in the first place, the new settlement does include a government agreement to audit the finances of Chief Richard Wilson's US backed tribal government. An investigation will also be made into complaints of civil rights violations.



Site of negotiations at Wounded Knee

Terms of the new settlement are similar to those of an earlier agreement reached April 5, which the government then refused to implement. Talks are supposed to begin in two weeks between a team of White House advisers and traditional Sioux chiefs and headmen.

According to the Wounded Knee Legal Defense-Offense office, however, those OSCRO organisers and AIM leaders now in jail will only be permitted to participate in the talks if they have been released on bond.

Talks are slated to center around the 1868 treaty, which gave the Sioux all the land of the former Dakota Territory west of the Missouri River. Legal fights around unsettled issues are expected to

continue as well.

One of the main unresolved issues, the key one behind the take-over from the beginning, is whether the people of the Ridge Reservation will be allowed to choose their own form of government.

A petition circulated in early March, which gained the required number of signatures, called for a vote to revoke the tribal government system. This the tribal government imposed on Indians all over the country in 1934. The petition would automatically remove tribal chief Richard Wilson and his council from office.

To date, this simple democratic procedure which requires only the implementation of already existing regulations, has been blocked by Wilson and the US government.

Watergate: An Indictment of Capitalism

BY CHRIS GRAHAM

Reflecting the deepening public outcry over Watergate, Democratic politicians are currently sporting Nixon's 1968 election campaign buttons, proclaiming "Nixon's the One". James McCord's testimony before the Senate Watergate inquiry has helped to substantiate this charge.

McCord testified on May 18 that Nixon was in motion the Watergate bugging, and had subsequently attempted to suppress public knowledge of it. McCord also alleged that Nixon had tried to suppress his own testimony, by offering executive clemency if McCord pleaded guilty, and to go to jail — and above all shut up. McCord further claimed that he was offered \$100,000 plus a "good job" in return for keeping his "rehabilitation" in return for keeping quiet.

Only President Nixon can offer executive clemency. McCord testified that this offer was made through a former Presidential aide named John Caulfield who has since been promoted to the Treasury Department. McCord claimed that Caulfield had told him:

"The President's ability to govern is at stake. Another Teapot Dome scandal is possible and the government may fall."

(The 1923 Teapot Dome scandal, over oil leases, resulted in the downfall of the corrupt Harding Administration.)

When McCord still refused to keep silent, Caulfield allegedly threatened him: "If the Administration gets its back to the wall, it will take steps to defend itself."

These "steps", McCord testified, included a threatening phone call and notes being left in his mail box. He claimed that he and his family were in danger because of his disclosures.

NIXON SINKS DEEPER INTO WATERGATE MIRE

Every new development in the Watergate affair has deepened widespread suspicion of Nixon's involvement in the organisation and suppression of the Watergate conspiracy. John Dean's revelations the week before the opening of the Senate inquiry are an example. Dean denied having written a report attributed to him by President Nixon, who used it to deny White House complicity in the Watergate conspiracy.

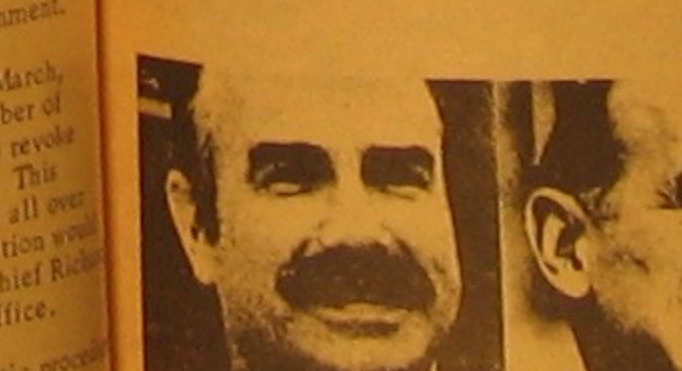
Nixon's credibility has been further demolished by the revelation of former FBI director Patrick Gray who said that he had informed Nixon of the Watergate cover-up six weeks after the arrest of the Watergate seven.

The Watergate disclosures have brought to light more issues which have contributed to the mounting public pressure on Nixon to resign. A Grand Jury has indicted two former cabinet ministers: John Mitchell, formerly Nixon's Attorney-General and Maurice Stans, formerly Secretary of Commerce.

Mitchell and Stans were charged with perjury, conspiring to suppress evidence related to Nixon's election campaign which was brought to light by the Watergate affair. They were also charged with having received US\$250,000 for Nixon's campaign from New York financier Robert Vesco. The indictment further charges that Mitchell and Stans attempted to obstruct charges of fraud being brought against Vesco by the General Accounting Office, alleging he had defrauded four mutual funds entrusted to him, in return for Vesco's "donation".

Vesco is now holidaying in the Bahamas. He is unlikely that he can be forced to testify before any court of inquiry.

Nixon's former personal lawyer, Kalmbach, has admitted charges that he received US\$210,000 to finance the Watergate burglary. The White House has denied this.



Liddy, McCord, Dean, Nixon, Gray, Stans, Mitchell

The Pentagon Papers trial of Danie Ellsberg has been dismissed by Judge Byrne, following Watergate revelations that the prosecution's evidence was obtained by wire-tapping and hence was inadmissible. Ellsberg suspects that the Nixon Administration was responsible for this decision. He believes that this "executive clemency" was motivated in order to prevent any further disclosures about Watergate and other matters which would expose Nixon.

The little that has been revealed has provided a damning indictment of Nixon. It is clear that Nixon initially was out to "get" Ellsberg because of his exposures of US aggression in Indo-China. The May 7 New York Times reported that Nixon's aide, Ehrlichman, had ordered the CIA to burgle the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist Fielding in the hope of finding material which could discredit Ellsberg. Judge Byrne has admitted that on April 5 and 7

ignation, which is more and more on the cards with every fresh development, "would do more harm" than the Watergate conspiracy itself.

The Moscow bureaucracy has "broken" its silence on Watergate. Pravda reported on April 29 that Patrick Gray had resigned from the FBI and that there was a "scandal". However, it did not even hint that Nixon or his administration was involved. With Brezhnev's visit to the United States coming up next month, it couldn't afford to. The same considerations of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism have governed Peking's silence on the Watergate affair.

So it seems that while Peking and Moscow refused to form a united front to defend the Vietnamese against Nixon, they have been more than willing to form a "united front" in defence of Nixon when their diplomatic interests are at stake.

gate under the shabby pretext of "letting the Government get on with the job".

Thus action on Watergate in both the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives and the Senate has been completely half-hearted. In the Senate inquiry, led by Democratic Senator Ervin, most of the important witnesses who have been called to testify have been held well back in the list. Ehrlichman, for example, occupies seventieth place on the list.

And a notable absence from the list of those subpoenaed to testify is Richard Milhous Nixon.

In the latest round of the war the appropriations game which received a new lease of life from Watergate, the House of Representatives has delayed its decision to cut off funds for Nixon's bombing of Cambodia. The matter will not be reconsidered until next month.

The reasons for the Democrats' procrastination are not very obscure. Reactionary Republican Barry Goldwater aptly remarked that "the Democrats are going to be in this in a livid, vivid way before this is over".

The Democrats aren't so much angry at Nixon's crimes, ranging from breaking and entering to attempting to bribe a US judge. These crimes are, after all, part and parcel of capitalist politics, for both the Democratic and the Republican parties. No, what angers the Democrats is that the US public found out about it!

WATERGATE: AN INDICTMENT OF CAPITALISM

Perhaps the frankest admission — and proposed solution — on the Watergate affair came from Nixon's former defence Secretary Melvin Laird. Speaking with reporters on May 1, Laird said that he "just didn't want to know" about Watergate. He continued:

"I'm confident the President didn't have prior knowledge of this, but I don't want the Presidency put on trial. A trial of the Presidency would be very dangerous."

"Are you saying that if the President were involved you wouldn't want the truth to come out?"

"I would say that, but I don't think for a minute that is the case."

In the last issue of DIRECT ACTION we speculated on the measures Nixon would be capable of taking against the working class and the mass protest movements if he were capable of police state measures against other capitalist parties. We no longer have to just speculate. According to highly placed White House sources quoted in the Washington Post, the following repressive measures against the mass movements of the current radicalisation can be accredited to Nixon:

* The trial of Daniel Ellsberg and Nixon's vendetta against him, described above.

* The installation of FBI and CIA provocateurs in antiwar demonstrations to provoke violence with police.

* The use of "vigilante squads" drawn from the same sources to infiltrate and illegally wire-tap radical organisations.

In addition, the Post article cited specific occurrences of wire-tapping Democratic politicians.

Six months after his landslide election victory Nixon's credibility is practically zero. This can only strengthen the working class movement, and the mass movements of the oppressed in fighting against their oppression. It remains to be seen whether fresh developments in the Watergate affair will sufficiently intensify public outrage to the point where the Senate is forced to impeach Nixon. The ruling class has a huge stake against that happening, but will not shrink from it if it is necessary to save itself.

inter-continental press

The articles on these pages dealing with revolutionary developments around the world are reprinted or based on reports from Intercontinental Press, a weekly news magazine specialising in political analysis and interpretation of events from a revolutionary Marxist viewpoint. It contains formal documents, reports, reprints and translations from around the world.

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LABOR IN POWER

AN ANALYSIS BY SOL SALBY PART 2: THE LEFT



This is the second part of a two-part article. The first part dealt with the record of the Labor Government during its first five months in office.

The attitude of left wing organisations towards the Australian Labor Party has always been an important test of their politics. Ever since the formation of the Communist Party of Australia and the Communist Party of Australia, the attitude of revolutionaries to the ALP has been the key to their success or failure. In particular their attitude to Labor in office has been crucial to such organisations.

It is not surprising therefore that just about all the groups to the left of the ALP have been careful to outline their attitude to the ALP. This has happened in the pre-election period and even more so since December 2. All these groups have also been forced to comment and react to quite a few of the Whitlam Government's actions.

The necessity to relate to the Labor Government was amplified by the various actions taken by the new Government particularly in its first one hundred hours. Many left tendencies were faced with an immediate change in their political perspectives. Some were faced with some real problems. The Draft Resisters Union (DRU) found itself without any reason to exist particularly when the Government went further than just suspending conscription. It also released all draft resisters and all those people in the army's gaols as well as giving all national servicemen the option of leaving the army immediately. Thus there were very few demands remaining for the DRU to put forward.

The case of the DRU is of course an extreme one. But, in one way or another the actions of the Whitlam Government affected, on the immediate level, the programmes of all political organisations in Australia.

A common expectation in left circles in the pre-election period was that the Labor Government would not be too different from its Liberal predecessor. A similar government to the Wilson Labour Government in Britain or what eventuated as the Kirk Labour Government in New Zealand was everybody's prediction.

It was more than just cynicism which created the expectation of a right-wing social democratic government. Both the objective and subjective conditions pointed in that direction. On the subjective level the Whitlam leadership has exposed itself in the past for its opportunism. It was this leadership which in 1967 forced through one of the worst capitulations and sell-outs of ALP policy. That was the change of the Labor Party's policy on the issue of Vietnam. Whitlam and his "left" supporters such as Jim Cairns forced the ALP Federal Conference to adopt the line of supporting "holding operations". Instead of supporting the previous policy of immediate withdrawal from Vietnam, Labor was now committed to a tactical withdrawal to certain areas. Operations against the Vietnamese people were still to continue in these areas.

The sell-out on the Vietnam question was accompanied by many other similar opportunist manoeuvres. The worst one was the Federal intervention into the Victorian branch in 1970. The Victorian branch was noted for its left-wing policies. On several occasions it had severely embarrassed the reformist leadership of the ALP. In particular it gave strong support to the anti-war movement and other mass movements for social change. For its militant policies the branch was dissolved, and an attempt was made to replace it with a more pliable apparatus.

But there were also objective reasons pointing to the ALP leadership taking a conservative stance in government. The international and local economic situation, the general trend of social democracy to the right, the decline in influence of the trade unions in the ALP, all indicated that a Whitlam Government would be very much like the Wilson Government, trying to set back the workers movement, shackling the unions, collaborating with US imperialism in Vietnam etc.

Reality however has been somewhat different. If anything the first one hundred hours of the Labor Government were recognised for their radical actions. While the forces of the right were trying to catch their breath the left reaction was quite varied.

The Communist Party of Australia (CPA) is the largest political organisation to the left of the ALP. Its strength in the unions where it has won many union

positions, is not matched on the electoral level. Nevertheless its chronic failure in elections has not led to any changes in policy or a re-evaluation of the ALP. In the last election the CPA stood seven candidates. In all other electorates, and in allocating its own candidates' preferences, the Communist Party did not take an unequivocal stand. In fact in the early stages of the campaign the CPA advised its members to vote for either the Labor Party or the liberal capitalist party, the Australian Party.

The Communist Party did not even express token support for the election of a Labor government as such. Labor was regarded as a preferable government to the Liberals on the basis of its programme. This programme which contained many reforms was undoubtedly superior to any of the Liberal, Country and Democratic Labor parties. The adoption of the programme as the main criterion was unfortunately a serious mistake. In disregarding the class nature of the parties and concentrating on the programme the CPA found itself crossing class lines. Its support for the Australia Party was based on the latter's allegedly progressive stand on many issues such as abortion.

The complete disregard for the class nature of the ALP, despite some favorable comments on the ALP's membership has once again reflected itself in the post-election period. To the Communist Party the Labor Government is a welcome development, but one which is nevertheless somewhat extraneous to the Communist Party. To them the Government has nothing to do with either the activities of the Communist Party, the unions in which the CPA has some influence, or the mass movements in which it is involved. Any positive actions by the Whitlam Government are welcomed as a stroke of good fortune. At no stage in the long statement of the National Committee of the Communist Party of Australia published in Tribune April 17, 1973 was there any attempt to analyse the reasons for Labor's actions. Some concessions are being made by the national committee: "The widespread mass action on so many issues created the political atmosphere for Labor's victory. Continued development of the mass movement is decisive in determining the future of political struggle and in influencing the course the Labor Government takes."

"Influencing the course" - The Communist Party is not prepared to go any further. The Communist Party prefers the role of an outside observer. They refuse to actually intervene in the struggles which are going on. Not recognising the role of mass pressure in forcing Labor's radical policies they remain aloof. It is remarkable that in that two page statement in Tribune, the Socialist Left, the most significant left formation, is not even considered worthy of comment.

In some other people's books reality has no role to play. If marxist theory says that in the era of imperialism social democracy moves to the right, then so it is and that's that. The sectarian Socialist Labour League (followers of Healy in England) provides the best example of this kind of attitude. To them the actual measures taken by the new Government are immaterial. The criticism of the Whitlam Government published in Labour Press bears very little relation to events. Anti-war measures, concessions to the mass movement against apartheid, actions to reduce the oppression of women do not rate a single mention.

The SLL propaganda in the pre-election period already reflected the attitude they were to take afterwards. "Labor to power pledged to implement socialist policies" was their slogan. Unfortunately Whitlam won the election without pledging any socialist policies.

The election of a Labor Government which isn't pledged to implement their policies has meant that these sectarians have refused to relate to it. In particular they have refused to comment on actions which do not concern the issues they consider important. The anti-war women's liberation and anti-apartheid movements are all "middle class" protest movements. Any concessions made by a Labor government as a result of mass pressure from below is just an extra confirmation (for them) of the petit bourgeois nature of these movements.

The best example of the SLL's sectarian attitude to the ALP came up in the Victorian elections. The May 4 issue of Labour Press included the following as a demand for which the ALP should

fight: "Build Labour Press, the Socialist Labour League and the Young Socialists as the Alternative Revolutionary Leadership".

The Communist Party's lack of understanding of the class nature of the ALP and the SLL's sectarian attitude both led to the same results. Neither group is actually involved in any way in keeping the pressure on the ALP leadership. Both of these positions are in sharp contrast to the socialist position put forward by the Socialist Workers League and the Socialist Youth Alliance and expressed in DIRECT ACTION.

In DIRECT ACTION 22, June 30, 1972 Dave Holmes outlined the attitude of socialists to the ALP. He began by quoting from Leon Trotsky in 1925 in "Where in Britain Going?". Here Trotsky characterised the British Labour Party as "an invariable historic achievement, from which nothing can ever detract". The ALP is the fundamental working class in that it embodied the idea of independent working class political action. The ALP is a step along the road from bourgeois politics to independent working class politics on the way to the revolutionary struggle for socialism.

"The loyalty of the mass of the organised working class to the ALP has endured since its inception. The workers see the ALP as their party against the bosses' parties. This applies irrespective of an right-wing and class collaborationist to the core."

"However, if the ALP is a step forward in the struggle for socialism, it is also an obstacle to it. It represents the concept of independent class politics, yet it is led by hardened reformists and cannot be transformed into a revolutionary party. The ALP will never lead the social revolution. That role can only be fulfilled by a mass revolutionary party armed with the programme of Trotskyism."

It is necessary to understand the dual nature of the ALP, that it is both bourgeois and proletarian at the same time. In its origin and structure it is a working class party, the party of the unions. It was formed by the unions in a period of great defeat for the class. It is organisationally based on the unions, whose predominance is guaranteed over that of individuals from the branches. The unions provide the overwhelming bulk of its funds. Even its official aim (The Objective) reflects this character.

"On the other hand the ALP is not a socialist party. It has never in its entire existence threatened capitalism in this country. Its programme and politics are class collaborationist through and through. Its field of action is the parliamentary arena; mobilising the masses in direct struggles is alien to it. The ALP leaders have always been right wingers and have often at moments of crisis gone over openly to the capitalist parties (Hughes, Lyons). The ALP leadership has perpetrated numerous and repeated crimes on the working class."

Armed with this analysis of the ALP, the Socialist Workers League and the Socialist Youth Alliance launched a vigorous and enthusiastic campaign in the last elections. The campaign was of unconditional support for the ALP. It wasn't conditional. It was based on a socialist programme, not Whitlam's programme. No support whatsoever was given to the reformist programme.

SYA and SWL urged a vote for Labor under the slogan "Labor to Power! Fight for Socialist Policies!" They warned that the Labor leadership can only betray, that Labor's programme is incapable of solving the ills of capitalist society.

No doubt the vast majority of those who voted Labor on December 2 did so because of their rejection of the capitalist parties and the reactionary policies they stood for. The valuable reforms in Labor's programme were only part of the reason why the working class turned to Labor. The worsening economic situation on an international scale was reflected in Australia with high unemployment and increased inflation. Labor was elected in order to defend the working class from this capitalist onslaught.

One of the most striking results of the Labor Government in action was the quiescence of the Socialist Left. With some notable exceptions such as the Singapore spy base and Omega issues the Socialist Left has been comparatively quiet. The Victorian Socialist Left was formed during 1970 in response to the intervention by the Whitlam leadership in the Victorian branch. The old Victorian Central Executive and the branch

as a whole have been a thorn in the side for the right-wing leadership of the party for the period since the split with the groupers in the mid-50's.

In an attempt to defend themselves against the intervention, mass meetings of the rank and file were organised by the Victorian leadership. The first of these was called by five hundred members of the party. The leadership of the Socialist Left, including the former president, George Crawford, the former secretary, Bill Hartley and the former organiser, Bob Hogg, helped launch a publication called Inside Labor. The group which crystallised around this developed into the Socialist Left.

The Socialist Left is unquestionably the most significant left wing formation in the ALP. The strong base in the union movement which the SL enjoys is a most important feature. Its emphasis on extra-parliamentary mass action is also a very progressive development which should be wholeheartedly supported.

The SL did not play a major independent role in Labor's 1972 campaign. While no conscious policy of succumbing to Whitlamism was followed, no actions were taken to put forward an independent socialist programme. Inertia was the main cause. No obstacles were laid in the way of any members wishing to take such action. But the heterogeneous nature of the SL and the lack of cohesion meant that most SL members were swept up by the tide of Whitlamism. The enthusiasm generated by the party machine in its professional campaign and the mass support from youth circles meant that most members of the SL were busy working on the campaign trail without putting any of their own ideas forward. The general level of specifically SL activity declined to the bare minimum.

The activities of the Labor Government in its first few weeks in office has taken the Socialist Left by surprise. "We were pleasantly surprised" said Action-the SL newspaper. Undoubtedly Whitlam's apparent whirlwind of activity has shaken SL members. The need for independent action to keep the Government to its promises wasn't so much apparent. No wonder then that SL activity in the last few months has been at about its lowest ebb since its formation.

It would be wrong however to dismiss the SL's role or even underestimate its significance. The SL is not dead. When on two occasions there has been the need for a strong opposition, the SL responded overwhelmingly.

The first one of these was the question of the Singapore base. Contrary to popular opinion the motion against the Australian base in Singapore was not directed against the existence of an Australian spy base there. At that stage the spy base was a well guarded secret. The objections to the base were based on far more fundamental reasons than opposition to spying. Many people may object to a spy base that would pry on our neighbours. The SL went much further. It objected to the very existence of an Australian base on foreign soil. Nor should it be used to bolster the dictatorship of Lee Kwan Yew in Singapore.

Thus SL supporters moved a motion in State Council (the main governing body of the ALP in Victoria) regretting the statements by Defence Minister Barnard concerning the retention of a large number of support forces in Singapore. The success of the motion which received no verbal opposition shows that when called upon the SL can mobilise not only its own members but other supporters as well. Even with Labor in office and following behind Whitlam, the SL created a national issue and forced significant concessions out of Whitlam when fundamental questions were at stake.

A similar chain of events took place around the question of foreign bases in Australia. Whitlam and Barnard backedtracked considerably on Labor policy. Vehement SL opposition to this betrayal led to a compromise amendment being introduced in the Victorian ALP General Assembly. This mass meeting of the rank and file adopted nearly unanimously a motion moved by the Minister for Environment and Conservation Dr. Moss Cass and Ken Carr of the Socialist Left. This amendment reiterated the existence policy which is "opposed to or operated of foreign-owned territory." The centrist part of the amendment was to focus on opposition to any new bases and in particular the Omega navigation base. The introduction of an Omega base to be used as part of US imperialism's global war machine is now more or less ruled out.

One of the by-products of Labor's victory has been the new political situation in Australia. The process of interaction between the radicalisation of the working class and the actions of the Government is not a one-way process. Mass pressure has forced Labor to the left. Labor's progressive actions have given more confidence to the working class and have laid down the objective foundation for an increase and a deepening of this radicalisation. There are many examples but one of the most illustrative ones concerns union action on political questions, the unions' bans on the United States and France.

The bans by the seamen's and other unions on US shipping during the resumption of Nixon's murderous carpet bombing of Hanoi would have been less likely to take place under a Liberal Government. Whitlam's protest note, the condemnation in no uncertain terms by Jim Cairns and other Cabinet ministers, the whole atmosphere of a Labor victory, as well as all decisive factors in encouraging the seamen to take a new step in their anti-war activity.

Similarly with the boycott of France. This boycott in opposition to French nuclear testing in the Pacific has been of a much larger magnitude under a Labor Government. The encouragement on this occasion was provided by the more decisive opposition to the tests by the Labor Government compared with its Liberal predecessors. The actions of Labor in applying to the International Court of Justice and more significantly the threat of sending a naval ship to the test zone together with a New Zealand ship has given encouragement to the ACTU in putting forward its total ban.

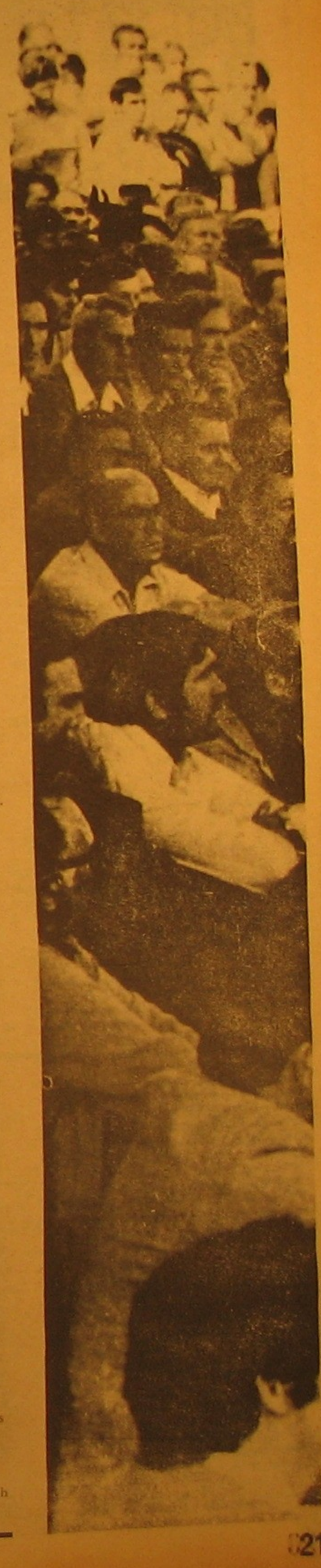
The glaring contradiction on both occasions is quite plain. On both occasions the actual Government position was to oppose (at least tacitly) the union actions. The method they used was that of dissimulation and "persuasion". Labor certainly did not degenerate to the level of the Liberals, it actually threaten the use of the power of the state. But, what remains true is that these types of actions have been carried to a different level under Labor. The social forces set in motion by Labor were not being controlled by the party apparatus. ACTU president Hawke was forced into defying Whitlam in order not to be outdone by the parliamentary wing of the Party. The dual nature of the ALP comes through clearly when the Whitlam leadership is seen to be subjectively discouraging this union action while objectively encouraging it.

What is the future of the Australian Labor Government? It is obvious that Labor can't bring about socialism through Parliament. It is also clear that there is a conflict between its working class rank and file and its capitalist backers. In the immediate future any answer to the balance of forces can only be speculative. At the moment it is just as likely that a wage freeze could be imposed, or that Labor will have to turn to the working class and mobilise for a struggle against the capitalist obstructions to the execution of Labor's programme.

Just as likely is the possibility that the wing of Australian capitalism which prefers capitalist party rule at any cost may force Whitlam to defer any attack on the working class' standard of living so that Labor can at least carry out its general programme. The capitalist parties have a majority in the Senate. The use of such power to frustrate the general labor programme can result in Whitlam donning his radical mask again of abandoning temporarily the wage freeze in favor of a militant struggle against the capitalist parties. A double dissolution of both houses of Parliament and a new election is a definite possibility.

In the long run however, Whitlam's options will run out. He can not carry a radical programme for ever. He can not take any real measures which alleviate unemployment and reduce inflation at the expense of the employing class. He has no choice but to try and reduce workers' militancy, to try and destroy all opposition in the ALP and the unions.

Such a course can only lead to conflict with Labor's rank and file. An alternative leadership must be built to put forward a different programme to the opportunists. The Socialist Left provides the basis for building such an alternative. It must be extended nationally, and must adopt a conscious fighting programme to provide leadership in the struggles that are erupting and which will intensify in the future.



AUSTRALIAN LABOR HISTORY PART 9

THE 1954 SPLIT

BY PETER CONRICK



B. A. Santamaría

H. V. Evatt

This is the ninth part of our series on the history and development of the Australian Labor Party.

THE 1954 SPLIT

In the course of this series we have seen two major internal political crises in the history of the Australian Labor Party. The first of these involved the exodus of the Hughes pro-conscriptivist group from the Federal Caucus in 1916-17. The second important breakaway occurred during the depression of 1929-1933 and resulted in the expulsion of Lang from the Party. Concurrent with the struggle against Lang was a less significant exit from Labor politics, centring around the person of J. A. Lyons. While these splits were politically disastrous for the ALP, their effect tended to be short-lived. The party had recovered from the Hughes split by 1929 and was able to win office. Lang's influence lingered for the remainder of the thirties, but its main impact was an organisational decimation of the party, especially in NSW. By contrast, the results of the 1954-55 crisis were to render Labor politically and organisationally bankrupt for nearly a decade and a half. The impact of this most recent schism had been exacerbated by the fact that it occurred on top of Labor's most successful and extended period of parliamentary office at both a State and Federal level. For the Labor political machine in 1954, this was the bitterest pill to swallow. Through their post-war success, Labor politicians had arrived at the smug belief that they were the best and only government for Australia. Most carried the idea that the Menzies era was only an interlude before they would be back again holding the reins of power.

THE OPENING OF THE COLD WAR

The development of anti-communism in Australia paralleled the rise of McCarthyism and the witch-hunt in the United States. With the defeat of the Chifley Government in 1949, politics took a sharp turn to the right. The basis for this turn was a stabilisation of Australian society between 1949-52. Communist power in the unions had declined to a point where Menzies felt confident enough to turn his attack from purely rhetorical bombast into practical repression. This repression took several forms. One of these was the 1949 Victorian Royal Commission into Communism, held with the approval of the Cain Labor Opposition in the Victorian Legislative Assembly. Another was the stepped-up activities of ASIO. However the most notorious measure used by conservative reaction in this period was the attempt to ban the Communist Party. This outright attack on working class organisations took the form of the 1951 Communist Party Dissolution Bill. The record of Labor's attitude towards this measure is an interesting one. From time to time in the late forties, certain ALP leaders had the measure advocated as a total ban on communist activities. The actual proposal to legislate against the Communist Party originated in the Country Party during the period of the post-war strikes and was taken up by Menzies as a sop to his coalition junior partner during the 1949 elections.

LABOR AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY BAN

Labor caucuses quickly split into three groups in its attitude to the bill. Much of the left and the centre led by Chifley strongly opposed the bill and wanted to see Labor's Senate majority block it. The second main grouping was on the right wing of the Caucus, much of the industrial right and in the state parliamentary parties. The attitude of this group was opposition to the bill on the grounds that it was ineffective and would not work. In neither group was there a strong argument for defending the democratic rights of radicals. Even on the Labor left it was felt that the bill was more of an expedient way to deal with Communists than an anti-democratic measure. This did not stop some Labor parliamentarians sensing that a Menzies' attack on the Communist Party was an implicit attack on the rights of organisation of the whole Labor movement. But if some Labor leaders did believe this, they were very much in a minority.

A third, much smaller grouping, actually supported the bill. In caucus this group was led by the pro-Santamaría Victorians, S. M. Kean and J. M. Mullens. Outside of Federal Caucus its mouth-piece was strongly identified with the organ of the fanatical anti-communist Catholic Movement, News Weekly.

Following a meeting of the ALP Federal Executive it was decided to support the ban in principle, while moving amendments to water down the impact of the legislation. The refusal of the executive to come out against the bill was founded on the fear of a double dissolution in parliament if the issue was forced.

This decision was largely shaken however by Evatt's acceptance of a brief from the militant Waterside Workers Federation to challenge the passage of the act in the High Court. The verdict of the court was a victory for the unions and practically committed the ALP to opposing the repression.

A week after the High Court decision Menzies secured the 1951 Double Dissolution and in an election fought mainly on the grounds of 'communism', Labor gained seats, but not enough for government. Within a month of the election Chifley died, leaving Evatt as parliamentary leader.

With Labor under a new leader, the government decided to force the issue to a referendum, the only legal way left in which the powers needed to ban the Communist Party could be obtained.

The defeat of the referendum was largely the result of Evatt's efforts in pulling the parliamentary machine against the bill, as well as an intensive and prolonged campaign undertaken by the Communist Party itself. Perhaps the most surprising element in the whole affair was the narrowness of the final majority against the ban: Barely 50.48 per cent of votes cast opposed the measure. Nevertheless, in the atmosphere of anti-communism at the time, the verdict was a soothing set-back for the conservative repression campaign. Apart from conservative politicians, the core of the anti-

communist crusade had been carried by a force known as 'the movement', a group who exercised a disproportionate influence inside the Labor Party and the unions.

CATHOLIC ACTION, THE MOVEMENT AND THE RISE OF THE GROUPS

The Roman Catholic Church had always played a significant role in the internal politics of the Australian Labor Party. This is not surprising when one considers that the overwhelming proportion of the laboring classes before 1949 were of Irish Catholic extraction. Even with a rapid influx of European migrants into the working class after 1949, the core of Labor support could still be identified with this group. Without attempting to acknowledge sectarian forces as a factor in Labor politics, one cannot ignore the continuous dialogue between Protestant/agnostic supporters and Catholics. In 1954, 60 per cent of Labor parliamentarians were Catholics. Before the Second World War this influence was most commonly associated with the figures of Melbourne Archbishop Daniel Mannix and the businessman cum architect, John Wren. The influence of Mannix persisted after the war, but this time buttressed by a more organised group under the leadership of B. A. Santamaría.

In 1937 the Australian Catholic hierarchy approved the establishment of a National Secretariat for Catholic Action, which organised a number of associations in an attempt to counter the influence of the Communist Party, expressly within the unions. In August 1942 was held the first meeting of a secret organisation of Catholics, which later became known as "The Movement". "The Movement" was denominationally exclusive and organised into small activist cells or "groups" within each trade union in which it was interested. By 1945 "The Movement" had links with every State in Australia, and received a mandate from the Australian Catholic hierarchy to oppose militants in the trade unions. It was mainly under the influence of "The Movement" that the State Branch of the ALP in New South Wales (1945) and Victoria (1946) decided to form and sponsor official anti-Communist groups within the trade union movement. Such groups were to campaign for union office under the ALP banner. During the war ALP Industrial Groups had been formed by militants in some unions in NSW and Victoria to counter the right-wing line of the Communist Party, which had opposed strikers and other struggles by workers during the war. After the war these groups were taken over by the right wing "Movement". Industrial Groups were also set up in South Australia in 1947 and Queensland in 1948. "The Movement" quickly became the hard core of power in the organisations, and Groups soon gained considerable strength on the various ALP State Executives. The influx of "The Movement" into the unions was accompanied by an invasion into the party at the branch level. Just prior to the split in 1954, some ALP branches in Sydney and Melbourne were reporting 15 new members joined in one night. This policy of branch stacking had very little effect however as many of these new members were simply names on paper.

As well, concentrations of "Movement" supporters made it easy for the official machine to pick off particular branches.

As for success in union ballots, the Groupers were able to capture the Federated Clerks Union (which is still in DLP hands), the Australian Railways Union, the Building Trades, the Federated Ironworkers' Association and for some time, the Waterside Workers' Federation. Most of these victories were short lived, the Groupers being unable to consolidate their positions in the frequent outbursts of rank and file militancy.

The hysterical, obsessive anti-Communism of the Groups aroused great distrust among many sections of the industrial and political labor movements. Apart from Communist Party union officials, opposition to the Groupers between 1947-1953 was led by sections of the ALP left, both inside and outside the unions. It is doubtful whether even this amalgam of forces could have politically defeated the Groupers without the support of the more moderate wing of the Labor Party. The success of the left in rallying the bulk of the organised workers' movement against the influence of "The Movement" was due to a number of factors.

By far the most crucial reason lay in the error committed by the Groups in antagonising the middle of the road elements in the unions. Not content on his attacks upon members of the Communist Party, Santamaría now turned his attention to even the most moderate ALP unionists. In Santamaría's eyes, no section of the labor movement was "safe" until it had been purged by the Groups. Santamaría's fatal mistake of turning against social democracy cost the Groupers their most esteemed prize — control of the Australian Workers Union.

The AWU had earlier aligned itself with the Groupers, but by 1954 its leadership had become alarmed at the increasing power wielded by the Grouper fraction in both industrial and political arenas. A speech made by Santamaría in 1954 and circulated inside the AWU, claiming that "The Movement" wielded considerable power in the Industrial Groups, delivered the conservative leadership of the AWU into the hands of Evatt.

In Federal Labor caucuses many traditionalists were also disturbed by the fact that the Groupers were hostile towards the ideas of nationalisation and Socialism, which, although their content had been drained away by the fifties, were still important symbols in the labor movement. By their vigorous stacking of union meetings, praising of American foreign policy, in the openly accepting of the patronage of the Catholic Social Movement and in suggesting that the ALP needed to take a tougher line on communists generally, the Groupers managed to alienate such traditional industrial and political leaders as J. A. Ferguson, Clyde Cameron, A. A. Calwell, P. J. Kennedy, and P. J. Clarey. It was becoming increasingly apparent that the thrust of Grouper policy was towards the creation of a christian democratic party on the European model. The South Australian branch of the ALP, largely on the initiative of Clyde Camer-

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

IN BRIEF.

ONLY VIETNAMESE

A few weeks ago the daily press was full of front page pictures and stories concerning the release of United States prisoners of war in Vietnam. Not so much is heard about the release of political prisoners recently released by the South Vietnamese. The prisoners were stripped to their underpants and carried to the middle of a river, from where they had to wade to the other side. If it was US prisoners who had been stripped to their underpants or made to wade a river you might be right if you thought that the press would have been filled with howls of rage about the indignities and brutal treatment inflicted on them.

HELPED HIMSELF

Ron Hubbard, founder of the "Church of the New Faith", better known as "Scientology" has retired from the religion business and now spends his time cruising in his yacht. Ron isn't saying whether the almighty helped him to his worldly wealth or whether he simply helped himself.

VORSTER TO BAN DEMONSTRATIONS

A bill now before the South African Parliament proposes that all open air gatherings and processions around the Parliament House in Cape Town be banned. The bill defines a demonstration as being "one or more persons for or against any persons, cause, action or failure to take action". Obviously Vorster's white supremacists are anxious to get on with their job of governing in isolation from the rest of the population.

BJELKE PETERSEN'S MIDNIGHT DOORKNOCK

On Friday May 11, Queensland premier Bjelke Petersen said that the time was near when "Every parent in this country will need to consider very carefully whether any extension of Federal power, any denigration of the Crown's role and functions in our particular form of Federal democracy, will not within our children's lifetime lead to a system of government involving fear and the midnight door-knock".

Why Bjelke-Petersen should be against "midnight door-knocks" is a mystery. It was his Government which made early morning police raids a reality for many anti-war activists, opponents of the South African sporting tours and black people in Queensland.

COLONELS' LAW

Under the military dictatorship in Greece at the present time, atheists are not permitted to marry. Greeks can only be married in the Greek Orthodox Church, and atheists are not permitted to marry in the church.

GOVERNMENT HELPS FINANCE ANTI-ABORTION CAMPAIGN

The Council for the Defence of Government Schools claims that the \$34 million of government aid directed to church schools over the past year has helped the churches to finance their anti-abortion campaign. The \$34 million has allowed the churches to use money which they formerly spent on education, for other purposes.



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on, had disbanded the Groups as early as 1951. In the other States, the Groupers were finding themselves faced with growing opposition.

FROM THE PETROV AFFAIR TO THE 1955 ELECTION

Early in April 1954, Vladimir Petrov, a member of the Russian Embassy staff in Canberra, asked for and was granted political asylum in Australia. On April 13, the Government, with the approval of the Opposition, pushed through a special measure under whose terms a royal commission on espionage was later established. Throughout the campaign for the Federal election of May 29, 1954, the shadow of these events loomed large. Menzies himself did not refer to the affair (he hardly needed to) but many of his followers zealously took up the witch-hunt. Whether it was intentional or not, the Petrov case, especially in its timing, discredited the ALP and influenced the results of the election.

In the event, the Government was returned to power, although its majority in the

House of Representatives was reduced from fifteen seats to seven. The royal commission provided little that was new regarding Soviet intelligence operations but its proceedings, involving Evatt, gave rise to political controversies of the first order. Individual communists, including several journalists were mentioned in the commission's subsequent proceedings, but the person who suffered most from them was one whose name was not associated with any document — Dr. H. V. Evatt. Throughout August and September he fought a long battle to obtain permission to appear before the commission to defend certain members of his staff, implicated in the proceedings. Evatt's allegations that Menzies, Petrov and ASIO had conspired to injure the ALP earned him the scorn of the Groupers and News Weekly. The immediate result of the Petrov commission, therefore, was to heighten the tension within the Labor Party.

Evatt chose this occasion to act. On October 5 he accused certain Victorian members of Federal caucus (S. M. Kean and J. M. Mullens) of being disloyal to

LIBERALS EMBARRASSED BY TAYLS

In DIRECT ACTION No. 39 we commented on the setting up by the Liberal Party of the Teenage Young Liberals, with the aim of stopping the gravitation of young people toward the anti-war movement and left-wing politics. Since that time more information has come to light on the policies and outlook of TAYLS.

In the Nation Review of April 28 - May 3, a report of an interview with the NSW president of TAYLS, appears. The president, Andrew Colfax, is a student at Castle Hill in Sydney and he outlined some of his views. He holds South Africa in high regard, maintaining that communist publications and party members should be outlawed, as they are in that country, and that apartheid is in the best interests of the black people. He supports the South African practice of internment of prisoners without due process of the law. He also wants to 'cut out the cancer of communism now, or it will take over the whole body of students.'

Apparently even the Liberal Party is embarrassed by such far-right views. They understand that the reasons behind the Labor Party victory in December were closely linked with the radicalisation of large numbers of young people as a result of the Vietnam war and they have been trying to give their party a more liberal outward appearance. But a Young Liberal by any other name is still an arch-reactionary, that is something which is impossible to conceal.

MASS MURDERER OFFENDED

Speaking at a recent graduation ceremony at the Mitchell College of Advanced Education in Bathurst NSW, Howard Beale, a former Australian ambassador to the United States said that some Federal Labor ministers had harmed relations with the United States by criticising President Nixon. Beale said that he was distressed at the time of the US bombing of Hanoi last year, when some Government ministers referred to Nixon "using words such as 'maniacs', 'mass murder' and 'thugery'". Beale is right, members of the Government should be more careful about how they refer to Nixon. To call someone a maniac implies that they might not fully understand or be able to control their actions. Mass murderer, thug, liar, hypocrite — all of these terms fit Nixon, but he's no maniac, he knows what he's doing.

BEALE CONTRADICTS HIMSELF

At the Mitchell College of Education graduation ceremony, Howard Beale also outlined what he thought should be the major goals for young Australians. They were: national security, progress and prosperity and improvement of the quality of national life. He also said that Australia should not forget its British heritage and should continue to foster the friendship of a staunch ally, the United States. The students must have been greatly impressed by the utterances of this dinosaur about the British Empire, but they must also have been puzzled about how they could improve the quality of life while fostering friendly relations with the mass murderers, racists and male supremacists in the United States government. The thought may also occur to some that if any "progress" was to be achieved, relics such as Beale would have to be cast aside.

VICTORY IN CARLTON LAND DISPUTE

On Friday May 11, the Victorian Education Minister Lindsay Thompson handed over 14 acres of land in North Carlton, Melbourne, to a playground committee. The land was formerly owned by the railways and in 1971 only action by local residents backed up by the Builders Labourers Federation stopped the construction of a warehouse on the site. During demonstrations on the land several people were arrested, including builder's labourer Norm Gallagher who served 14 days in gaol as a result of an assault charge resulting from one of the demonstrations.



Norm Gallagher

BOMBER CREWS PROTEST

It was disclosed in Washington on May 2 that at least a dozen crew members of B 52 bombers which have been involved in raids against Cambodia have written to members of the United States Congress protesting. One letter to Senator Edward Kennedy said "We are no more than a mercenary army fighting solely on the discretion of our President".

THE HOLY INSTITUTION

Figures for 1971, (the latest available) reveal that during that year 12,947 divorces were granted. In other words, almost 26,000 people who had been forced into marriage, often more through social pressures than by desire, decided that keeping the churches and the authorities happy, just wasn't worth the cost. During the same year many more marriages would have ended in separation without going through the courts.

NUCLEAR TESTS WILL INCREASE CANCER

Professor Eric Burhop of the University College London, claimed on Thursday May 10 that radiation from the French nuclear tests in the Pacific would remain in the atmosphere for the next 30 years. He also said that as a result of the tests at least 3,000 people, (including 100 Australians) in the Southern hemisphere would die. He said that the radiation would lead to an increase in the incidence of cancer, malformed babies and genetic illnesses.

MARCOS SLAUGHTER OF MOSLEMS CONTINUES

The Melbourne Herald of Friday, May 11 reports that a former member of the Philippines Congress said on May 11 that during the previous week 19 "rebels" and at least 9 women and children had been killed by government troops in the southern Philippines. ... STEVE PAINTER

the Labor Party and of being subject to outside influences in the form of "The Movement". In the recent election said Evatt, "one factor told heavily against us — the attitude of a small minority group of members, located particularly in the State of Victoria, which has, since 1949, become increasingly disloyal to the Labor movement and the activities of this small group are largely directed from outside the Labor movement. The Melbourne News Weekly appears to act as their organ." Evatt was immediately supported by E. J. Ward and Senator P. J. Kennedy, by the South Australian executive and by most of the trade unions which were not under Grouper control, including the AWU. He was strongly opposed by the Victorian and New South Wales executives of the ALP which were still under strong Grouper influence. The telling factor in drawing both of these States behind Evatt in the long run was the enormous power and prestige of the AWU.

The epilogue to these events in the summer of 1954-55 occurred in December 1955 when Menzies sprang a snap election. The Labor Party, shattered at both a Federal and State level, demoralised and dispirited, was soundly defeated and conceded a twenty-eight seat majority to the conservatives in the new parliament. For Evatt, the 1955 elections were a personal disaster and effectively undermined his position of leadership to that of A. A. Calwell.

FOOTNOTES

1. Robert Murray, The Split, pp 78-89
2. F. G. Clarke, "Towards a Re-assessment of Dr. Evatt's Role in the 1954-55 Split", In Labor History, 1971.
3. Ibid.
4. see Paul Ormonde, The Movement.
5. Murray, Op. Cit. p. 130.

CAPITALISTS OBSTRUCT LABOR'S REFORMS LABOR MUST FIGHT!

BY SOL SALBY

The combined votes of the Liberal, Country and Democratic Labor parties are being used to obstruct Labor's progressive legislation in the Senate. The combined Opposition parties have a majority of 31 senators to Labor's 26. There are also three independent senators. So far only one bill, the Electoral Bill, has been rejected. Indications however are such that at least four others are likely to be rejected.

The obstruction has resulted in considerable discussion of a double dissolution, that is the dismissal of both houses of Parliament and the calling of new elections in which the whole of the seats in both houses will be up for election. The Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, and several other ministers like Property and Services Minister Fred Daly and Treasurer Frank Crean have made strong statements threatening a double dissolution as soon as possible if the Opposition persists in its disruptionist tactics.

The motivation of the Opposition is not precisely clear. At this stage indicators are that in any immediate ballot the capitalist parties will suffer a crushing defeat. But the Opposition has plenty of room to manoeuvre. Constitutional requirements prevent the Labor Government from going straight to the masses. A so-called major bill has to be presented twice before the Government can ask the Governor-General to dismiss both houses. A three month lag has to lapse between the two introductions of the bill. Thus the Opposition senators are not really risking anything in their first rejection of any legislation.

What is significant is not the obstruction itself but the issues chosen by the Opposition to fight on. They are clearly the most significant planks in Labor's pro-

gramme. Overwhelmingly they are the ones which all sections of the bourgeoisie including those who backed the ALP in the last elections have some doubts. Generally its clear cut concessions to mass pressure from below which upsets the employers.

The Electoral Bill does not really fall completely into this category. It is basically a democratic bill, it seeks to eliminate the gerrymander which is built in to the current laws. The capitalist parties are the main beneficiaries from a law which allows up to 20 per cent deviation from the average number of electors in each seat. The new bill will reduce the gap to 10 per cent. Small wonder why the Country Party is leading the opposition to the bill. Some of Labor's recent backers amongst the ruling class may also have some doubts on the advisability of removing the gerrymander. Increased democracy will reduce the dependency of the Labor leadership upon them.

The legislation which annoys the capitalists most is not the Electoral Bill. A much more significant reform is involved. The amendments to the Conciliation and Arbitration Act is the most controversial piece of legislation brought forward by the Labor Government so far. The newspaper which speaks for the wing of Australian capitalism which backed the return of a Labor Government last December, The Australian, had this to say about the most important section of the bill: "Abolition of penal clauses is very obviously appeasement to the unions and there is little doubt that this is a policy the majority of Australians would oppose."

The abolition of the penal clauses is a significant reform wrested under mass pressure from the Labor Government. This pressure began with the mobilisation

against the gaoling of Clarrie O'Shea under this power in 1969. Thousands of workers marched in the streets and hundreds of thousands went on strike to demand O'Shea's release. Opposition to any penalty was reflected at the last Federal Conference of the ALP. The Launceston conference rejected the infamous Cameron proposals. No penalties are going to be left in the law threatening striking unionists.

The amendments to the Conciliation and Arbitration Act can only be understood in the context of Labor's strategy for industrial peace. This strategy represents a move away from the Liberal's big stick and the substitution of a subtle "voluntary" agreements system. It is in this context that whatever support the amendments to the Act have received from the employers can be seen.

Despite a willingness to critically support the Labor amendments, the employing class prefers to retain a watchdog. An Opposition majority in the Senate means that pressure can be put on Labor to moderate and amend some parts of its programme.

The removal of the penal clauses is the type of action that the capitalist class may wish to influence using the Senate. If the Labor leadership is scared of a double dissolution then the Senate majority can be used for the watering down of the Government's legislation. The capitalist politicians are meanwhile causing a pile up of Labor legislation.

The disruptionist tactics used by the Liberal, Country and Democratic Labor parties should not be allowed to succeed. The working class of this country did not turn to Labor only to find itself frustrated by the Senate Opposition. Whitlam must add determined action to the words he has used so far.



LABOR FOR UNION DEMOCRACY?

BY JIM McILROY

One of the provisions of the Federal Government's new amendments to the Conciliation and Arbitration Act has caused an understandable stir amongst trade union officials. It is clause 50 of the new Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, which provides for direct rank and file election of union officials. In many unions, at present officials are elected by a collegiate system, in which ordinary union members elect an executive which in turn elects union officials.

The new provision, in its finalised form, now provides for direct elections under future registrations of union rules, and finance by the Federal Government for the conduct of these elections. Changes were made in the original form after protests by many unions.

The line-up of supporters and opponents of the changes was a rather unusual one.

Supporters included leading CPA figure and secretary of the NSW Builders' Laborers Federation, Jack Munday, and extreme right winger Laurie Short, secretary of the Ironworkers' Federation. Opponents included ACTU president Bob Hawke, the secretary of the Building Workers Industrial Union, Pat Clancy, and right-winger Edgar Williams of the Australian Workers Union.

The division would appear to reflect the confidence of the various union leaderships of their own support amongst the rank and file of their respective unions rather than any political agreement.

It is clear that the present system of election allows officials to perpetuate themselves without having to face any direct accounting to their members. The principle of direct election is a good one and should be supported. It is only by making union leaders more accountable to the demands of the rank and file that union

bureaucracy can be combated.

The motives of the Minister for Labour Clyde Cameron in introducing the amendment are a different question. The Labor Government seeks to separate itself a little from the union establishment, and to give itself some more room for manoeuvre in industrial affairs. One way is to appeal to the union rank and file over the heads of the union leaderships. The Government wants to be able to rely on its popularity amongst rank and file unionists in any future clash with union officialdom.

In addition, the changes have been introduced in an undemocratic way. Little debate was permitted within the trade unions themselves. The changes should preferably have come as a result of a broad movement amongst ordinary workers. They would then have represented a more significant gain for workers democracy.

Trade union affairs should be left to the

trade unions themselves. All interference by the capitalist state should be eliminated. It is not the job of a Labor government, or any other, to determine union rules. The spectre of state interference in union matters through control of union ballots etc is raised. In the hands of a Lynch this could be disastrous. The Labor movement has always opposed such interference and fought for its independence. This must not be allowed to change because of a Federal Labor Government.

In spite of these reservations, the change is a desirable one. Clause 50 deserves support as part of Labor's vitally important new amendments to the arbitration act. As a whole, the new amendments are a response to the demands of the working people for the unfettered right and ability to fight for better conditions through their unions. It is a clear class confrontation with the Liberals, between the Labor movement and the employers. Labor must not give in on this question.



Jack Munday



Laurie Short



Edgar Williams



Pat Clancy