

# "THE RED LINE"

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Peter Collins

## TACTICS FOR THE PEACE MOVEMENT

by Greg McCrae

The principal contradiction within the Peace movement is between those who are simply interested in peace (i.e. Capitalism is not to be overthrown but reformed, but we must stop it fighting these nasty wars) and those who realize that peace is only possible when Capitalism and Imperialism have been overthrown and a Socialist society established. In a word, between Revolutionary Socialists and Reformists. In an organization such as this, it may seem to be stating the obvious to list the principal contradiction but the fact remains that in the past we have often operated on wrong assumptions, or wrong analyses as to the division between ourselves and our opponents. To illustrate this I will list three wrong assumptions that we have made in the past and the errors in tactics to which they lead.

Wrong Assumption (i) The struggle in the peace movement is between those who support negotiations and those who demand withdrawal. An irrelevant division since it fails to allow for tactical considerations (ie. violence versus marching and lobbying). Also it is a distinction that bears little relation to ideological positions. "Progressive" Capitalists can and do support withdrawal (eg. Barton, James and that crew) so do pacifists. Communists support negotiations when the terms are advantageous (some insignificant examples might be the North Vietnamese Government and the National Liberation Front). This particular wrong assumption is less powerful since the Paris talks began, but it did have quite a lot of support among the Gould mob, and also, to a degree the ML's. It is dangerous because it obscures tactical differences as to how the struggle is to be fought in Australia and leads to sectarianism for its own sake.

Wrong Assumption (ii) The struggle is between Pacifists and supporters of National Liberation Movements in the Third World. Wrong because the groups are ill-defined. The Pacifists are our 'enemies' in the peace movement but they can still be worked with in a limited fashion, sometimes that is not taken into consideration in this assumption. Another serious weakness in this assumption is that many supporters of Revolution in the Third World do not support Socialist Revolution in Australia (most of the non-Labor Club members of the NLF Aid group were in this category). Some of the most vocal critics of our action on July 4 are probably genuine in their professed support of National Liberation Movements in the third world.

Wrong Assumption (iii) The struggle is between those who support violent demonstrations and those who do not. The most recent one, it is totally erroneous. Apart from the obvious fact that the Anarchists support violent demonstrations and are Pests of the first order because there is no way that we can control them, there is a second consideration. There still exist a reasonably large group of people who could be genuine revolutionary socialists and even genuine Communists who believe that violent demonstrations are tactically unwise and premature. The fact that these people are wrong (at least in my opinion) does not mean that they are not still very much on our side. We must not treat these sort of people as opponents to be struggled against, but rather as people to be convinced and won over. As it stands we rarely even try to inform them of our plans.

Above I have suggested the ideological positions that must be considered in planning tactics for the peace movement. What are the realities of the situation?

The basic problem facing us is this.

We have the resources and ability to take over a demonstration that others have organised. (We have proved this repeatedly). We have the resources and ability to organize our own mass demonstrations (we have yet to prove this but I will explain below how I think this could be done). We do not have the resources to run the other functions (propaganda etc) of the Peace Movement. For that matter neither do the CDA-VCC crowd now attempting these functions. Given the limited propaganda value of demonstrations it is important that we do get these functions under our control in some way and the only body that we can influence capable of doing this is the Rev Socs. The weakness of that solution is that if the Rev Socs took over running the Peace Movement it would be unable to carry out most of its other functions. On the other hand the current membership of the Rev Socs includes people whose support would be essential if we wished to remove the administrative and propaganda functions from the CDA-VCC crowd. The decision that the YCL must make is whether we think it is more important to run the residual functions of the Peace Movement or for the Revolutionary Socialists to carry out the other functions proposed last week in Comrade Esdaile's article. It seems to me extremely unlikely that we are going to be able to have it both ways.

Should we decide not to undertake the residual functions of the peace movement we are certainly still able to organize our own mass demonstrations. The fact that we do not possess mailing lists is totally irrelevant. A former secretary of the VDC once said that Goldbloom, Jean McLean and the rest are paper tigers because they cannot control or even influence the people on their mailing lists. At best all they can do is inform them of the dates of demonstrations. However when we get down to it, the important groups in demonstrations are Uni students, High School students and workers. We certainly do not need anyone's help to publicise demos at any of the three Unis. The SID kids can circularize the schools and Goldbloom and his cronies have to rely on paste-ups to contact the workers almost as much as we do.

It had been my intention to present a somewhat less disjointed article on tactics in the peace movement and also analyse the recent history of the peace movement to see what lessons we could draw for deciding future tactics. Unfortunately this has had to be written in a hurry so I will attempt to fill in the many gaps I have left in discussion at the next meeting.

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In this short article I would like to discuss the possibility of setting up some kind of radical teachers organization.

The need for this organization should be fairly obvious. Two reasons present themselves in particular. The first is the absence of militancy in the established unions - an obvious example of this is the Victorian Teachers Union. However this is so even in the so called more radical unions - eg. sellout of the Tech Teachers Association of Victoria over retrospectivity.

Secondly there should be some organized teacher support for the student underground movement - while this group should avoid direct interference, some subtle influence could be exerted - especially in the light of the drift of SID towards the CDA group.

If we accept the necessity for such a group then how should it be organized? There are two alternatives. - a cell like organization in the established unions or a separate above ground organization. At this stage the second alternative is preferable for several reasons. At this time such a group would be too small and would have very few contacts outside of ex members of the Monash left now teaching. Also such a group would be very vulnerable because of its large proportion of temporary teachers. Therefore there is no real advantage in being above ground in the short term.

What should be done? Members of the YCL who are teachers should:

- (a) Set up a central cell
- (b) Work within their own schools
- (c) Establish contacts with student underground and encourage, support and influence them.
- (d) Infiltrate the Unions (especially the TTAV and the VSTA) and establish contacts with militants and lefties within them - and of course attempt to draw them into this organization.

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SUBVERTING SCIENCE

BY Sean O'Hara

Unlike history of politics it is not immediately clear what a left wing approach to science is. Nonetheless, there is much room for work in the Science Faculty. Many science students are highly dissatisfied with thier courses, having been attracted by the supposed creative and constructive natures of science they find themselves in lectures consisting of boring lists of facts to be learnt for exams and forgotten. Most importantly, none of the work seems relevent to their future occupations. Although the main purpose of a science faculty in a capitalist system would be expected to train a small elite of research workers and a large group of people trained to do technical jobs, in fact both are done badly. Thanks to such concepts as academic freedom and the like, the emphasis incourses are often on the particular research interests of the lecturer rather than on any general look of the subject. The fact that few of the students will ever work in the particular field (indeed the particular department) and thus that the majority of the work will be useless to them is not considered by the departments, their main interest seems to be in keeping the best students in the departments. The thought that some of the students are not considering an academic career never occurs.

And thus we come to what appears to be a contradiction in our position. Any work we do towards stirring up discontent with the courses could have the effect of turning out better technocrats to keep capitalism running. But this is unavoidable, as communists we cannot hold any ivory tower position with relation to the university; we must oppose any idea that holds the university apart from society. We must support mores that enable graduates to receive a more relevent education but we must also aim for scientists to be more aware of the social and political implications of their role. Anybody who saw the recent TV program on germ warfare and remembers the scientist who, when asked why he was working in such a field, answered ' because the work was of a high scientific standard ', will realise the lack of political thought among some scientists- and from my experience this appears to be widespread. Thus, a prime aim for a cadre in the science faculty would be to get discussion started on the social aspects of science.

This can be developed into such seemingly more political questions as the role of science in keeping capitalism running, contrasting the aims of research in capitalism i.e. higher profits, with its aims in a socialist society, working for the good of mankind. The general aim must be to show their talents are wasted at university and exploited by industry. Scientists must be made to realise that their 'elite' position is illusory, and that they are just as much prisoners of capitalist exploitation as any other worker. Some of the worlds most brilliant scientist have come to realise this, most have not even thought about it.

How do we proceed? Tony Brooks idea (Red Line 2) of working through the science society is excellent; the society would be anxious to sponsor an examination of science courses, the role of science in society and the like. We might even get a cell recognised as a sub-committee and receive a grant. Departmental clubs also make useful agents, if they dont exist, efforts should be made to set them up, as a first step set up discussion groups amongst people doing a particular course or tutorial. This group can be formalised and then demand to attend, or at least send representatives to departmental meetings. If the YCL member chooses his issues well, confrontations must occur as the interests of the academics and of the students do not coincide. At this point 'well meaning' moderates of the Price ilk will be the main enemy, differences must be outlined, not covered over.

The chemistry department is the most hopeful, thanks to one Labor club member regular meetings of students are already held and their recommendations must be considered by the department. So far nothing significant has come out of this and it is thus regarded by the department as a complete success. Yet material is there, chemistry is the worst science department in many regards, irrelevant courses, bad lecturers, useless and time consuming prac. work and a god-professor of the worst type. The match is all that is needed. Once confrontation has begun, interest in 'student power' and in the role for which they are being trained will occur.

Biochemistry is similar, especially amongst post-graduates. Dissatisfaction is common, especially since two research students were unjustly dismissed, and the 'normal' channels for protest were useless for anything but sympathy. A demand for student involvement in the government of post-grad. degrees would gain much support.

We must remember that science students are basically apolitical, actually slightly scared of politics. We must get them thinking politically but through issues that effect them personally. Thus a 'Labor Club Science Group' would not be effective, but a 'science study group' doing exactly the same things would. The YCL member and sympathisers can provide the political direction.

COMMENTS AND CRITICISMS

by Peter Collins

In this article I would like to collect together my comments and criticisms of the articles which have appeared in Bolshevik and "The Red Line". On the whole, the results of publishing an internal bulletin have been excellent. We have proved conclusively that it can be done - that people can write serious articles analysing the problems we face and that the writing of these articles helps to greatly clarify our thinking. Already more than twenty pages of material has been published and almost all members have contributed at least once. From now on we should make writing an integral part of League activity. All members have something to say and, as far as possible, it should be said in writing. This does not mean that we are ready yet to give up general meetings or that we should provide unnecessary assistance to ASIO by revealing specific details in articles; but it does mean that whenever we have worked out our thoughts on some question these should be put down in writing. It also means that when nobody has worked out his thoughts on an important problem facing the League, any member involved in the problem, or having some ideas to contribute should regard it as his duty to think out the question clearly and contribute his views. For example we need material on the following topics (apart from more general theoretical problems) among others: Organization of the Monash Labor Club, Work at Melbourne Uni, Infiltration of CDA (and Monash SDS), concrete methods of integrating the student movement with workers, work in the anti-war movement, organization and role of militant demonstrations, spread of Marxist education among non-members, future recruiting policy and so on. All members should be involved in a specific sphere of work and they should be able to determine what that sphere is and how its specific problems should be approached by the YCL. Monash students would of course be more concerned with University work unless they are also involved in SWCC, the Rev Socs etc while non-students would concentrate on off campus organization.

In addition of course, all members should study the articles already published very carefully (this involves more than just reading them once) and prepare suitable comments and criticisms. Even if there is no need to publish written comments we should make sure that we understand each article and have defined our attitude towards the views expressed sufficiently clearly so that we could do so. None of the subjects already dealt with can possibly have been completely covered so further material can be introduced through comments and criticisms.

My main criticism of the material published so far is that it appears to fall too easily into two neat packages - articles concerned solely with theory and those concerned solely with practical details. This reflect something wrong in our thinking, what is required is an analysis of the problems we are facing together with practical suggestions for their resolution. My views on some of the subjects which have been raised are set out below.

ON TACTICS AND MORALITY

Comrade Frey's point that we should derive our morality from the interests of class struggle is entirely correct. But then doesn't everyone? Bourgeois morality is not, as the author implies based on truth and justice, but on the needs of preserving capitalism. The "capitalist thieves" are not only "parasites living on the blood of the workers" but also liars, cheaters and hypocrites, so there is nothing new in this concept. What distinguishes Communists from others is not that they have no morality but that their morality is based on the interests of a different class and this should always be made clear. In fact there is a communist ethic and it is summed up in the words "Serve the People". Because we serve the people we are not afraid of the truth and we are not afraid of criticism. Unlike the bourgeoisie we have nothing to be ashamed of - the truth is on our side, we are not conspirators but rely on the correctness of our position winning the people's support. Always and everywhere Communists have been the most honest and fearless defenders of the truth and this has won great prestige - note the role of Communists in the Chinese and Vietnamese Revolutions, the World War II Resistance movements etc. A particular distinguishing feature of Communism is that we do discuss our tactics completely openly and almost all the classic Marxist-Leninist works are in fact such polemics over tactics. "We Communists disdain to conceal our views and aims, we openly declare that our ends can be attained only through the forcible overthrow of all existing social systems..." (Manifesto) Once again we have nothing to fear and no reason to conceal our attitudes. Bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties for example have to lie when they join in a United Front but we declare openly to the workers what our aims are.

Perhaps the disagreement is caused by an incorrect use of the word "tactics".

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If by referring to tactics Comrade Frey simply means immediate practical problems then I have no real quarrel with him. Of course it is correct to quote Lenin's Left Wing Communism in saying that a Communist may, if necessary resort to all sorts of schemes and stratagems, conceal the truth and so on in order to work in the trade unions. But this has nothing to do with "tactics" and is certainly not a matter of moral principle - it is a matter of common sense. The reason, as Lenin points out in the sentence immediately before that quoted is because "... the "leaders" of opportunism, will resort to every trick of bourgeois diplomacy, to the aid of bourgeois governments, the priests, the police and the courts, to prevent Communists joining the trade unions, to force them out by every means, to make their work in the trade unions as unpleasant as possible, to insult, bait and persecute them."

In fact it is often necessary to lie etc - because of the nature of capitalist society. Even for non-Communists deceit and hypocrisy is a daily part of life in order to survive in a society based on competition and profit. Since every effort is being made to make lists of revolutionaries for future liquidation and to isolate those who work in the open by spreading lies and slanders about Communism (such as the lie and slander that we support the use of deceit and treachery) it is only natural that we should conceal our identities and details of organization and activity. This poses no moral questions whatever and we need pay no more thought to it than should a man who is being pursued by cut-throats and tells them that he is not the person they are seeking. It is the cut-throats and the capitalists x who are acting immorally.

Certainly the moral posturings of liberals and pacifists are nauseous as they earnestly debate whether it is "right" to kill imperialists or resist policemen: or whether we should passively "protest". We should carry out energetic propaganda against those who are so fond of having us "go to gaol for our beliefs" etc etc. These attitudes are quite widespread and it is correct to point out that bourgeois lines of thought tend to creep into our minds. However I think that Comrade Frey's article was written for the wrong audience and chose the wrong target. To the best of my knowledge no member of the YCL would engage in the kind of mental dialogue about "should I have the courage of my convictions and admit that I am a communist". The fact that it was necessary to write about this aspect of the question is itself a reflection of the fact that bourgeois lines of thought tend to creep into our minds. Such an elementary matter as survival and non-isolation should not be the subject of moral qualms any more than moral opposition.

Let us always keep clear then, the meaning of "tactics" and the distinction between "revolutionary expediency" and counter-revolutionary opportunism. Deceiving the people as to our policies and informing the enemy of our activities are both equally stupid.

LET US PREPARE FOR ARMED STRUGGLE and WE MUST DO POLITICAL WORK NOT JUST WITH STUDENTS BUT WITH THE MASSES OF THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE.

In my opinion both these articles make an important point but are divorced from reality. The question of state power and the need for violent revolution is extremely important and deserves careful study. In some circumstances it is desirable to publish material that simply reaffirms the Marxist-Leninist theses on the question but in our particular situation this is absolutely pointless. Instead of such phrases as "armed struggle is a necessity for the proletariat to achieve state power" and "in the near future we are faced with a depression and violent repression by the fascists" an explanation and defence of those propositions would have been more appropriate. Since the first proposition is generally accepted within the YCL while the second is not, it would be very useful to have a concrete analysis of why we can expect violent repression in the near future. An analysis of the developing contradictions of imperialism would help people to see the importance of armed struggle instead of putting them off with such childish phrase mongering as "Brandishing the gun in one hand, and Mao Tse-tung's thought in the other..." or "does not Commentator boost our morale and deflate the imperialists arrogance."

If we accept that there is a need to plan armed struggle then Comrade Dove should proceed to make some concrete suggestions as to what the YCL should do. Presumably we are not expected to launch an immediate insurrection or even to establish an underground people's army and begin military training, or to start seriously stockpiling arms. Our main task is to prepare people ideologically for the future. The YCL should always keep the likelihood of future repression clearly in mind and remember that all our activities are ultimately directed towards the seizure of state power. If we forget this we will make opportunist

errors. We should also endeavour to spread a similar attitude among the left circles we move in. The most obvious aspect of this is the question of security. If we believe that the ruling class will not surrender peacefully then we must even now take steps to preserve our forces.

Any revolutionary violence in Australia would most likely take the form of a relatively brief urban insurrection (possibly followed by a war of independence against US imperialism) after many increasingly violent clashes at demonstrations etc rather than a protracted rural guerilla war. Our main preparations at the present time should be to develop the correct organization and techniques to combat police violence and also to protect ourselves from security. We should also, at an individual level, become more familiar with guns etc. All of this would be a great deal more use than airy waffle about "struggle on all fronts".

I think that it is quite correct to point out that student struggles must take second place to the working class, which is the main force in the overthrow of capitalism. Indeed lack of integration with the workers is the most serious weakness of the student movement and so the building of a worker-student alliance should be our main task among the students. Unfortunately, Comrade Melms takes this correct position and turns it into its opposite by belittling the importance of work among the students. It is undoubtedly true that the YCL has placed "great emphasis on university life and struggles against university authorities and the decadent bourgeois education system" but what is wrong with this. It is a fact that there is a growing rebellion against capitalism among students all over the world and it is the duty of Communists to support that rebellion and channel it in the right direction (ie towards proletarian revolution), within Australia students are at present the most politically active group and the events in France last year proved that student struggles can act as a detonator for mass working class action. As Chairman Mao points out "The young people are the most active and vital force in society. They are the most eager to learn and the least conservative in their thinking." All this is good, not bad and we should support it. Precisely because "the intellectuals are subjective and individualistic..." it is all the more important for us to develop a Marxist leadership of the student movement so that they will not be led astray.

Even if the student movement did not occupy such an important position in contemporary struggles, the attitude taken by Comrade Melms would be incorrect. We should, as Lenin frequently points out, do revolutionary work not only among the proletariat but in all strata of the population. The point is of course that we do proletarian Communist work among the other strata e.g. our main work among students must be to oppose petty-bourgeois notions of "student power" etc. and demand support for the workers' revolution. This is quite different from talking about "struggle on a broad front" as an excuse for failing to struggle on any front.

Whether we like it or not, the majority of League members at this time are in one way or another connected with the student movement and it is only natural that this should form the center of our attention. It is the duty of every Communist to work in the sphere most suited to him - and for students that means the University. If a student, while not doing any real revolutionary work outside the University, regards it as beneath his dignity to work out the correct path for struggle within then we can only conclude that he is not serious. To quote the author "If these people continue to talk revolution but do not make revolution, losses again will be incurred."

SECURITY

Comrade Brown's article sets out a number of important points and there are many others. The key question however is one of ideology. Once our cadres are genuinely convinced of the need for secrecy there will be no difficulty in drawing up and enforcing the necessary list of rules. But as long as people pay only lip service to the idea that the state is an instrument of repression any rules we draw up will prove incomplete and useless. We must carry out extensive propaganda within and outside the YCL to remind people of what happened in Indonesia, to the leaders of the banned revolutionary youth organizations in France and so on and to draw attention to ASIO's \$3,000,000 budget and the fact that they must be using it for something. The 'enemy' at this stage is not primarily interested in finding out what immediate plans we have so much as preparing lists of who is active and what their links are with other people. At present the whole student left is hopelessly exposed and open to infiltration. We should immediately earmark some people to step back from the likelihood and hold themselves in reserve and should take measures against the numerous gossips in our ranks. The Revolutionary Socialists HQ in Prahran should be treated with extreme caution so as not to become simply a more efficient means of keeping tabs on left-wing activity.

Print should be published daily in term time this year, both because this is the logical format for a duplicated production (under which it is at a greatest advantage against its competitors) and because daily production is likely to improve both the quality of Print and the efficiency with which it is produced.

Print is a cheap duplicated paper that cannot compete with *Lots Wife* on its own terms and must take advantage of the two areas in which it does have advantages viz. speed of production and comparative lack of censorship. Thus Print will have a head start over *Lots Wife* etc as daily topical newsheet which is not afraid of the laws of obscenity and libel. The argument that Print should be both daring and topical has been generally accepted in the past, but the other point I want to make here is that the daily production of Print will make it more efficient, and that a daily Print can be put out with the same effort that it took for a weekly.

Last year the production of Print was highly inefficient. After April there was no editor and Print was produced by whoever felt like doing it (usually an executive member or someone from Shirley Grove). Because there was no editor there were no such things as reporters or typists. However people used to feel guilty about not doing something and therefore tended to come to Shirley Grove on Print night to "help". But most often they hindered, they sat around and gossiped most of the evening with the result that gossip would start at about 8.00 pm and the actual writing of Print would not begin until 10.00 pm and the whole process would not be finished until 1.00 pm or later. It was common last year for 30 man hours to be spent in putting out one edition of Print (six people hanging around for five or six hours). By contrast Sydney University's Wednesday Commentary was commonly produced in four man hours.

But if the production of Print is to be streamlined we need discipline and the fact of putting out a daily paper will force discipline upon us (you can't spend thirty manhours a day on print). Under a disciplined system there will be:

- ① An editor of the day. Responsible for collating stories rewriting copy, implementing club policy through Print and seeing to typing and production of Print.
- ② A production/distribution manager who will co-ordinate distribution, see that a supply of ink and paper is maintained and ensure that the Gestetner is kept in a clean and workable condition.
- ③ A pool of typists. Some editors can type themselves but others will need typing assistance. It only takes 40 minutes to type Print as long as ALL the copy is ready for the typists. It is reasonable to expect an editor to have all his copy ready for typing by say 8.30 pm. If he can not stick to deadlines he won't get any typists.
- ④ A deadline for copy of say 6.00 pm. Most things that are going to happen have done so by then. When important late news breaks it may be necessary to run a second edition or re-cut the stencil of one page. Late stories may be phoned in. A device for recording off the telephone has been purchased.

If this system is adhered to an editor can sit down at 6.00 pm and have the whole thing finished (including running off) by 10.00 pm.

⑤ Reporters. An editor should edit. He should collect stories, assign reporters and exercise an overall supervision over the style and content of Print, but he should not be required to write much in the normal run of things. Print should be edited from a central office where the editor can be contacted personally and by phone. Reporters should write their stories down and either deliver them personally or drop them in a "Print Box" at the University or the centre.

The Content Last year Print carried too much editorial and not enough news. This was not because the news was not available but because there was so much polemic that had to be printed the news often got crowded out. In a daily production we can have both more news and more polemic while at the same time restoring Print to a newspaper and not just a propaganda rag.

Letterheads Last year one of the most timeconsuming tasks was the duplicating of Print headings. This year the printing will be done free if we can supply the paper in large batches (i.e. the printer can not print a small batch every week but he can print three large batches a year). We need to buy enough paper to last a term.

