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Why Vietnam Treaty Won't Bring Peace



Thieu and Nixon... 'peace' accords would maintain pro-U.S. regime in Saigon.

The agreement by the U. S. to halt the bombing and to withdraw its remaining troops from South Vietnam is a long-sought-for victory for the Vietnamese people. It is also a victory for the antiwar

An editorial

movement here and throughout the world. But imperialist intervention in Vietnam is far from ended.

The accords do nothing to resolve the social, economic, and political problems that have been at the root of the Vietnam war. The imperialists recognize the fact of two armies and two governmental forces in South Vietnam, each representing basically op-

posed class forces.

On the one side is the Saigon regime of the landlords and capitalists, backed by U. S. imperialism. On the other side are the revolutionary forces based on the workers and peasants. This is an inherently unstable situation. One side or the other will eventually have to predominate, and that can only be determined in struggle.

The cease-fire accords announced Jan. 24 will not bring peace to Indochina. They signal a new stage of the civil war, and of Washington's intervention.

Nixon and Kissinger are trying to create an atmosphere of elation over the accords, claiming that the armistice justifies the genocidal war the U. S. has waged against the people of Vietnam.

This claim is utterly false. Washington's aggression in Indochina will go down as one of the greatest crimes ever against humanity.

As we go to press, the terms of the accord are just becoming available. In future issues we will analyze them in detail. But in their broad outlines, the accords do not end U. S. intervention in Vietnam. U. S. forces will remain poised to defend the Saigon regime, even after U. S. soldiers are withdrawn. B-52s and other aircraft will remain in Thailand, on aircraft carriers off the coast of Vietnam, and on other Asian bases. Thousands of "civilian technicians" from the U. S. will be "advising" Thieu's forces.

The U. S. will continue to pump massive economic aid to the Sai-

gon clique. Washington will be permitted to maintain Thieu's forces, including the world's third largest air force, at their present bloated level. Many U. S. bases and much U. S. war materiel in South Vietnam have already been turned over to the Saigon dictator.

In his news conference, Kissinger gave lip service to the idea of "free elections." But there is no specific provision guaranteeing such elections. This, Kissinger stated, is to be worked out "between the two South Vietnamese parties." Rules governing the elections, including what offices are open, are to be discussed by a "national council of national reconciliation and concord." Thieu has unconditional veto power over

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US Abortion Victory; Labor's Arbitration Plans

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Vietnam Treaty

Continued from page 1

all proposals presented to this body. Any elections Thieu agreed to would be "free elections" Saigon style.

Far from preparing for "free elections," Thieu is preparing a bloodbath of political executions, mass arrests, and political terror to liquidate any opposition.

In the coming struggles in South Vietnam, Washington will not remain neutral. Kissinger made it crystal clear in his news conference that the U.S. will back Saigon to the hilt. He repeatedly warned North Vietnam not to "violate" the accords. Washington threatens to unleash once again its terrible destructive power if the landlord-capitalist regime in Saigon appears to be in danger.

With cynical double-speak, Kissinger spoke about the right of Vietnam to self-determination. But the very fact that the U.S. has negotiated the future of Vietnam is in itself a fundamental violation of self-determination.

Washington's diplomacy has been the diplomacy of terror bombing and genocidal air raids on the people of Vietnam. It has relied, and continues to rely, on the force of arms to impose its will on Vietnam.

The Thieu regime would not survive a day without the massive military support of the U.S. Yet Nixon keeps this regime in power in the name of "self-determination".

The terms of the cease-fire contain numerous violations of the principle of self-determination, and many concessions wrung out of the Vietnamese rebel forces.

For example, while Kissinger said American POWs are to be released "unconditionally" within 60 days, there is no guarantee or time limit for the release of the estimated 200,000 political prisoners held in Thieu's prisons. Kissinger said the "problem" of distinguishing between civil-war prisoners and "criminals" would be worked out between the Thieu regime and the Provisional Revolutionary Government.

The accords contain other conditions that Washington has imposed on the Vietnamese. North Vietnam has been forced to accept these conditions under the military blows of Washington and the failure of both Moscow and Peking to adequately aid the Vietnamese, either politically or militarily.

The Vietnamese, of course, have every right to negotiate and sign an agreement with the U.S. and Saigon. But we must not give support in any way to the conditions the U.S. imposes on them. Any attempt to paint these conditions as a "victory" can only disarm and disorient the international antiwar movement and the defenders of the Vietnamese struggle for self-determination. Our job is to tell the truth about the conditions Washington, Moscow, and Peking have imposed on the Vietnamese people. We must prepare to continue mobilizing opposition to U.S. war aims in Southeast Asia.

In his televised speech on Tuesday, Jan. 23, Nixon appealed to "other interested nations to help insure that the agreement is carried out and peace is maintained." He made it clear through this reference that he will continue to rely on Moscow and Peking to exert "influence" on the Vietnamese. They have put pressure on Hanoi to agree to terms acceptable to the U.S. so as not to endanger their detente with Nixon.

Kissinger also announced that Washington had the agreement of Moscow and Peking to join a big power conference on Indochina less than a month from now. The purpose of this conference will be to legitimize the violations of self-determination contained in the accords.

The heirs of Stalin in the Kremlin and their counterparts in Peking have repeatedly refused to provide the Vietnamese with an adequate defense in response to the genocidal escalations of either Johnson or Nixon. The fact that this policy did not change one iota during the mining of the ports of North Vietnam or during the most recent terror bombing has strengthened Washington's confidence that both Brezhnev and Mao will continue to twist Hanoi's arm after the cease-fire takes effect.

The struggle will continue in Vietnam against the Thieu regime's bloody dictatorship. Our struggle here will continue until the U.S. is forced to withdraw entirely, and without imposing any conditions, from all of Southeast Asia. Only when that is done will the Vietnamese be able to determine their own future. Only then can there be peace in Indochina.

Antiwar Action Around Australia

BY JOHN PERCY

Antiwar protests were held in the major Australian cities January 19 & 20 in response to the call by the National Peace Action Coalition in the United States and the Stockholm Peace Conference.

In spite of the short notice, the university holidays, and continuing fanfares from the press about peace possibilities and new negotiations, hundreds of people showed their opposition to Nixon's genocide in demonstrations in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Perth and other centres around Australia.

In Sydney, 600 people attended a rally outside the U.S. Consulate. A wide range of speakers addressed the crowd, with a variety of political views, but the most predominant slogan on placards carried by the demonstrators was: "No Conditions - U.S. Out Now!" Speakers included Australian Labor Party Senator Arthur Gietzelt, Elliott V. Elliott, federal secretary of the Seamen's Union, the Rev. Ted Noffs, Tas Bull from the Waterside Worker's Federation, Laurie Carmichael, Assistant Commonwealth Secretary of the Amalgamated Metal Worker's Union, Jim McIlroy of the Socialist Workers League, and Frans Timmerman of the University of New South Wales Students' Union.

At the Sydney rally, Laurie Carmichael of the A.M.W.U. announced that a delegation of trade union leaders from North Vietnam had accepted an invitation to visit Australia, and were scheduled to leave Hanoi on January 27. Last year, three Australian union officials visited North Vietnam.

After the rally, some of the demonstrators marched to the post office to send postcards of protest to Nixon.

At the demonstration, nearly 200 copies were sold of a special Vietnam issue of DIRECT ACTION, fortnightly newspaper of the Socialist Workers League and the Socialist Youth Alliance, the sympathizing organisations of the Fourth International in Australia.

In line with national and international demonstrations against Nixon's inaugu-

ration, a protest and guerilla theatre was organised in Perth. About 350 people attended a demonstration on January 20. Widespread support for the antiwar movement was indicated by the consistently large numbers of people who had attended similar demonstrations on December 20 and 28, and January 4. Speakers at the rally included union representatives, student activists from the university, Institute of Technology, and several Labor parliamentarians. Western Australian Labor Premier Tonkin also sent a message of support.

On January 20 a rally of 200 people in King George Square, Brisbane heard speakers condemn the continuation of US aggression in Indo China. Speakers included ALP members, a Seamen's Union official and other unionists as well as members of left-wing groups. Large banners, calling for US Out Now, were draped between flag poles in the square so that although a motion for a march was defeated large numbers of Saturday morning shoppers saw the rally.

In Melbourne, a demonstration was held on the Friday night (see report below).

In Adelaide, 200 people demonstrated in the centre of the city. The official slogan for the demonstration called on Nixon to "Sign the peace treaty Now!"

One unfortunate feature of the January 20 actions was the bureaucratic way in which they were organised in some centres. In Sydney, for example, the Association for International Cooperation and Disarmament (AICD) attempted to substitute itself for the antiwar coalition that had organised previous successful antiwar actions. AICD is controlled by the Communist Party of Australia (CPA), which is trying to return to a previous era when it could dominate any mass movement in a thoroughly Stalinist and undemocratic manner (see DA 34). Hopefully, in the new conditions where there is a mass radicalisation amongst students and young workers, caused in part by the worldwide reaction to the Vietnamese war itself, it will be less successful than in the past.



North Vietnamese delegation Tran Thanh, Vu Dinh, & Do Trong Hop at Sydney airport

Melbourne Action

BY DOROTHY TUMNEY

Approximately 700 people attended a demonstration in Melbourne on the night of Friday January 19 (marking Nixon's inauguration) to protest continued US aggression in Vietnam. Starting at the City Square the march went round the city with stops at various places such as Pan Am and the Southern Cross Hotel to address the city crowds.

The demonstration was a success but could by no means be called a huge protest. This can be attributed in part

SOCIALIST WORKERS LEAGUE CONFERENCE

The Socialist Workers League held its 2nd National Conference in Sydney over January 27, 28, 29. The SWL is the Australian sympathising organisation of the Fourth International, the world revolutionary party founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938. The task of the Conference was to sum up the experiences of the League in its first 13 months of existence, draw the lessons and lay down guidelines for our future work.

The League's character as an integral part of a real world movement, struggling for socialism on all continents was demonstrated by the greetings it received from the overseas sections and groups of the Fourth International. Greetings came from the Socialist Action League of New Zealand, the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvriere of Canada, the Socialist Workers Party in the US; the Japan Revolutionary Communist League; the Israeli Socialist Organisation (Marxist); the Venezuelan Trotskyist Group, the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (Revolutionary Workers Party) of Uruguay; and the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (Socialist Workers Party) of Argentina. All these organisations are in the front ranks of the struggle for socialism in their countries and internationally. The work of the Argentine Socialist Workers Party, for example, in organising a class struggle workers front in the elections there, must be an inspiration to revolutionary socialists everywhere (see article p. 869, and the greetings from the PST of Argentina).

Trotskyism is internationalist through and through. Flowing from this outlook, the Conference began with a report on the international situation. The report focused on the struggle in Vietnam which, it pointed out, remains the central issue in world politics today, the central arena of the struggle between the forces of world revolution and capitalist counter-revolution. The so-called "peace" treaty, the report stressed, would not lead to peace and justice in Vietnam. The treaty was forced on the Vietnamese by the US through a combination of terror and pressure exerted by the bureaucracies of the Soviet Union and China, who have completely betrayed their elementary duty to defend another workers state from imperialist attack.

Only the victory of the socialist revolution in Indo China can bring about a just peace, and that means the total withdrawal of all US forces from the region and the overthrow of the military-landlord-Thieu clique in Saigon. Our task in Australia remains that of explaining the meaning of the recent events and

demanding that the US get out now and let the Vietnamese determine their own future.

The report also considered the rising curve of struggle in the advanced capitalist countries, where the radicalisation continues to deepen and extend to ever new layers. A vivid demonstration of the international character of this move to the left among the youth and the labour movement is the gains made by the labour and social-democratic parties in recent elections in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Germany.

The report concluded with a survey of the anti-bureaucratic struggles in the workers states, and the continual upsurge of the colonial revolution, which has not been halted by the numerous defeats it has suffered in the past years. The report was unanimously endorsed by the Conference.

Next on the agenda was a report on the discussion now underway in the world Trotskyist movement in preparation for the 10th Congress (the 4th Congress since the 1963 reunification) of the Fourth International later this year. The reporter was Jim Percy, who was elected the National Organiser of the SWL after the conference. This report, which was unanimously endorsed, projected a conference of the League in July to consider, in particular, the questions facing the world movement in more detail and adopt a comprehensive position for the World Congress.

All of Sunday was devoted to the presentation and discussion of the draft

political resolution which set projections for our local work. The main report on this document was given by Dave Holmes, the National Secretary of the SWL. The document systematically developed the analyses and positions familiar to the readers of DIRECT ACTION.

The document begins by setting the developing crisis facing the Australian ruling class in the context of the crisis of the world capitalist system. Then, after considering the contradictions of Australian capitalism, the draft analyses the various sectors of the mass movements and sets forth our tasks in relation to them - the antiwar, women's liberation, black and student movements, the labour movement and the Labor party. We shall not attempt to summarise in detail this part of the draft, as the essential points will appear in articles in our press over the coming months. The main tenor of the draft here was the very favourable conditions that were developing for the advance of the socialist movement.

A key section of the draft was one which elaborated our basic method, the method of Trotsky's Transitional Program. This method consists in trying, in all cases, to link the day-to-day struggles of the oppressed with the struggle for socialism through a series of democratic and transitional demands. The draft points out that struggles for elementary democratic rights can have, in an era of capitalist decline, a very revolutionary significance (such as, for example, the democratic right of national self-determination). But in all these struggles we push for revolutionary means of

struggle - mass action and not a reliance on parliamentarianism. We also advance transitional demands which point directly to a socialist reorganisation of society, such as the demand for a sliding scale of hours and wages, against inflation and unemployment.

The draft concludes by reemphasising the central and decisive importance to the socialist revolution of the building of a revolutionary party, which can correctly lead the various sections of the oppressed against the capitalist state.

The draft was unanimously endorsed by the conference. The unanimity around these perspectives and conceptions was also a final judgement by the whole group on the claims of those who split away from us last August, to form the "Communist League".

The final day of the Conference considered the Organisation report, a press report and a report on last August's split. The highlight of the press report was the launching of a drive to increase the circulation of DIRECT ACTION and gain 500 new subscriptions by Easter. Finally a new National Committee and Control Commission were elected.

The Conference marks the close of a year of development for the SWL. In that time the League has become a much more solidly structured nucleus, carrying out an active intervention in all the sectors of the mass movement. The conference makes us confident the League will extend its size, influence and prestige in the coming year.



Jim Percy, National Organiser of SWL, addressing the conference

SWL Conference Sets Drive for 500 New Subs

The Second National Conference of the Socialist Workers League decided to launch a drive to obtain 500 new subscriptions to DIRECT ACTION by Easter at the special rate of 15 issues for \$1.

At this crucial time for the world revolution you cannot afford to be without a single issue of DIRECT ACTION. As the Vietnamese revolution faces a new phase with the constant threat of a return to an earlier era, you need to have the

paper with the best reports on the Vietnamese situation.

The peace accords leave open the possibility of U.S. re-involvement if Thieu can manufacture a convincing enough pretext. Unlike many people we have not been lulled into complacency by the manoeuvres of the imperialists. We know that the Vietnamese people are still in mortal danger and for that reason we intend to keep our readers

abreast of the latest developments there and to call on them to take action to support the Vietnamese when necessary.

The struggle for socialism is an international one. Not only in Vietnam, but all over the world oppressed people are struggling against the exploiters. All over the world struggles are erupting that are shaking the capitalist system to its foundations. We believe these events are important and that it is essential for socialists to be aware of and support them. That is why we carry the most up to date and accurate information on these areas too.

But we don't only report on international struggles. The people who produce and sell DIRECT ACTION are leading activists in the struggles for socialism in this country too. We carry the most up to date and accurate news and analysis of the

struggles of the workers, students, women black people and gay people.

We believe that a clear understanding of the Labor Party is necessary for socialists in this country. For this reason we have articles on the historical roots of the ALP as well as analysing the latest developments inside it at the moment.

If you want to know the truth about the socialist movement both in this country and overseas, you must read DIRECT ACTION. No other paper will print the truth. The press barons won't - they have a stake in keeping people ignorant and the other left papers either distort reality by twisting it to fit their sectarian schemas or are afraid to tell the truth because they have tied themselves to the privileged bureaucracies in Moscow and Peking.

If you want to read the truth, you must read DIRECT ACTION so subscribe now!

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International Antiwar Actions

BY FRANS TIMMERMAN

Huge demonstrations were held all over the world during January to protest the U.S. war in Indochina.

U.S. President Nixon's inauguration day, January 20, was met with especially large antiwar protests in various centres around the world.

"There are more Americans here at the Washington Monument saying 'No' to the war than there are a half-mile away at the inauguration saying 'Yes' to Richard Nixon. And that's the real measure of the way things stand today in the USA."

The speaker, Jerry Gordon of the National Peace Action Coalition, was addressing more than 100,000 people who had marched there for the rally.

The signs and chants along the line of the march seemed to be evenly divided between those supporting "U.S. Out Now!" and those favouring the signing of the nine-point peace plan.

The chants of the demonstrators could be heard in the reviewing stands a half-mile away where 20,000 people had gathered to watch the swearing-in rites for the world's No. 1 war criminal for another four years as U.S. president.

Antiwar and anti-Nixon signs were also in abundance along the route of the president's inauguration. Many of those lining the streets to watch Nixon go by held up protest signs.

The antiwar march itself was so large that it took well over two hours for the main body to march the short distance from the Lincoln Memorial to the Washington monument, where the rally was held.

In his speech, which received one of the most enthusiastic responses from the crowd, Jerry Gordon said:

"The latest proposed agreement will not end U.S. intervention in South-east Asia or even in South Vietnam. . . . Hundreds of warplanes will still be in Thailand and the Seventh Fleet will still be off the Vietnam coast — poised and

ready to resume bombing operations. . . . Our demand remains what it has always been," Gordon stated, "for the immediate, unconditional removal of all U.S. military forces, warplanes, ships, military bases and advisers from South-east Asia."

Meanwhile, demonstrations of between 4,000 and 10,000 people were held in Boston, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Portland and Chicago.

In Europe, one of the largest January 20 protests was in Dortmund, West Germany, according to United Press International. Conservative estimates by the police put the number of participants at 10,000.

UPI also reported on demonstrations in Paris, Berlin, Stockholm, Tokyo and New Delhi:

"In Paris, a police van and several private autos were set ablaze, and the riot police clashed with leftists, who hurled gasoline bombs. The war protesters wearing helmets and wielding iron bars, tried to stage their demonstration outside the United States Embassy on the Place de la Concorde, but the police prevented them from reaching the area."

About 5,000 people marched through downtown Stockholm, according to UPI, chanting "Long Live the National Liberation Forces!"

In Berlin, a rally of 1,000 persons was held outside the U.S. Information Agency's cultural centre.

Photos of Nixon were burned outside the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo at the end of a march by 1,200 people.

In New Delhi, 500 demonstrators at a rally in front of the U.S. Information Agency chanted "Nixon the killer!" and "Americans, get out of Vietnam."

The January 20 demonstrations followed on the heels of a series of antiwar demonstrations throughout Europe in recent weeks. In Milan, a demonstration of 30,000 took place in the afternoon on January 13, followed by an evening rally in a sports stadium. The next day,

another demonstration of 30,000 occurred in Bonn, filling the city's Munsterplatz.

Even after Nixon ordered a halt to the 12-day bombing raid on Hanoi and Haiphong, worldwide revulsion over the Nixon administration's war policies continued to be expressed in massive protest actions.

An Agence France-Presse report stated that "some 50,000 people took part in a demonstration on Sunday afternoon (Jan. 6) in Utrecht (The Netherlands) protesting American bombing of Vietnam." An NBC television news report on the action stated that organisers of the march estimated the crowd at 100,000.

The antiwar action, supported by virtually all Dutch trade unions, was the largest demonstration in the Netherlands since the end of World War II.

In Stockholm, between 10,000 and 15,000 persons joined in an antiwar march on Dec. 20. The action was the largest of the annual demonstrations held in Sweden on that date to commemorate the founding of the south Vietnamese NLF.

A contingent of more than 500 people marched under the banners of the Indochina Solidarity Campaign. The ISC opposed the inclusion of the demand that "Nixon must sign" the Paris accords as one of the demands of the demonstration. The ISC felt that this demand violated the Vietnamese people's right to self-determination.

In Copenhagen, about 7,000 people marched on Dec. 23 against the bombing. In London, 700 demonstrated on the same day.

Between December 19 and 31, thousands were mobilised in cities throughout France by the Indochina Solidarity Front. Protests were also held throughout Italy and in Bangladesh.

Three days after the massive January 20 protests, President Nixon gave a television speech announcing the initialing of

the Vietnam truce. He declared that "the United States will continue to recognise the Government of the Republic of Vietnam as the sole legitimate government of South Vietnam."

But despite Nixon's talk about "peace with honor" and "Self-determination for South Vietnam", it is clear that the U.S. intends to maintain imperialist domination of South Vietnam.

On Jan. 22, Pentagon officials announced that the withdrawal of U.S. air power in South-east Asia would be very slow following a cease-fire. U.S. air power will be kept in the region for at least a few years more.

Nixon will not hesitate to reapply air and sea power in Indochina if the struggle for national liberation looks like succeeding.

To further put the squeeze on the Vietnamese liberation forces, Secretary of Defence Melvin Laird stated on Jan. 19 that following a cease-fire agreement, the U.S. would attempt to negotiate an agreement with the Soviet Union and China to cut off arms supplies to Hanoi. Laird felt optimistic that this could be arranged because, he said, Moscow's desire for trade with the U.S. "is the strongest weapon that we have in our hands."

The response of the Saigon regime is indicated by the police state measures that President Thieu has decreed. The repressive measures show that Thieu fears most from a cease-fire: the possibilities of social disruption, labour unrest, desertion, economic chaos and migration of population into the Communist-held areas.

Thieu has ordered his police to shoot on sight any persons who "applaud the Communists" or incite "pro-Communist" demonstrations, or circulate N.L.F. money. Anyone who is caught distributing "Communist" leaflets or flags, or engaging in any public "pro-Communist or neutralist" political activities, is subject to arrest.

LABOR'S ARBITRATION PLANS

BY JIM McILROY

Labor's announced intention to abolish the penal clauses of the Arbitration Act is a victory for the working people of this country. It is the culmination of a campaign which began with the great mobilisation against the gaoling of Clarrie O'Shea under these powers in 1969. Thousands of workers marched in the streets, and hundreds of thousands went on strike to demand O'Shea's release. Liberal governments have not been game to really challenge the strong feelings of the great majority of trade unionists on this question.

Opposition to the use of penal clauses was a mark of a revival in trade union militancy on a broad scale. It was the first great demonstration of a new confidence and aggressiveness amongst rank and file trade unionists, after nearly two decades of relative quiescence. At the same time, the abolition of these clauses by a Labor government clearly shows the way the ALP reflects the powerful pressures of its base amongst those who work, and those who suffer oppression in this society. This is yet another clearly progressive consequence of the Labor victory last December.

However, we must also see that this step forms part of a new strategy for Labor relations fostered by the new Labor administration. Generally, the move is away from reliance on the Liberals' big stick and towards 'co-operation' and, if necessary, the 'small stick'. The aim is to persuade workers to moderate their demands, and to control the unions by 'consent' of their leaderships and by 'conciliation'. All Arbitration Commission presidential members and commissioners will also be given the power to conciliate under the new laws to be introduced by the ALP government. Consent agreements between unions and employers will be encouraged.

At the same time Labor has announced an advisory committee to examine the existing Labor laws and investigate industrial relations in Sweden, West Germany, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States. No doubt the committee will be able to pick up quite a few ideas on control of industrial unrest from the systems in these 'progressive' states e.g. the U.K. Industrial Relations Act (under which unionists were gaoled only last year), Heath's, and Nixon's experiments in wage freezes and anti-union laws, and Sweden and Germany's highly bureaucratic and restrictive systems of 'collective bargaining'. It is hardly likely that this committee will come up with anything other than the newest and latest in anti-worker industrial regulations.

The reactions of big business spokesmen and the daily press are a guide to the thinking of various sections of the capitalist class on the new proposals. "The Age" which represents the 'liberal' wing of business tended to look on the bright side, and continued to critically back Labor's proposals. It clearly saw them as consistent with the expectations it had when backing the ALP in the elections - and as an acceptable and 'realistic' approach to the industrial situation. "The Age" editorial of February 2, 1973 makes this clear:

"... It is not possible to pronounce advance judgment on the proposals; they must be judged on how they work. But the Government's plans clearly reflect its concern to develop an industrial relations system which faces the difficulties and acknowledges the realities of modern life. While employers may be somewhat wary, there is no evidence that the Government will be supine to every trade union demand. Indeed, Mr. Cameron's statement suggests that the unions could be surprised by the amount of supervision which will be exercised over their industrial activities.

"The most controversial proposal is the abolition of the so-called 'penal clauses' of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. Whether Australia's arbitration system can remain viable without these sanctions remains to be seen: that is the essence of the Labor experiment. But it does not necessarily follow that abolition of the penal clauses will remove all coercive restraints from the trade unions. Mr. Cameron was careful to emphasise that the Govern-

ment would "step up" the prosecution rate for breaches of awards by unions and employers - a statement which suggests that unions will be kept under close scrutiny. It might also be argued that abolition of the penal clauses will do no more than formalise the situation which has, in fact, prevailed in industry over the past few years. Trade union rejection of the sanctions has made them inoperable anyway."

For "The Age" editorialist it is a "Labor experiment". Indeed, the whole venture of supporting a Labor government is for "The Age" an experiment - one which has great dangers, and which will no doubt need to be sharply reversed one day.

Labor is being called upon to administer a sedative to the working class and to the various movements of the oppressed. But the business class cannot be sure that the reforms which Labor is able to carry out and the confidence which Labor's victory instils in every oppositional movement will not overcome any attempts by the ALP leaders to co-opt and divert these movements.

Thus the new Labor proposals are an experiment. And not all business representatives agree on their implications. Liberal ex-Minister of Labor Mr. Lynch said the plan was a virtual sell-out to the demands of the left wing of the trade union movement. (Melbourne "Herald", February 1, 1973) Mr. Ian McPhee, director of the Victorian Chamber of Manufacturers said the plan could result in "an unprecedented state of industrial anarchy".

But "The Age" notes with satisfaction that Labor Minister Cameron, in outlining the proposals, has provided against such a possibility. Unionists can expect to be closely supervised and perhaps even prosecuted for over-activity. Talk of 'stepping up' prosecutions of employers and unions for breaches of awards raises the spectre of the "Cameron proposals" of 1971, which suggested prosecution of individual unionists for unauthorised strikes. Strong opposition from rank and file

militants and the Socialist Left drove those proposals out of sight, but the possibility of their re-appearance is always there, particularly in a future crisis.

At present the ALP leadership in its radical reformist mood has steered clear of an open commitment in this direction. The general tenor of the other proposals is to strengthen the hand of the ALP leaders' natural ally, the trade union bureaucracy. The move to exempt trade union officials from private legal action relating to industrial activity is quite admirable in itself, but it clearly discriminates against rank and file militants. They will still be liable to prosecution for "damage" resulting from strikes. The general clamor of protest from Liberal Party spokesmen shows the progressive character of these moves (which will eliminate such situations as the Terrazo dispute in South Australia involving the right of unions to go on the job to organize but there is clearly this other side to it.

The moves to ease union amalgamations and to eliminate Federal/State conflicts in industrial structures are good, and a reflection of the pressure of industrial unionism and the need of workers for strength and unity to fight the monopolies. But again they also serve to strengthen the hand of the union officials, and concentrate power in fewer hands. Of course, increased rank and file militancy can counter this.

Overall, the new proposals reflect the ambiguous position of the Labor government, and its allies, the union leaderships. They must balance between the pressures of their constituency - the working people and the demands of big business. Labor seeks in this new strategy to consolidate the control of union officialdom vis a vis rank and file militants, and direct wage and other demands into the safe channels of conciliation. At the same time we must see the abolition of the penal powers and the other pro-labour measures as a real victory for the working class - and a reflection of the different sort of party in power in Canberra.



Demonstration against penal clauses

READERS!
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The Australian press estimated the January 20 rally in Washington at 25,000 - 40,000. The organisers claim 100,000. Above is a picture of the rally. Judge for yourself.

Melbourne

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

rank and file VMC members and the active involvement of members of the Socialist Youth Alliance. Meetings were very poorly attended, thus making effective publicity hard to arrange. In the actual demonstration, there was something for everybody. Banners displayed a full range of slogans from:

US out of Indochina - No conditions through
Sign Now
and on to
End US Domination of Australia.

This last mentioned slogan is put forward by those, notably the Maoists in the Worker Student Alliance, who seem to have forgotten that the War in Vietnam continues and have turned their attention to expelling US interests from Australia to help out the Australian "patriotic" bourgeoisie. The WSA leadership's lack of interest in Vietnam was made clear at the December 6 VMC meeting at which the concept of making the expulsion of Omega (and other U.S. military bases) the centre of VMC activity in the future was put

forward. Since this meeting WSA has even dropped its cover for this policy. They no longer hide behind "defending the Vietnamese by kicking the Yanks out of Australia". For the demonstration on January 19 their sole contribution was appearing at the march with banners denouncing US domination of Australia. Meetings planning the march were of no interest to them at all whereas serious antiwar activists put in a lot of work to publicise the march.

The other major organisation in the antiwar movement in Melbourne, the Communist Party of Australia, for once adopted a national policy on something - SIGN NOW has been their demand all through the campaign. It is a great pity the CPA could not have united around a demand that does not objectively help Nixon force the Vietnamese into submission. SYA/SWL were attacked every time discussion on slogans arose for not respecting the decisions of the North Vietnamese by continuing to demand unconditional withdrawal. As has been explained in DIRECT ACTION many times, world antiwar forces do not have to negotiate on Nixon's "peace" terms under threat of annihilation as do the Vietnamese. The most effective, and only principled demand to place on the US is Get Out

Indochina - No Conditions. For all their talk about respecting the wishes of the Vietnamese the CPA's demand is objectively pressuring the Vietnamese to accept Nixon's terms, in the tradition we might add of the Moscow and Peking bureaucracies. These people claim to be allies of the Vietnamese, yet this action in effect says "If you want our continued support concede a bit and sign". DIRECT ACTION has for a long time pointed out the uselessness of demands such as "Sign Now" even in the short term. The CPA is claiming that by demanding "Sign Now" they force the Americans to withdraw long enough to give the Vietnamese a chance to recuperate and be ready when the next US invasion occurs. Even to the CPA the temporary nature of any treaty is obvious and yet they refuse to demand the only solution - US get out.

Add to this the stifling role the CPA and the Melbourne CICD have consistently played in the movement over the past year or so. With what amounts to comparatively strong resources we could expect the CPA to enter the antiwar movement with the perspective of building it and placing its resources, union contacts and so on at its disposal. But the reverse has been the

case as their position has been reflected by politically bad objectives and a commitment which at best could be described as half-hearted.

Yet to the detriment of the VMC the CPA and CICD have maintained a firmly manipulative hand in order to stultify the movement and channel it into dead-end politics. Fortunately many of the VMC activists have rejected the above concept of the movement and opposed such diversions as the multi-moratorium championed by the CPA and CICD, many of whom are CPA rank and file members with a clearer political insight and a more principled position than the CPA leadership.

The January 19 demonstration illustrated one thing very effectively. Two major components of the antiwar movement in Melbourne have given up the fight for Vietnamese self-determination in one way or another. The need for future action of course will depend on events in SE Asia and this cannot be judged at present. However, time will no doubt show that the policies of the WSA and the CPA have downplayed the antiwar movement in Melbourne (and nationally) and hence indirectly given imperialism an easier run in SE Asia.

Bloody Sunday Anniversary

BY MIKE JONES

In January last year, thirteen people, participants in a peaceful demonstration in the streets of Derry, were shot dead by British paratroopers sent there to "maintain law and order". Their deaths and the reasons for their deaths were remembered in international demonstrations held over the last weekend in January.

In Sydney, on January 29, about 50 people attended a rally called by the Sean South and Fergal O'Hanlon Society. The meeting heard speeches from representatives of the Irish Republican movement in Australia, the Socialist Youth Alliance, a Trade Unionist and a member of the Communist League.



The speakers emphasised the role played by the British Army in upholding the stranglehold of British imperialism in Northern Ireland. A letter from Bernadette Devlin was read which called on people throughout the world to condemn the actions of the British government and the puppet regime in Stormont.

After the meeting, the participants marched to the BOAC building in

Castlereagh Street where a British flag was burnt. An important task of the Irish Republican movement overseas is education. The British government would like people to think that the trouble in Ireland is nothing more than a feud between religious fanatics. This misconception is useful to the British because it puts them in the role of "peacemaker". Yet we have only to look at the demands of the thirteen Derry dead to see through this lie. There was no mention of religious differences; only the demand for a free Ireland - a demand which the British refuse to grant.

SYA Plans Fourth National Conference



The Fourth National conference of the Socialist Youth Alliance will be held in Sydney over the Easter long weekend (April 20-23). The conference will discuss the tasks confronting young people who wish to work for a socialist transformation of society.

The period since the early 'sixties has seen a rejuvenation of the movement for socialism on a worldwide scale. The apathy and conservatism of the cold war period is well and truly over. Young people everywhere are realising that Vietnam was no accident, that such murderous wars are an inevitable result of control of a major part of the world's resources by the industrialised capitalist powers, which depend for their profits on the misery and deprivation of the masses of working people throughout the world.

The anti-communist hysteria of the exploiters is meaningless to a generation which has seen the viciousness and misery caused by the very people who characterise themselves as defenders of the free world. Increasing numbers of young people are coming to the conclusion that a new society is needed - a society which is not based on the exploitation of many by a few, but one in which the working people control the wealth they create, where education is geared to meet the needs of students, rather than students being moulded to fit in with the needs of a dehumanised society, where women and racial minorities are not discriminated against and where all people, including the old and disabled, have all their needs met.

Young people are realising that they have to fight for what they want. This is what has given rise to the antiwar movement, the women's liberation movement and the struggles on the campuses and in high schools. However, a willingness to fight is not enough on its own. The SYA believes that if the fight against

capitalism is to be successful, the oppressed must be organised too.

The SYA is an organisation which can unite the most conscious activists from all the growing anticapitalist movements of the youth radicalisation, and has played an important part in building and supporting them, over the past 3 years of its existence.

SYA does not go along with those who say the radicalisation has ended, or is dying. We understand it to be a process which has its roots in the insurmountable contradictions of world capitalism today, and which is already having a profound effect on the consciousness of broader sections of the working class.

Youth are continuing to move to the left, in spite of temporary downturns in the antiwar movement due to the confusion created by the cynical manoeuvres of Nixon and Kissinger, or other momentary setbacks. In increasing numbers they are supporting anti-imperialist struggles, supporting the struggles of women and blacks for their dignity and full rights and opposing an education system which seeks to shape the future working class and uphold the class values of bourgeois society.

SYA aims to cater to the best of the new rebel youth, and to provide a leadership for many of these unfolding struggles.

At Easter, socialist youth from across Australia will be discussing the tasks before them in the coming year, planning how to get our ideas before wider numbers of radical youth and setting concrete perspectives for coming campaigns.

If you want to participate in this discussion and plan for the struggles which will ultimately shake the foundations of this rotten society - you need to attend the SYA conference. If you belong in the fight for the future, you belong in SYA!

Come to the Conference! Join SYA!

I would like to attend the Socialist Youth Alliance Conference at Easter. Please send me more information.

I would like to join the Socialist Youth Alliance.

NAME.....
 ADDRESS.....
 PHONE..... POSTCODE.....
 Post to SYA, 139 St Johns Rd, Glebe, NSW, 2037.

US Abortion Victory

BY NITA KEIG

On January 22, a 7-to-2 majority of United States Supreme Court judges decided in favour of declaring abortion legal in the US. This decision which, in effect, has stated that abortion is a woman's constitutional right for the first 24 weeks of pregnancy, is a historic victory for women and the women's liberation movement, and probably the most significant legal step forward in the fight for women's emancipation since women won the right to vote.

According to the ruling, abortion can be banned by state law, after the first 24 weeks of pregnancy when the foetus could be viable. The court limited restrictions on abortion between the twelfth and twenty-fourth weeks to those that concern the safety of the conditions under which abortions are performed. For the first twelve weeks, no restrictions on abortion are allowed whatsoever. Even with these limits, the decision reflected the pressure that the women's movement has been able to exert, in pressing for abortion law repeal and for a woman's right to choose.

The court denied the anti-abortion argument that the foetus has a "right to life" saying that "the word 'person' as used in the Fourteenth Amendment, does not include the unborn".

While the Supreme Court did, in large part, rule in accordance with the demands put forward by the women's liberation movement, it did not call for the complete abolition of all abortion laws. In all states of the US, where reactionary laws now exist, the question will be raised of whether to replace these with new laws. The abortion rights movement must still continue to put forward the concept that no laws concerning abortion are needed. Abortion is basically a medical procedure - no different in this respect from an appendectomy - and should not be regulated by the legislatures.

In response to the announcement of the decision, Women's National Abortion Action Coalition coordinator, Susan LaMont said "This victory, which is going to have an impact on the lives of millions upon millions of American women,

Labor Pledges Freedom Charter

BY JENNY FERGUSON

The Victorian State Opposition leader Mr Holding announced recently a major aspect of Labor's platform in the coming Victorian State Elections to give individuals greater rights and freedom. These rights are to cover:

- 1) Freedom of speech and expression
- 2) Freedom of assembly and association
- 3) Freedom of the press.

Reforms have been proposed concerning vagrancy, capital punishment, credit firm ratings and homosexuality. These proposals come as a change after many years of Liberal government during which the rights of the individual have been steadily eroded. Democratic rights represent the last defence for the individual in a society where one's labour power is bought for a fraction of its value, and where the control one has over the surrounding conditions of life is minimal.

Mr Holding is quoted (Melbourne "Age" 1/2/73) as saying: "The Government and its operations have been walled off from the people - a humble citizen has come to feel there is no real way of influencing Government decisions."

The inclusion of proposed reforms on the laws regarding homosexuality is significant. The gay movement throughout the world has done much to change existing restrictive laws on this, and to demand the right to free homosexual practice without discrimination in any sphere of work or social life. That the Labor Party has taken up this issue is

en, shows the power of the women's movement". In contrast to this, Cardinal John Krol of Philadelphia, a representative of the Catholic Church hierarchy and other anti-abortion forces, hailed it as an "unspeakable tragedy" with "disastrous implications for our stability as a civilised society."

The effect of this ruling will be to weaken the resistance to the passage of other women's rights measures, such as the Equal Rights Amendment and also add impetus to women's struggles on all fronts. This new freedom for women will have far-reaching effects on the attitudes and morale of women.

The ruling, however, does not mean that the struggle is over. The anti-abortion forces are well-financed and will doubtless pressure state legislatures to restrict the impact of the decision and hamper its full implementation. The abortion rights movement will need to remain vigilant and prepared to defend this new ruling.

The fact that the US Supreme Court felt constrained to legalise abortion, will set a powerful precedent internationally. Women throughout the world will be aided in their struggles against anti-abortion laws.

In Australia, there is already positive speculation that laws restricting abortion will not be part of the new criminal code to be enacted for the Australian Capital Territory. The Australian Labor Party is under pressure to legislate in favour of legalising abortion, and women will be continuing their fight for repeal in the coming months. The example of the women's movement in the US, in consistently mobilizing women against the reactionary laws in all states - in demonstrating, in petitioning, in issuing legal challenges through law suits, in countering the propaganda of the anti-abortion forces and stressing the central importance of a woman's right to control her own body, is very important for the international abortion rights movement. Only through the concerted action of women, led headway be made in destroying these reactionary and patriarchal laws throughout the world.

indicative of its increasingly progressive stance on a number of different social issues which affect the rights of the individual.

There is one issue, however, which is conspicuously absent from this list of proposed extended democratic rights. This is the question of abortion, and a woman's right to choose whether or not to carry through an unwanted pregnancy.

Senator Murphy, the Attorney-General, made a recent statement in which he endorsed the recent Supreme Court decision in the United States which granted women the legal right to abortions for at least the first six months of pregnancy. However, he stated that the question here would probably be resolved outside of the Federal Bill of Rights. This is an attempt to push the question under the carpet and to avoid associating abortion with the basic individual rights of women.

Labor has traditionally been looked to as the party which defends and ensures the rights of the working people. This role will be pushed onto it even more, now it is in office. The growing movements of oppressed groups such as the women's liberation movement and the black movement will more and more direct their demands at the Labor government. Similarly the increasing militancy of the working class in their struggles for such elementary democratic rights as the right to organise on the job, and the right to strike must force the Labor Party to adopt an uncompromising position on individual freedom and democratic rights.

Conference Sets Student Actions April 11

BY GREG ADAMSON

Secondary students from seven major cities gathered in Sydney over the weekend of January 19-21, to discuss problems affecting them as students, and to jointly project the next action of the student rights campaign initiated on September 20. In all, about sixty delegates and twenty observers (mostly teachers) attended what turned out to be the first successful national conference of secondary student radicals.

The whole trend of the conference, from the area reports and papers to the resolutions, was an emphasis on the need for independent mass action of students to advance the campaign. The main decision of the conference was to build a national student action on April 11, 1973. The National Education Action Coalition was formed to organise this, and future activities.

The organisation of the conference reflected the recent developments in student politics - in contrast to large student meetings in the past, prior planning and competent chairing allowed the fullest discussion throughout the conference.

The first session, held on Friday afternoon, heard reports from various cities on the history of the high school movement and the organisation of the September 20 actions in each city.

Dave Deutschmann from the Victorian Education Action Group described the development of the EAG from the moribund Victorian Secondary Students Union. An initial division within the VSSU developed over their attitude to the student strike on May 31, which the VSSU supported, but only a section of which worked for it. Finally, after the leadership of the VSSU remained silent on the proposals for a September 20 demonstration (eventually to oppose it) a section broke off and called itself the Education Action Group. After September 20 however, due to impending exams and school holidays, the EAG became dormant.

Sue Horton from the Queensland Secondary Students Union reported on the situation in Brisbane. The QSSU, which was formed in early June last year, had been active in the weeks preceding the September action but, like the VEAG, had difficulty in retaining the interest and activity of its members towards the end of the year.

Unlike other groups, the Sydney Education Action Group continued to operate throughout the end of year exams and the school holidays. Jill Adamson related the recent history of the Sydney high school movement. The greater staying power of the Sydney EAG could be attributed to the tradition of organised radicalism. After hearing about the Melbourne May 31 demonstration it was Sydney students who took the lead in organising and coordinating the September actions. Similarly, the Sydney group was probably the only one strong enough to convene the national conference.

In the Adelaide report, Bruce Hannaford outlined the history of the Adelaide Student Action Group. This group was formed

to organise an action on September 20 and was then dissolved. Later in the conference, students from Adelaide announced that they had met and decided to form the South Australian Education Action Group. Reports were also presented from Hobart and Canberra.

The Saturday morning session of the conference was suspended so that those students who wanted could take part in the January 20 antiwar demonstration.

In the second session, various papers were presented on the role of the school in society, and related topics. Jim McIlroy, an active member of Teacher Action, spoke on the relations between teachers and students in the radical student movement and the school in general. Teacher Action is a left-wing caucus within the Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association which, through its publication of the same name, tries to build teacher support for campaigns like the antiwar movement, and raise teachers' consciousness in general. It gave full support to the September 20 strike in Melbourne. Two other teachers also spoke on the conditions of education in New South Wales. Extensive discussion followed, much of it being centred around the merits or otherwise of "community schools". These are schools set up and financed by groups of parents and teachers who want to introduce creative values into education. Several students argued against these because they are only open to a small wealthy section of students, and because they served as an apology for the State Education Departments, isolating and satisfying a small elite, and letting them avoid the real struggle that is needed in order to change the existing state school system. While no position was formally taken on these areas of discussion, the conference generally agreed with this view.

A paper was given by Dennis Garmey on "Young Students and the Secondary School Movement". He described the basic difference between the younger and the older students in relation to democratic rights of students. To appease senior students and to divide the student body, they were granted certain privileges. The junior students cannot be given these without weakening and breaking down the age division and the hierarchical power structure on which the discipline in school depends. Younger students feel especially insulted, because they face the prospect of several more years without the right of free expression and appearance. Also, young students are all the more enthusiastic in their fight for rights, because they know they have all to gain and nothing to lose.

Three other papers were presented. A contribution on "Gay Liberation in High Schools" was received with interest, being a relatively new and unfamiliar area for most students. Although in at least one school, a gay liberation circle has been started, the movement has not, as yet, had much impact on secondary students. The speaker emphasised the way in which gays (homosexuals and bisexuals) are discriminated against in this society, and how the school courses reinforce this discrimination. "Economic Discrimination in Schools" dealt with the unequal financial

treatment given to schools in different areas. One method of doing this is to give financial grants to schools based on the amount the parents can raise. This clearly favours schools in wealthy areas. This method is gradually being eliminated. What is needed is a system of positive discrimination in favour of poorer schools, in order to bring all schools to the same standard. "Sexual Discrimination in Schools" dealt mainly with the channelling of female students into very narrow social roles, and the distortion of history to support this.

The Sunday morning session of the conference was devoted to discussing the future character of the students' rights campaign. A general perspectives report was given by Greg Adamson, based around the following proposals:

"That this conference fully supports both the national and local campaigns for democratic rights for secondary students and improvement and equalisation of education conditions and opportunities. While these may differ in details from state to state, and school to school, they affect all Australian secondary students.

"That this conference recognises the need for national independent direct mass action by students to advance such a campaign, and rejects the possibility of a solution which does not involve broad, active student commitment.

"That this conference decides to build nationally coordinated actions on April 11, 1973. The precise forms of these actions should be decided in the individual centres, and could include strikes, demonstrations and mass meetings. These should aim to involve and educate the largest numbers of students about the campaign."

These proposals were discussed at length.



Mike Jones, new national coordinator of the NEAC, addressing the conference.

Women's Commission

At: Teachers' Auditorium, 300 Sussex St.
 On: Sat, 6 Sun, March 17 & 18, 1973.
 Time: Saturday 10 am to 5 pm
 Sunday 10 am to 5.30 pm.

The Commission will be for women and organised by women to inquire into:

- Women as Mothers**
- *Social assistance: including leave-from-work requirements, health care, social services, child care.
 - *Social attitudes and practices: single women as parents, need ALL women be mothers, should women be more responsible than men for the social development and care of children, our mothers

- and us as mothers.
- *The right to choose: birth control, abortion, enforced motherhood.

- Women as Workers - paid, underpaid and not paid**
- *Education, training, re-training.
 - *Job opportunities: Is there a "natural" division of labour between women and men, are women "naturally" more suited for home and children, are men more reliable and women more emotional.

- *Housework: paid and/or unpaid or shared, community cleaning and cooking services.
- *Migrant women: economic and social abuse, language problems.
- *Women's creativity: cultural discrimination.

- Women as Sex Objects**
- *Sexual exploitation: rape, prostitution, sexuality and love, advertising.

- *Male supremacy: power structures and physical strength.

- Why Marriages Break Down**
- *Families as they exist: economic and psychological pressures, emotional pressures, emotional dependence.
 - *Divorce: maintenance, children and property.
 - *The aftermath of a breakdown: living alone, self-discovery, new relationships and values finding new ways to live.

- Other Forms of Discrimination**
- *Women as people.
 - *To be black and a woman.
 - *Subtle every-day discriminations.

Every subject will be introduced by women who will testify/speak out on their own personal experiences or on behalf of others. Others with general knowledge about problems confronting women will speak about social services

Alternative attitudes to student action were fully debated. However, in the end the vote to adopt these proposals was unanimous.

During the Sunday afternoon session a proposal was discussed and adopted on how this and future actions should be organised. In a paper presented on this subject, Ian Gordon put forward the concept of a national federation of area groups and coalitions. This would involve a national co-ordinating body - the National Education Action Coalition - which would correspond with all states, issue certain press releases produce a regular newsletter, and be the administrative responsibility of a Sydney-based coordinator. The emphasis on local rather than national organisation is a reflection of the embryonic level of national organisation.

The Sunday sessions also considered the different demands to be raised by students under different conditions, and the problems of organisation the campaign on a local school basis.

There have been two attempts to coordinate student groups nationally in the past two years. Both were seen as the initial step towards a national student union, and the basis of unity in these cases was the willingness to nationally distribute the paper of the VSSU. The qualitative difference between those attempts and this recent conference was their absence of a viable basis of unity. Only around such an action as that of September 20, or the proposed April 11 action, can national links be forged.

If you want more information about the NEAC or the action on April 11, contact NEAC, P.O. Box A444, Sydney South, 2000

and social alternatives available to women.

Discussion will then be open to participation by all women present.

The aim of the Commission is to seek to discuss the social conditions of women as the background to specific demands. Organising meetings are held each Monday night at WL House, 25 Alberta St, City at 7.30 pm. All interested women are invited to participate.

Participation in the Commission is not limited to those who agree to be sponsors. If you wish to sponsor the Women's Commission (\$1 minimum), donate money, distribute publicity material or offer suggestions about the organising of the commission write to:

Women's Commission
 25 Alberta St,
 Sydney 2000.

Fred Holstead
of Halstead was the presidential
candidate of the Socialist Workers
Party in the USA in 1968, and has long
been a leading figure in the US antiwar
movement.

Buenos Aires, Dec. 18 — This week-
end I attended three meetings here con-
cerning the elections that are scheduled
in Argentina next March.

The first took place Dec. 16 in a rented
movie theatre in a working class suburb
of Buenos Aires. It was a meeting of the
Frente Obrero (Workers Front), a united
front of working class candidates pledged
to run in these elections independent of
the capitalist parties, including the
Peronist party.

I enter the theatre the meeting has
already begun. A few hundred people
are there early preparing the hall with
banners, and as groups from around the
city arrive bringing their own, these
soon are placed around the hall.

The biggest banner hangs above the
stage: "First Plenary of the Frente Obrero,
against the Trap of the Generals, Bosses,
and Doctors (filled persons). For
Workers Candidates."

Some of the other signs, which are of all
sizes and colours, read: "Petrochemical
— La Plata. We Support the Workers
Candidates"; "Barrio de Mendoza Present!";
"Agar Workers of Tucuman Present!";

"Metalworkers, Barrio La Carolina"; "San
Nicolas With the Frente Obrero — Long
Live the Struggle of the Workers of
McKee San Nicolas!" (McKee is a
petrochemical plant.) There are dozens
of such banners being placed now, as the
ill begins to fill up.

A group from Rosario enters, forces its
way down the centre aisle and sings a
song made up for the occasion. After
the chorus there are cheers from the
rest, who catch the chorus after a few
minutes and join in: "We don't want to
be bosses, only workers!"

A large banner hangs from the balcony:
"First Special Congress of the Partido
Socialista de Trabajadores (PST — Social-
ist Workers Party) — For Workers
Candidates — For a Socialist Argentina."
This is the new party resulting from the
fusion of the left wing of the old Social-
ist Party of Argentina and the Trotskyist
Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores
RTO Verdad — Revolutionary Workers
Party.)

The PST is a key part of the Frente
Obrero, whose candidates will use the
ST ballot status to place their names
on the ballot. This arrangement of a
united front of candidates using the
ST status of a part of the front is not
unusual in Argentina. Several of the
other parties, including Peron's National
Socialist Movement, have made similar
arrangements in this election. But unlike
the other fronts, the Frente Obrero includes
capitalist parties.

After the meeting of the Frente Obrero,
the congress of the PST is scheduled to
take place in the same hall.

SITRAC-SITRAM

A few young men, their shirts removed
because of the heat, are hanging another
large banner from the balcony, and as it
falls into place the crowd — now filling
the lower floor of the theatre — cheers.
reads: "Down with the Government.
Down with Peron, Flores and the rest of the
murderers of SITRAC-SITRAM! Free
the Prisoners of the Military Dictator-
ship!"

Peron and Flores are leaders of SITRAC-
SITRAM, unions in two Fiat auto plants
in the northern industrial city of Cordoba.
These unions broke with the Peronist
bureaucracy that dominates Argentina's
union leadership and played a vanguard
role on a city-wide and national scale.
They led the two famous uprisings called
"Cordobazo". SITRAC-SITRAM have
been banned by the military dictatorship
that rules the country, and many of
their leaders have been imprisoned.

It is announced from the platform that
Peron has just been released from jail and
will be attending this Frente Obrero meet-
ing. The audience breaks into cheers
and then into a rhythmic chant: "Two,
ree, many SITRAC-SITRAMs!"

Throughout the rest of the meeting this
kind of chanting occurs repeatedly.
Singing, of course, is also common at
rallies in other parts of the world, but
what is different here is that many of the
songs do not seem to be traditional, but
are made up on the spot — like a

Calypso singer's verses — so widely do
they vary and so closely do they fit the
particular moment or the particular point
being discussed.

The lower level is quite crowded now,
and I can't see at first who is coming
down the aisle to spreading cheer. It
is an old man, walking straight and erect.
One of the chants tells me who it is:
"Mateo Fossa from Tucuman, coordinat-
or of retired workers!"

Mateo Fossa has been a leader in the
Argentine workers movement for half a
century. In the 1930s he visited Leon
Trotsky in Mexico and has since then
been sympathetic to the Fourth Internat-
ional.

The cheering is quite wild at his appear-
ance; I notice one lithe young man
almost turning flips. I wonder at what
this says about the generation gap, since
the great majority of the audience are
young persons in their twenties. At the
very least it is clear these young workers
are proud of their ties with the oldest
militants.

One of the old workers takes the stage
after running the gamut of cheers. He
is Pedro Milese, as the chant tells me;
"Old Pete, veteran of SITRAC-SITRAM
and Cordoba!"

Finally the meeting is called to order,
but before it begins the cheers inter-
rupt from the back: "Paez! Paez! For
many more SITRAMs!"

Jose Francisco Paez comes walking down
the aisle, a short man in his mid-twenties
wearing loose-fitting blue jeans and a
faded red shirt. He is accompanied by a
work-worn woman and several small
children. He pauses in the audience
briefly while seats are found for the
woman and children and then proceeds to
the stage.

The meeting begins. Old Pete speaks
first. "I represent those who fought
before. I remember those who were
imprisoned. So many. It is a triumph
to be here. This is the way to fight the
masters."

It is a speech befitting a rally, which is
what this meeting really is. There are
only a few simple points of business —
to decide whether to field a presidential
slate in addition to the parliamentary
and local candidates, to recommend that
slate, and to set up an ongoing committee
that can enlarge itself and direct the
campaign.

The people here, many of them candi-
dates themselves (the Frente Obrero
hopes to field 1,000 candidates), repre-
sent local party groups of the PST, local
Frente Obrero groups, committees in
various unions, and neighbourhood
groups, many of them called Sociudades
de Fomento (Improvement Societies).
The latter are longstanding mass organ-
isations found in many working class neigh-
bourhoods in Argentina. Many of those
representing such groups are women.

Disillusioned with Peronism

A woman of about 40 in a red dress is
pointed out in the audience by one of the
speakers on the stage. She is described
as a longtime Peronist leader in a workers
neighbourhood. She stands in the
audience and says a few words. She is
joining with the Frente Obrero because
she can't stand the Peronist policy. The
audience cheers.

A number of other speakers express
similar sentiments, most of them workers
in their late 30s and 40s. A dock worker
introduces himself as "a revolutionary
of the Peronist movement."
"I have failed for 17 years because of
Peronism. We have had no victories for
17 years. Those responsible for those
failures aren't here to support this very
important meeting on behalf of workers
power... The workers must decide,
must save the country. The people
must take power by jumping over all the
traps the capitalists put in our way."

I notice a banner on the side wall that
says: "Rucci doesn't represent anything."
Rucci is the Peronist head of the Confed-
eracion General del Trabajo (CGT —
General Federation of Labor of Argentina)

It is one of the most powerful union
movements in the world, organising close
to 90 percent of Argentina's workers. Its
top leadership has a long record of class
collaboration, sweetheart contracts,
and strikebreaking against the rank-and-
file plant committees that are the real
strength of the Argentine union move-
ment.

At present, the CGT co-operates with the

Workers Front and Revolutionary Socialists Launch Joint Election Campaign in Argentina

military dictatorship. Politically it is
part of Peron's Justicialist party. In this
sense, though not in others, Peron's party
is similar to the Democratic party in the
U.S. — a procapitalist party containing
within it a spectrum from rightists to the
leadership of the labour movement.

A big difference is that the Peronists have
been illegal or semi-legal for much of
the time since Peron was overthrown in
1955, and they have an aura of persecuted
anti-imperialists. Also, workers remember
the significant social reforms that they
won during Peron's rule.

This makes Peronism the biggest block
to independent working class political
action. Thus the fact that the Frente
Obrero has attracted militant workers from
the Peronists for the crucial step of break-
ing with capitalist politics is a highly
significant beginning.

Also present at the Frente Obrero rally
are some militants from the Communist
Party as well as other tendencies on the
left. The CP in Argentina did not
attempt to get ballot status, seeking
instead a bloc with "progressive"
capitalists.

Late in the afternoon the Frente Obrero
meeting becomes involved in a discussion
over whether to field a presidential slate.
It is clear the great majority favour this.
To do otherwise would not pose clearly
a working class alternative.

Old Pete, however, opposes it, and
perhaps others as well, so a long process
of patient explanation goes on with no
doubt as to the outcome. I take the
opportunity to look in on another rally
taking place at the same time a few
miles away.

Revolutionary youth rally

This is a meeting of the Juventud
Socialista de Avanzada (JSA, the
Socialist Vanguard Youth, which is
affiliated with the PST). Before I leave
the Frente Obrero meeting I carefully
estimate the crowd — about 1,500 at
that point.

The youth rally is also being held in a
rented movie theatre. Inside there are
some 700 young people, delegates from
around the country representing a
youth group of more than 2,000 according
to the organisers.

This meeting is all spirit and chanting.
I jot down a few of the chants: "The
youth fight for working class independence!"
"To fight, to win, workers to power!"
"Trotsky, Guevara, the people are getting
ready!" "Chile, Cuba, Vietnam, the
people salute you!" After this chant
there is some discussion of the regime
in Chile, with Allende coming in for
sharp criticism.

It is obvious just from physical appearance
that the majority of these youth are not
from universities but are younger. I
speak to as many as I can in the short
time I'm there. Most are from high



JUAN CARLOS CORAL, presidential
candidate of the Argentine Socialist
Workers Party (PST), a former leader of
the Argentine Socialist Party and
leading defender of the Cuban revolution.

schools (secundarios, they are called
here). Some are young workers.
After an hour or so I return to the Frente
Obrero meeting. They have decided to
run a presidential slate and are now
discussing who the presidential and vice-
presidential candidates will be.

A PST official, Albergo Pujal, formally
offers the ballot status of the party to
the Frente Obrero candidates, declaring
that the PST will set aside 75 percent
of the spots for leaders of the rank-and-
file struggles in plants and neighbour-
hoods.

He also announces that the party is
prepared to run two of its own members —
Juan Coral and Nora Ciapponi — for the
top posts, but that it will yield to a slate
of Paez and Leandro Fote, secretary of
the San Jose sugar refinery workers in
Tucuman, if they accept.

It is announced that Fote sends a message
declining for personal reasons. The time
has come for Paez to speak. The whole
audience eagerly awaits his decision.
The youth — by this time have adjourned
into another meeting and piled into the
balcony here — are chanting for Paez
as presidential candidate.



Section of the crowd at Frente Obrero meeting Decem-
ber 16 in Buenos Aires. Greetings below
bring up to date the number of candidates running
for the Workers and Socialists ticket.
Further news on the Argentine elections will appear
in future issues.

Second National Conference Socialist Workers League Australia

Dear Comrades,

We send you our warmest revolutionary
greetings, convinced that your
Second National Conference will be a great step
forward for the Australian working
class, for the development of its revolutionary
powerful Trotskyist current on a world scale.

Your Conference coincides with the
beginning of our electoral campaign
in Argentina, where we are confronting all the
capitalist parties with a workers' and
socialist front, structured around our party.

A workers' plenum which gathered
1,000 comrades, a Youth Congress
with 700 delegates representing 2,000 members
of the Socialist Vanguard Youth (JSA), and our party's
socialist sectors was concretized around the
organizational program and the Bolshevik method
of the electoral process.

Our lists of candidates total 1,000, with a great proportion of
workers, headed by leaders of practically all the
last three years, with women comrades
Vice-Governors of the most important provinces
of the nation. This reality
opens up immense possibilities for our growth
and the spreading of our revolutionary
program.

Our presence before the mass media, combined with our activity in the
factories and workers quarters tends to indicate that we will come out of the electoral
process converted into the strongest party in the Argentine left, and the pole of attraction
for the working class vanguard which is suffering with the mobilizations inaugurated
in 1969 with the workers' and popular insurance strike which we call here the "Cordobazo".

What we have informed your list, and the sure success of your
Conference form part of the advance of the revolutionary Trotskyist positions throughout
the world.

Receive our revolutionary greetings.
Long live the World Socialist Revolution!
Long live the Fourth International!

Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores
(Socialist Workers Party)

Cordobazo

One reason for the charisma of Paez and
the other revolutionary unions from
Cordoba is their leading role in the
Cordobazo. These were semi-irregu-
lar strikes that took place in 1969 and
marked the upturn in the class struggle
in Argentina that is still in effect.

Indeed, it is in an attempt to deal with
this new situation that the current milit-
ant dictatorship has promised elections
and a return to constitutional government.
It is for this reason they have allowed
us to visit the country.

The rules are counting on the Peronists
to help deflect the workers' revolutionary
impulses into capitalist parliamentary
politics. The Frente Obrero is countering
this with independent working class
political action.

Paez takes the floor. He has stage
presence, the makings of an orator. He
receives support to the Frente Obrero but
he cannot decide on the presidential
question right now. There are differ-
ences among his comrades in Cordoba
and he must discuss with them.

At this point some people from Cordoba



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stand in the audience and begin chanting
for Paez to accept. The whole audience
is wild with chants, then one chant takes
over from all the rest: "Come, come,
come, companion. For here we are
forming the Grand Party of the Working
Class!" (In Spanish it has meter and
rhyme.)

But Paez is firm in his decision. He will
have to talk to his comrades from
Cordoba. The naming of the top slate
will have to wait until the PST congress
tomorrow.

The rest of the Frente Obrero meeting
is anticlimactic. The form of the con-
tinuation committee is discussed and
decided. The meeting is adjourned to
shouts of "Obreros al poder!" (Workers
to power.) I am told there will be a band
and dancing to finish off the night.

I ride home on the bus with a PST
member who is also in need of sleep since
he spent the last two nights in jail for
selling the party newspaper in front of a
factory. Election campaign or not,
Argentina is still a military dictatorship
and the state of civil liberties is touch
and go.

The next morning, on the way to the
PST congress, I pick up the papers and
see a news photo of Abal Medina, gen-
eral secretary of Peron's National Just-
icialist Movement being physically
thrown out of his own party's Buenos
Aires provincial meeting.

Medina had demanded the meeting
nominate one candidate for governor of
the province — the second most important
post in the country — and the meeting
had instead nominated someone else.

The story goes on to say that the candi-
dates who were nominated by the meeting
were later expelled from the party by the
leadership. The papers are full of
descriptions of physical fighting, including
gunplay and even an assassination, among
the Peronists as they attempt to work out
their slate of candidates for the coming
elections. It is obvious that the Peronist
movement is in crisis.

By contrast the PST congress is well
ordered and discussion is full and
democratic. One thousand people attend,
about half as many as at the height of the
Frente Obrero meeting the day before.
There are 195 voting delegates from 12
provinces and the city of Buenos Aires.

The first major point on the agenda is
a speech by Juan Carlos Coral, leader of
the Marxist wing of the old Socialist
Party of Argentina that fused with the
Trotskyists to form the PST.

His speech here is a description of the
pre-revolutionary crisis in Argentina, of
the present opportunity to reach the masses
who have been entrapped in Peronism, and
of the necessity to build a revolutionary
party.

"The Frente Obrero," he declared, "is
not a propaganda concept, but a tool in



NORA CIAPPONI, the vice-presidential
candidate of the Argentine Socialist
Workers Party (PST), has a long experi-
ence as a trade-union activist, political
leader, and fighter for women's rights.

the hands of the Argentine proletariat.
But there is something even more impor-
tant calling for the conquest of political
power by the working class is for this
party not a romantic pronouncement, a
utopian slogan, but the concrete, imme-
diate task of this generation, which will
make the social revolution in Argentina."

The audience gives Coral a standing
ovation. A number of reports and
resolutions follow, including approval of
an election platform for the PST and
approval of a position of solidarity with
the Fourth International, the world
Trotskyist party. Then discussion of the
presidential slate begins.

Presidential ticket

Paez takes the stage, but this time he sits
behind a table and asks the audience not
to applaud. He speaks quietly, without
flourish, and says a great deal:

He has been up until two in the morning
talking with those who had come from
Cordoba, and he still could not resolve
the problem of running for president. For
himself, yes, he is for it. But he tells
of the problems in the newly formed
Frente Obrero in Cordoba.

Among the vanguard in Cordoba are many
for whom participation in the elections
seems a betrayal. They offer instead
slogans like "neither coup nor election,
revolution!" and "Active boycott of the
elections."

Paez says that much of the vanguard in
Cordoba is taken in by these ultra-left
conceptions. There is much discussion
among the tendencies, groups, and parties,
many of them from university circles that
in Cordoba have had an influence on the
young revolutionary union leaders. They
said it was criminal for Paez to suggest
that the leaders of SITRAC-SITRAM
and other factory leaders should look
to the alternative of presenting workers
candidates in the elections.

However, he says, he spoke with the
people in the factory, in the neighbour-
hood, the ordinary people. They did not
understand the ultra-left slogans.
They asked what they should do in the
elections. For whom should they vote?

Because of this he sought answers that the
masses could understand, that flowed
from their needs at this point in the
struggle. And the majority of the
workers in his factory understand the
proposal of the Frente Obrero for
independent working class political
action and agreed with it.

For himself, Paez had to go with the
workers and their needs to develop the
concrete struggle, hence, with the Frente
Obrero campaign. But in Cordoba,
some of the comrades now opposed to
this can be won over. They have a
record as good fighters and can be won.
Paez doesn't want to confront them with
an accomplished fact regarding his candi-
dacy. Some time is needed. So it is
better to nominate someone else for the
presidential spot.

He says he was astounded by the meeting
yesterday. It is something entirely new
and very important. He would accept
immediately if possible. He suggests
perhaps another leader of union struggles
could be found to take the top spot.

The ovation that follows is profound and
powerful. The crowd is thinking hard.

A debate follows that divides the congress.
Most of the party leaders and workers on
one side, many of the youth, it appears,
on the other. In this debate not only the
delegates but the observers from the youth
organisation and from Frente Obrero
speak. The issue is whether to proceed
with the nomination of the PST members
— Coral for president and Nora Ciapponi
for vice-president — or to wait either
for Paez to work things out in Cordoba or
to find another union leader for the top
spot.

For some of the youth the lure of the
spirit of the Cordobazo is all important
and they raise to the level of a principle
having a worker as presidential candidate.

Nora Ciapponi, 30, qualifies in this
respect. She is a longtime leader in the
textile plants, though she has been
blacklisted and is now a full-time party
worker.

Coral is a professional politician. He
has a long record of fighting against the
dictatorship and of leadership in the Cuban
movement in defense of the Cuban
revolution, and in peasant struggles,
but he is not a trade unionist.

On the other side the arguments go as

follows: When we proposed Paez-Fote
or Coral-Ciapponi it is because these
are the best spokespersons, those who
present the front and the party in the
most effective manner, who can take
advantage of the TV, who can answer
the press. The problem is political, not
symbolic. Our inability at this moment
to firm up the slate of Paez-Fote or a
similar one of equal quality is not acci-
dental. It is a result of the incipient
character of the Frente Obrero, which
is only a month old.

We are not going to take power in this
election or even get a huge vote — and
if we had a majority and waited for a
bourgeois election we would be fools —
but we are posing the question of workers
power. We are beginning a process of
breaking the vanguard of the workers
from the capitalist political traps,
particularly Peronism. It will take time.

The process will now begin in Cordoba,
but we cannot be artificial about it. To
field a less effective spokesperson
because he or she is a worker would be
counterproductive, not only for the
party but for the Frente Obrero.

We should field a socialist-worker slate,
using in the presidential slot the best
orator and propagandist we have — and,
what is more, a nationally prominent
socialist figure. For vice-president we
have a union leader who symbolises the
struggle of the most exploited workers and
also the struggle of women against the
capitalist system.

The debate is long and patient, and when
the vote comes it is solidly for the Coral-
Ciapponi slate. Then the whole audience
joins in a chant: "For workers independence:
Nora and Coral."

Woman candidate

There follow a number of technical points
of business and the election of the national
committee of the party. Then Nora
Ciapponi speaks: "We want, and it is one
of the objectives of my candidacy, to
show to all the women of the working
class that they should not be a base of
moral support to the bosses, holding their
comrades back... We want to show the
working woman that she has a key role to
play: Not just encouraging her companion,
but demonstrating, alongside her companion,
that she is capable of fighting along with
the rest of the workers of our land."

I had met her earlier for a brief conversa-
tion. Soft-spoken, serious, an earthy sense
of humour, tough. These were my impres-
sions.

She continues: "We want to end, once and
for all, the dependence of the workers
movement on capitalist alternatives. We
want to construct a truly revolutionary party
that can bring to a successful conclusion the
revolutionary process in our country."

"I don't know if some of the youth who
today expressed doubts about the slate
understand that this is not just a formula
for candidates, but a formula to guide,
to guarantee, a truly revolutionary
process."

She ends with: "For a victory, not in
votes, but in gathering together the best
of the vanguard of the workers move-
ment in the Frente Obrero! For the
construction of our revolutionary party,
which can guide the working class to
take political power! Long live the
Fourth International!"

It is a short speech, almost blunt, and
the crowd loves it.

At the end of the congress two guests
speak: Mateo Fossa, the leader of
retired workers from Tucuman, and
Paez once again. Paez says he is
impressed by the congress, that he thinks
it has done the right thing regarding the
slate, that he agrees the most important
thing is to build the revolutionary party.
He says he would like to be a candidate,
perhaps for governor of Cordoba, and to
tour the country with the national
candidates, and that he will propose
this when he gets back to Cordoba.

It is the end of a long weekend. On the
way back to my room I notice with
renewed interest the many slogans and
posters on the walls in Buenos Aires.
One of the most common is a printed
poster with a picture of Peron and the
following text: "With Peron in the
Country — Social Peace, Reconstruction,
National Liberation." It is signed CGT,
the big union federation led by Peronist
bureaucrats.

By contrast, in the quiet night, the
refrain of the meetings I have attended
rings in my ears: "To fight, to win,
Workers to power."

THE 4TH INTERNATIONAL

PART 13

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORY OF THE TROTSKYIST MOVEMENT BY PIERRE FRANK



This is the thirteenth installment of our translation of Pierre Frank's *The Fourth International: A Contribution to the History of the Trotskyist Movement*.

Chapter 8: The 'Long March' of the Trotskyists

We cannot make conclusive statements about the history of a movement that is engaged in so long a march, begun so long ago—a movement which has undergone so many trials and tribulations and which, although a new and much more promising stage lies ahead for it, still has big obstacles to overcome before reaching its goal. Our few closing remarks will, first of all, answer the question raised by those drawn to Trotskyist ideas but surprised by the numerical weakness of the organization that defends those ideas, a question that every Trotskyist as well has inevitably asked himself, in his heart of hearts, at certain times: *Is there a historical justification for the Fourth International?* Was Trotsky right to found the Fourth International and to say that the work he was doing for it was "the most important" in his life, "more important than 1917, more important than the period of the civil war," irreplaceable "in the full sense of the word?"³⁸ I do not think it necessary to answer those who attack the Fourth International by taking delight in stressing its difficulties; by failing to see its political strength, its vitality; by viewing its problems on a superficial level.

From the standpoint of historical perspective—the only valid standpoint for a subject like this—the long history of the Trotskyist movement, of the Fourth International, is in itself an objective verification of its historical justification. What has been the history of the international working-class movement in the last fifty years—a half-century that has seen the beginning of the disintegration of capitalist society and the advent of a socialist world? In every country where the working-class movement had a long history, with Marxist traditions, one really stands out: after several dozen years of wars, revolutions and counterrevolutions, fascism, and Stalinism, in the course of which numerous organizations claiming to be Marxist and claiming to stand for the working class came into existence—after so many years, the only organizations that despite crises, splits, repression, alternating advances and retreats, have lasted are those connected with the Second International, or what was the Third International, or the Fourth International. A reality like this, which covers dozens of years (and what years!), can be attributed neither to chance nor to any specific militant qualities. All of the organizations had dedicated and devoted militants with varied political and organizational talents. Such a phenomenon can only be explained by objective causes, profound historical causes. Here is really a case in which Hegel's thought can be applied correctly: *Was ist wirklich ist rational, was ist rational ist wirklich* (What is real is rational, what is rational is real). The underlying cause of this reality must extend

throughout all these years and must have international validity, as we shall see.

At various times in the preceding pages, we have explained the difficulties that faced the Fourth International because of objective conditions. Above all, there was the eminently turbulent character of the world situation, with its sudden turns and its centrifugal forces—a major difference from the earlier period of rising capitalism in the last third of the nineteenth century. The new world situation no longer allowed of so gradual a building up of working-class forces as had occurred in the earlier period, with the resultant formation of big parties organizing the entire working class as well as the vanguard into vast networks. There was also the eruption of Stalinism, which destroyed the Bolshevik party, pivot of the revolutionary international constructed around the October victory; the political convulsions and the cruelties of the Soviet bureaucracy more than once disoriented significant revolutionary forces and led them into blind alleys. The epoch of the gradual rise of capitalism had engendered the revisionism of Bernstein and the more insidious revisionism of Kautsky. The frightful history of the isolated first workers state engendered numerous "revisionisms" (state capitalism in the USSR; the bureaucracy a new exploiting class) incapable of acknowledging the revolution disguised in so hideous a mask. Finally, there were the hundreds of millions of human beings in the colonial countries who stopped being pawns of history and tried to bridge the gap of centuries in a few leaps—even in a single leap—so that the revolution they made often assumed some strange aspects.

The arena of the workers' movement, despite this situation or, more precisely, because of it, remained cluttered with the old formations—because the working masses could not fall into disorganization. There is no such thing in history as something born of nothing; the tremendous crises in the old organizations could not fall to give birth to new revolutionary leaderships. If Marxism is history that becomes conscious of itself, under these conditions this consciousness could come about only with great difficulty, could be born only in hard labor.

The organizations that could bridge all these years, all these trials, did it because they were strongly rooted in the deepest reality of the world of these fifty years. On one hand, the Second International's organizations are linked to the working class in the old European countries by the entire history of the class, when it sought successfully to organize itself on a mass scale to defend its day to day interests. On the other hand, these organizations are tied to capitalist society, which perpetuates itself as long as it has the means to accede to the workers' demands for reforms.³⁹

The official Communist parties drew their basic strength from the fact that they were created around the October victory and the Soviet Union, and that they appeared to be an extension of these throughout the world. Because it was the first, and for a long time the only, workers state, the Soviet Union had been the pole of attraction for all who were awakening to the necessity of replacing capitalism with a new society. Trotskyists have frequently pointed out that for the broadest masses, particularly in the underdeveloped countries, the economic

development of the Soviet Union had an infinitely greater significance than the total suppression of workers' democracy under the bureaucratic regime, because these masses had no acquaintance whatsoever with the feeble advantages of bourgeois democracy. For the militants in those countries, the Soviet Union's material aid, no matter how slight, was indispensable and more tangible than the treacherous maneuvers of Kremlin politics. In the capitalist countries, how many sincerely revolutionary militants remained members of the Communist party for a long time, even though they had anxieties and fears about its policies, because they could see no other organization to belong to. It took the birth of other workers states and the rise of serious differences among them for layers broader than those of the extremely politicized militants to make a distinction between a workers state and its leadership of the moment, for these broader segments to understand the accommodations to world imperialism the Kremlin was seeking at the expense of the international socialist revolution—so that, as a result, Moscow would no longer remain the "guide," the pole of attraction; so that, this time, a mortal crisis would affect the Communist parties. Parties in the leadership of workers states are at the mercy of social crises in their countries. Reformist degeneration in the Communist parties of capitalist countries sooner or later will cause these parties to break up, their members having to choose between openly acknowledged reformism and the politics of rising new revolutionary formations.⁴⁰

Obviously, the Fourth International has had no ties to capitalist society. At the hands of the first workers state, whose existence it never ceased to defend, both on the political plane against the capitalist world and on the theoretical plane against all the revisionist tendencies—Stalinism being one of the latter⁴¹—the Fourth International suffered the most implacable persecution, often more murderous than that imposed by capitalism. The Fourth International has nevertheless been able to live and grow, because throughout all these years it alone represented the fundamental, historical interests of the world proletariat. There is no mysterious, esoteric reason for this. At its foundation, the Fourth International received, through Leon Trotsky and the Soviet Left Opposition, the heritage of direct descent from the Bolshevik party and the Communist International. The Fourth International is their legitimate heir, taking up and continuing their traditions. The Communist parties that succumbed to Stalinism, and the Communist International itself, which Stalin had to debase and dissolve, are no longer anything but usurpers.

By the very fact of its existence as an international, the Fourth International continued to represent the interests of the proletariat. While not rejecting a single conquest of the proletariat, the Fourth International refused to grant special status to any one of them before the triumph of the revolution on a world scale. Every organization that claimed to be socialist but had only national objectives, or was not an integral part of an international organization, has in the course of these years seen itself condemned either to disappear or to stagger and fall under the impact of decisive political problems.

This international plane, on which history has passed its inexorable judgment, should never for a moment be overlooked by those who really want to assure the world victory of socialism; because the world today is incomparably more unified—and in a more complex fashion—than ever before. In a preface written for the ninetieth

40. In the early days of Stalinism, Trotsky had pointed out that if it were not rejected, it would drag the Communist parties onto a path halfway between communism and reformism, and that such a position could not be held for any length of time. It has been held much longer than Trotsky foresaw, but he had discerned the basic tendency with a great deal of acuity.

41. Numerous works have been written, vainly attempting to prove that Stalinism was the legitimate offspring of Bolshevism. It is easy to show the theoretical affinities between Stalinism's political concepts and those of various left currents in Social Democracy immediately after the first world war: Menshevism, Austro-Marxism, Italian Maximalism, the Bracke-Zyromsky tendency in the SFIO, etc.

anniversary of the *Communist Manifesto*, taking up the passage in which Marx wrote, "United action, of the leading civilized countries at least, is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat," Trotsky added:

"The subsequent development of capitalism has so closely knit all sections of our planet, both 'civilized' and 'uncivilized,' that the problem of the socialist revolution has completely and decisively assumed a world character. The Soviet bureaucracy attempted to liquidate the *Manifesto* with respect to this fundamental question. The Bonapartist degeneration of the Soviet state is an overwhelming illustration of the falseness of the theory of socialism in one country."

In the thirty years that have passed since these lines were written, contrary to the opinions of supporters of "socialism in one country" and then "national roads" (which is an adaptation of the first theory, brought to the fore during the period of the isolated state, to conditions in the "socialist camp"), the international character of the socialist revolution is even more obvious. The war in Vietnam has demonstrated, better than anything else, the necessity for the revolutionary movement to have a global strategy against imperialism. The invasion of Czechoslovakia has demonstrated, again better than anything else, how the term *socialism* can be besmirched by the national interest of a bureaucracy.

To truly act as an internationalist, it is not enough to follow world politics in the press. An international political line has to be elaborated, and this can only be done by being organically connected with forces in struggle throughout the entire world. What has given the Fourth International incomparable political strength, despite its numerical weakness; what has made it feared by the leaders of powers like the Soviet Union and China, who have a very clear understanding of their bureaucratic interests and who certainly do not engage in fighting windmills—is that the Fourth International is a party that, by the action of its members, forges connecting links among the guerrilla fighters and the rebelling peasants of Latin America, the Blacks of the United States, the fighters of South Africa, the peoples of Black Africa and North Africa, the revolutionary militants of the Middle East, the militants in many Asian countries, the vanguards in the workers states of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, the workers and the vanguard youth of Western Europe, etc. In both bourgeois and Stalinist counterrevolutionary campaigns against the Fourth International, a role is often attributed to it that it does not have, or a degree of influence is attributed to it that it does not possess. Nevertheless, no big struggle has taken place—nor is taking place—in which the militants of the Fourth International have not participated. The lessons drawn from these struggles by its militants become part of the political and theoretical analyses of the international movement. Since there can be no really valid knowledge apart from action, the Fourth International is today the only revolutionary organization that integrates and unifies the lessons of the class struggle on all continents. That is why its analyses, the positions it takes on an international scale—without any pretensions to infallibility—have most often been superior to the analyses of individuals or groups, no matter how intelligent and sympathetic to the revolution and to socialism the latter may be.

On this subject, the Cuban leadership affords a striking example of what international limitations can do. The Cuban leadership distinguished itself from that of all the other workers states by proving itself truly internationalist when it tried to help organize the struggle for socialism

throughout Latin America—on a continental scale. Nevertheless, in 1968, it very much disappointed a number of its friends and supporters because of its silence on the French May and its position on the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Where do its political defaults come from, considering its excellent understanding of the problems of the colonial revolution? Its political deficiencies stem from the fact that its horizon has remained limited to Latin America and to the colonial countries. The problems of the European workers' movements and the problems of the East European workers states and the Soviet Union escape it, because it is not connected internationally with formations that might enlarge its horizon and give it a profound, global grasp of these problems.

An argument that has been repeated many times since 1933 in connection with establishing the Fourth International maintains that we should start by building mass revolutionary parties on a national scale, that the founding of the International can only come about as a culmination of such a process. In other words, this question is posed as if we were building a house: first the walls (the national parties) must be raised before we can put the roof (the International) in place. This kind of thinking manifests a total misconception of the relationships between the International and its national sections in the twentieth-century world. Let us recall that up to this day no specifically national organization has acquired a program that, in a truly complete fashion, answers the revolutionary needs of our epoch, including on a national scale. Because there is no such thing as "socialism in one country," no such thing as "national roads," the instrument of world revolution can only be a world party. It cannot be constructed evenly in all countries because of the uneven development of the revolution throughout the world. Creating a mass revolutionary international and creating revolutionary parties in each country do not constitute two tasks separate in time. It is a single process that takes place by constant interaction between the International and its national organizations. Finally, to understand the importance of this question, it is not without value to see to what point the bourgeoisie, throughout its history, has especially feared the existence of an International.

The question of the International was eclipsed during the years in which the world revolution resumed its momentum almost exclusively through the colonial revolution, while in Western and Eastern Europe the era was marked principally by reformism. It will not be long before the big turning point of 1968 makes the necessity of international coordination, on the level of a vanguard Marxist-revolutionary organization, the first item on the agenda. The idea of an International was born in Europe over a century ago. And it was in Europe that the idea became a reality several different times. A few decades of Stalinism have not destroyed this tradition. Moreover, Europe is the area of the world with the strongest concentration of productive forces. In Europe more than anywhere else these forces are coming into collision with the barriers of national states. The contradiction between the development of the productive forces and the superannuated national states in Europe was at the bottom of the two world wars. In the absence of victories for the socialist revolution, which would have created a socialist federation of European nations, for more than twenty years we have been witnessing the spectacle of a Europe cut in two, socially and geographically, by the division of Germany, accompanied by the establishing of two caricatures of "unification," the European Economic Community on the one hand and Comecon (Council for Mutual Economic Aid) on the other. The resumption of the revolutionary rise in Europe will not fail to place the

socialist reunification of Europe on the agenda; as a consequence, the revolutionary International of the proletariat will also be placed on the order of the day.

Will the international revolutionary organization of the future be simply an enlargement of the cadre organization that constitutes the present Fourth International, or will it be achieved by other means? To pose the question in this fashion, like it or not, is to duck the problem as it exists today. No one can maintain that mass revolutionary-Marxist organizations are going to spring up all of a sudden, like Athena from the head of Zeus, and miraculously create a mass revolutionary International. The organizations are what they are today, and to be able to change the situation, our struggle must use existing conditions as its point of departure.

We are the very first to regret the Fourth International's incapacity for so many years to mobilize and lead mass movements. Without denying errors committed, we think that these did not bear on the essential problems, so that even if these errors had been avoided, changes of a qualitative nature in the relationships between the Fourth International and the mass workers' movement would not have resulted. It is difficult to imagine that for forty years, had there been objective possibilities for so doing, a team capable of solving the problem of a mass revolutionary-Marxist leadership could not have been found—what with all the attempts that were made. None of the Fourth International's manifold critics have demonstrated how to do better—and none have done better. On the contrary, when the socialist revolution made a new advance in the European countries, it was the Fourth International that was to be found in the forefront of the battle, and it was the members of the Fourth International who began to activate the mass movements in many of these countries.

The Fourth International is not one of a number of sects. Its history is that of an international revolutionary Marxist party in the most tumultuous epoch of the socialist revolution. The expansion of the working-class movement over and beyond organizations struggling in the framework of capitalist society—as a result of the creation of states rejecting the capitalist system—has given rise to an extraordinary phenomenon of combined development. Actually this expansion has for years been combined with a considerable retreat on the organizational level by the revolutionary-Marxist vanguard. We have had to lose ground as far as political action is concerned. But not for one moment has the Fourth International yielded an inch as far as theory is concerned. In addition, it has made available to new generations a rich theoretical and political contribution on numerous questions: bureaucracies in working-class organizations and bureaucracies in the workers states; Stalinism; political revolution; permanent development in the colonial revolution; theories relating to fascism and the Bonapartist strong state, etc. Those who have participated in the Fourth International have a legitimate right to be proud of its history. The theoretical and political conquests of the Fourth International as an organization of vanguard cadres will enable it to go beyond the stage it has had to traverse for so long.

Joining the Fourth International today means becoming part of the battle being fought in many countries, on every continent; it means developing a global strategy against capitalism, along with the other militants of the Fourth International, and applying that strategy wherever possible; it means once again, across the years, raising aloft the banner of October, of Bolshevism, of the Communist International, and bearing it to victory in the battles of today.

[To be continued.]

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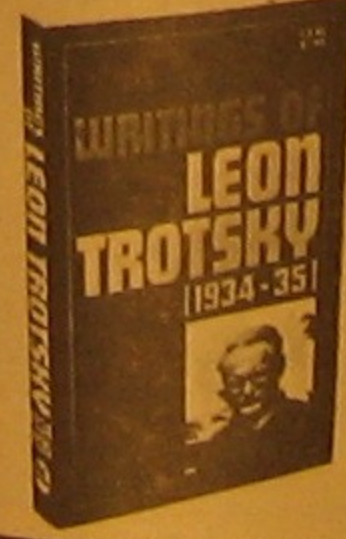
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THE WORLD REVOLUTION

SAL Conference Registers New Gains

BY JOHN COMPTON.

The socialist movement in New Zealand took a significant step forward with the recent second national conference of the Socialist Action League. Held over six days in Wellington in early January the conference registered the important gains of the previous two years and clearly laid down political analyses and perspectives for the next period.

The main political document "The Challenge of the New Radicalisation" took up the central question of the new upsurge of anti-capitalist struggles in NZ around the antiwar movement, women's liberation, Maori and Polynes-

ian struggles, the gay liberation and high school movements as well as a new restiveness in the labour movement, reflected in the unions and the Labour Party.

The growth of the antiwar movement in response to U.S. and N.Z. government policies of aggression against the struggle for national self determination of the Vietnamese people was seen as the main thrust of the radicalisation. The document stressed that Vietnam remains the "central issue in world politics today". The spreading of antiwar sentiment and its impact in so many other sectors had broken the hold of patriotism and Cold War politics on the majority of the NZ population.

The document went on to discuss the importance of the student movement as

a "powerful social layer", a catalyst of the radicalisation. The growth of a powerful women's movement, the new nationalist sentiment amongst Maoris and Polynesians, and the broad impact of the anti-Springbok tour movement were analysed.

The document then demonstrated how the radicalisation was having significant effects in the working class, combined with a new militancy in response to the attempts at wage and union controls by consecutive National governments. The N.Z. ruling class is in a quandary as to how to deal with this new situation.

Part II of the document analysed the structural roots of the worldwide radicalisation and stressed that it was not going to be turned back, that it would develop and deepen, and link up all sectors of anticapitalist struggle, including the

decisive sectors of the working class.

The document stated that: "The coming New Zealand revolution, in which the working class will be decisive, will incorporate the forces and demands of the independent movements which are developing in the course of the radicalisation."

The present period of broad radicalisation is one of training the revolutionary activists for a future decisive confrontation of social forces. This task the SAL as a party nucleus, has begun in earnest. All other left tendencies in NZ fail to grasp this dynamic, fail to relate to the living struggles and lead them towards correct political conclusions.

Three other documents outlined the tasks in key areas: the antiwar movement, the new feminist movement and the student and youth sphere. All documents were adopted unanimously, following a lively discussion. The rest of the conference was taken up with workshops and panels on questions such as the highly successful Socialists for Labour campaign carried out in the recent election.

The conference received greetings from many other revolutionary socialist groups around the world. A member of the national committee of the Socialist Workers League, the sympathising organisation of the Fourth International in Australia, was able to attend the conference, and presented greetings.

He was able to point to the many similarities between the political situation in Australia and New Zealand, in particular the newly elected Labour Governments, the history of opposition to the Vietnam war, and the presence of growing women's liberation and national minority movements. All these factors mean that the tasks facing revolutionary socialists in both countries are very similar at this stage.

All in all, the conference made it clear that the Socialist Action League can look forward confidently to a growing political impact on the N.Z. political scene.

Israeli Left Protests Witch-hunt, Torture

The document below is a response by left organisations in Israel to the ominous and wide-spread witch-hunt the Zionist regime recently launched.

The opening salvo of this witch-hunt came December 7, when Israeli police announced that twenty persons, sixteen of them Arabs and four Jews had been taken into custody on suspicion of participation in a Syrian - led "espionage and sabotage network". The four Jews were alleged to be members of the Red Front, an anti-Zionist organisation.

On December 11, seventeen more persons, apparently all Arabs, were taken in by the police. Then, on December 26, two more Jews were arrested. One, Rami Livneh, is the son of a Rakah delegate in the Israeli parliament (the Knesset.) Livneh is a member of the Revolutionary Communist Alliance (frequently known as Struggle, the name of its newspaper,) a group from which the Red Front had split. He was charged, not with having been part of the "spy-ring", but of having known of its existence and failed to inform the police.

Besides the nearly forty people being held in connection with the spying charges, many more have been held for "questioning".

Questioning involves more than mere query and response. On January 9 Rami Livneh's father, Abraham Lewenbraun, charged that his son had been tortured by the police. In their efforts to get Livneh to "confess" that he had known about the "spy ring", authorities beat him, threw freezing water on him, and subjected him to electric shock. When this procedure failed to do its job, the police confronted Livneh with several of his Arab friends, each of whom had been severely tortured. Livneh was told that if he had already confessed and that if he did not do so as well, he would receive even worse treatment.

At that point Livneh "confessed". He later repudiated the confession, and explained to his father and his lawyer the circumstances under which he had given his statement to the police. Livneh also charged that the other prisoners had been tortured.

The case marks the first time in Israel that Jews have come in for the torture treatment hitherto reserved for Arabs. The statement below, "Against the Government Repression," was signed by five organisations.

The Israeli Socialist Organisation (Matzpen-Marxist) has issued an urgent appeal to world public opinion to intervene in order to stay the hand of the Meir regime.

The group has called on people to send protest messages to Prime Minister Golda Meir, Jerusalem, Israel. Copies of such messages should be sent to ISO (Marxist) at P.O. Box 2234, Jerusalem, Israel.



Blindfolded Arabs who will face Israeli 'interrogation'. The Zionist regime has long employed torture and detention measures against Arabs, but this is the first time it has used them against significant numbers of Israeli Jews.

"For the Democratic Right to Organise"

The government aspires to destroy the organisations of the left and is utilising provocations to this end. After the discovery of what it called a "sabotage and spy ring," the regime struck at the Revolutionary Communist Alliance (Struggle) by arresting Rami Livneh and Mell Lehrman. It is obvious what will come next: the well-known domino method. After Struggle, others will be hit. Against the Black Panthers the government used frame-ups about "domestic terrorism" and "Molotov cocktails"; against the organisations of the left it is now using the obvious provocation of "spying and sabotage."

The government does not intend to stop there. By announcing that 100 more arrests are expected, the regime is preparing the ground for arresting more political militants and destroying more political and workers' organisations. The charge that members of an open political organisation "had contact with agents of the enemy" is only a beginning.

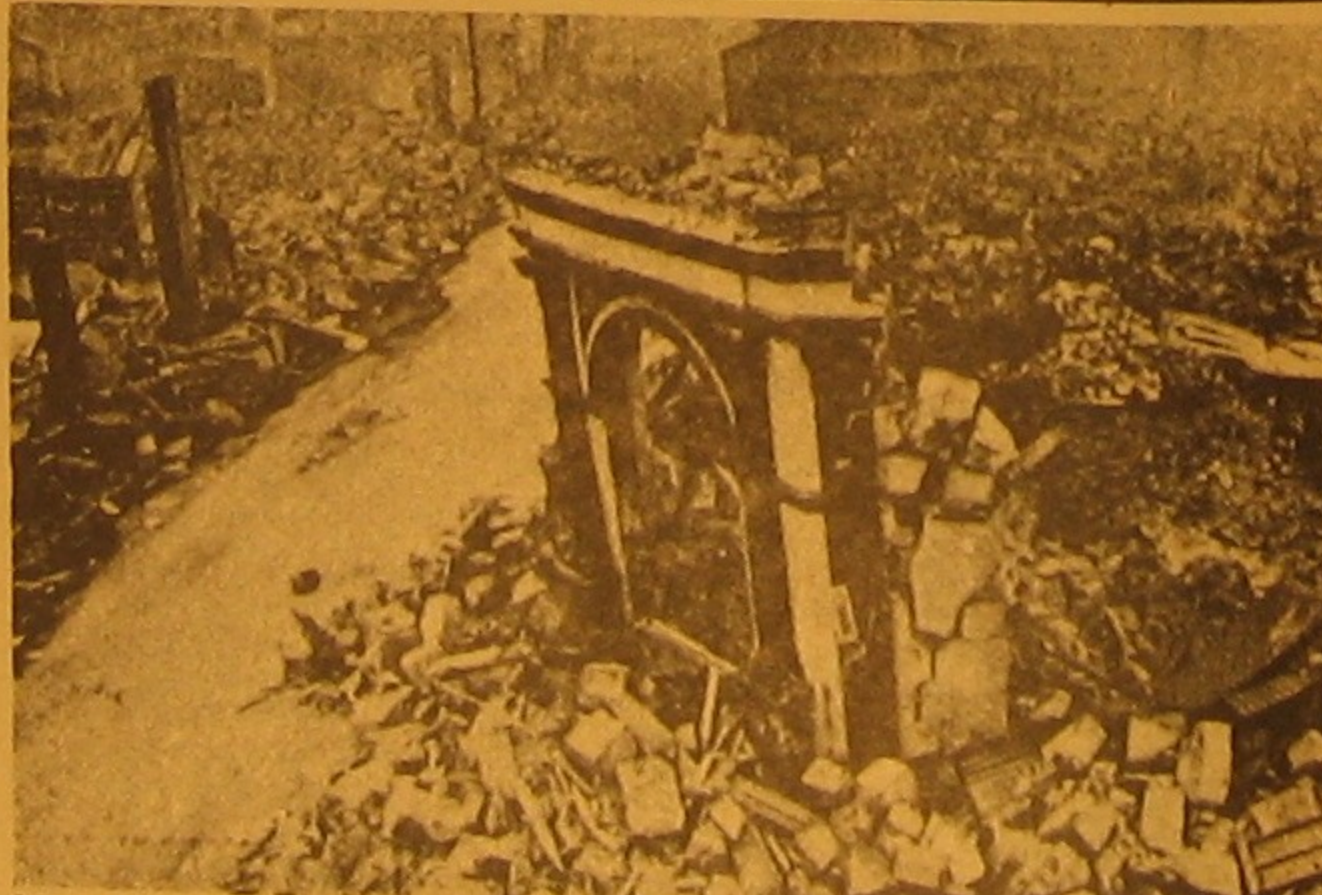
The government that has for years been expropriating and expelling Arabs, that has for years been engaged in class oppression and racial discrimination, is in need of renewed "national unity" because of the strike wave and price rises. It needs a new "security" grounds to justify its militarism and the continuation of oppression.

The Israeli regime cannot tolerate the joint political organisation of Jews and Arabs, and it uses all its weapons, from the security services to the courts, to destroy all such activity.

We place no trust whatsoever in the information released by the police and the security services - they are intended to create a lynch atmosphere. Various charges raised toward this end have already been disproved (and some of the accused have been freed already).

We know that many of those imprisoned have been badly tortured in the course of interrogation, in the highest traditions of such methods. We have heard that they will be tried before closed military courts on the basis of the 1945 Defence and Emergency Regulations.

Yesterday the regime claimed that striking workers were "saboteurs"; today it attacks political organisations and claims they are "enemies"; tomorrow it will destroy workers' councils by claiming that they "endanger national unity". The government attacks freedom of political organisation and at the same time prepares the laws that will enable them to send striking workers to jail. Let's stop them now!



Managua, Nicaragua. Rumour has it that Nicaraguan dictator Somoza is insisting that the city be rebuilt on the same site because of his real estate investments.



Ivan Nolan, Michael Anderson, Max Shillingworth

INTERVIEW: Wee Waa Cotton Chippers

Following is an interview with three members of a delegation sent to Sydney by striking black cotton chippers from Wee Waa in northern NSW. The interview is with Michael Anderson, Ivan Nolan and Max Shillingworth. Michael Anderson was spokesperson for the group. Other members of the delegation were Joe Fleck, Noel Haines, Roy Thorne and Lyle Munroe Junior.

The interview was obtained on January 19, since that time the cotton chippers have staged a strike which resulted in a wage increase of 29 cents per hour being won. A strike fund organised by the Aboriginal Legal Service in Sydney helped sustain the chippers during their strike.

As is explained in the interview, the low wages were only one source of the unrest among the Wee Waa cotton chippers. Other complaints included inadequate housing and poor working conditions, particularly the lack of toilet facilities which has led to health problems, including a high incidence of gastro enteritis among aboriginal children.

Ten chippers are reported to have died from heat exhaustion since the chipping began.

This interview has been transcribed from a tape recording and somewhat abridged. It has not been edited by the participants.

DA: Could you give us some background to the recent events at Wee Waa?

Michael Anderson: Representatives of the chippers at Wee Waa asked the Australian Workers Union (AWU) to look into the current wage conditions and living conditions of the cotton chippers. Now this has been held over and no action has been taken at all since December 3, mainly because of internal fighting in the union as was stated by Mr Oliver, the state secretary of the AWU, this morning in the Sydney Morning Herald. We have a letter from Mr Oliver stating that the AWU has now given us all the power to get our own legal advice and take it before the state conciliation committee. It is up to us now to claim for the wages we want, so they're more or less given us power to form our section within the AWU to fight for our own rights.

This committee I also must point out is an aboriginal committee, it is elected by aboriginal people.

The thing in Wee Waa started when people complained about conditions and complained about low wages and they said we should be getting more. Now when we looked into the matter we found that the award wages for cotton pickers and chippers, the basic wage is \$1.16 to \$1.25 per hour - for a forty hour week, that's \$46.50 (that's full adult pay). For a ten hour day the pay is \$12.78, and there is no sick leave or public holidays.

There has been a three year lapse waiting for higher wages in the cotton chippers' field of work, and I think we should get, and we will get, a three year increase in wages, which is going to come to a lot, and the cotton farmers, especially those Yanks aren't going to like paying blacks that much.

We intend to put all forces to make our

case heard. We're not going to pull any punches this time; we've had it. One thing is we've asked no government departments to act on our behalf. This is our thing; we're running it. The aboriginal people on this committee are running it fantastically; in fact I don't think that a government department can run it any better.

DA: You've had experience in the past with Government Departments?

Michael Anderson: I have had a lot of dealings with Government Departments and their lack of participation in many matters dealing with Aborigines. We have Mr Gordon Bryant at the moment who is travelling around Australia cleaning up a bit. But the thing is, fair enough he's a white man, and he's the right man in the right position but its about time Aboriginal people have representation too. In this case we have just made his department aware of the problem, and he has ordered that a Mr Foster from the Department of Labour, and a Miss Jan Cooper from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs go to Wee Waa and investigate the situation. But we are sick of investigation; we're telling the truth, and we're down here to tell them. They said they were there to investigate. We're going to take action ourselves.

DA: Do you think there will be any differences between the Liberals and Labor as far as setting up more possibilities for Aboriginal control over the running of black communities?

Michael Anderson: The only step I have seen them take is when Mr Bryant made a public statement to the Sydney Morning Herald saying that Aboriginal people should apply to become advisers to his advisory council. I question this advisory council that they're going to set up, as to how much power and how much influence they're going to have on decisions. It is no good us going there like before. They say we've got our advisers there advising them what to do. The thing is they're not listening to them. They're acting on their own behalf doing what they bloody want.

So the position is, the aboriginal people have decided now they are going to go ahead for an increase in wages and better living facilities.

The living facilities up there; people are living in cars, old busted up cars. They're living - well, if they can find any old pieces of tin, they put up a windbreak or they put up a shack and do whatever they can do. The majority of them are living in tents, with large families. They just had a large rainstorm up there, a big rainstorm which washed a lot of people out, so they just have to sit in a wet camp.

Also, there are a large number of aboriginal babies and children who have been treated for gastro-enteritis, and the local doctor up there said that he's finding it very difficult to cope with the problems that these seasonal wetts bring on, and the diseases that arise when the cotton-chippers are there.

DA: What sort of medical facilities are available?

Michael Anderson: We've only got the local doctor and the hospital, but we've got a team of doctors and nurses from the Aboriginal Medical Service going up tonight.

DA: What sort of treatment do black people get in the hospital; are they discriminated against?

Michael Anderson: No, to be honest they're too frightened to discriminate against any aboriginals because of the noise that might erupt, because we're starting to talk now. So they're going to just have to treat them. Some aborigines have been treated with contempt, but at least they're treated, which is the main thing.

DA: What are working conditions like on these cotton farms?

Michael Anderson: Well, the fields themselves are in rows from about one or two hundred yards up to about half a mile long. Aboriginal people have to walk up them and chip the weeds from the cotton. The temperatures range from about 110-125 degrees, and very few places have toilets. If women are working there, they have to sit down on a drum. A man, if he wants to go he just has to go across the road and do his business, more or less publicly. This is another complaint.

They provide the water in 44 gallon drums and the drums are just standing in the heat, so the water is just as hot as the sun once you drink it. There's no shade for people to have their lunch in.

DA: The morning papers yesterday said things like a lot of outsiders have come in and tried to stir up trouble. What do you say about that?

Michael Anderson: There are no outsiders. I think they regard me as being an outsider. I went to Wee Waa about Christmas with my family, my aunts and uncles. While I was there I started to work. I worked in the cotton for a few days. Some blokes just said to me, gee, this doesn't seem right. Everybody else works for eight hours and they get more than \$12 for eight hours, and anything else is extra on to that. I said well, you're entitled to that. The only reason you're not getting it is you're not making enough noise. You're satisfied as far as everybody's concerned.

So basically I don't regard myself as an outsider. I've worked there before. In fact I worked there to send myself through school. So, the only reason they see me as an outsider is because I was one of the founders of the aboriginal embassy and I came to Sydney to further my education.

DA: There have been some meetings up at Wee Waa. Could you tell us about them?

Michael Anderson: Yes, we've had about four mass meetings and I'd say the biggest attendance would have been about 400-500 people. We've had one mass meeting at the back of the pub; we've had another in the main street and we've had another in Dangar Park. And each time there has been more than 200 aborigines there.

DA: Has there been any strike action yet?

Michael Anderson: We've had a strike, a one day strike Friday last, and the only people who worked were the older people and the younger people who support the older people. And there's only a handful of them.

DA: What percentage of chippers went out on strike.

Michael Anderson: Well, I would say it was easily 85% of the cotton chippers who went out on strike.

DA: What percentage of people who work on chipping would be black?

Michael Anderson: 95% would be black.

DA: Why do you think that is?

Michael Anderson: Mainly aboriginals come because they're on social service benefits for most of the year and they're been after work - they get no work in town. So, as soon as cotton chipping season comes, everyone takes off from their home-town for four months to work on the cotton to earn some money. And they come across there and they don't care if they're exploited because they're earning money.

DA: Exactly how has the consciousness of the black workers built up there over the last few months, and when did it exactly start; was this over the Christmas period?

Michael Anderson: I'd say after the Christmas period they started to become aware that a lot of people were getting paid higher money for less work, and they feel that they are entitled to it as well. One thing they're screaming about is conditions; the majority of them are screaming about conditions rather than wages. But the consciousness of the people has been there for a long time. It's just that they've got no one to put it into action.

DA: Has there ever been unrest before in Wee Waa?

Michael Anderson: Yes, there has been a lot of discontent amongst the townspeople - not only the aboriginals and itinerant workers who come to Wee Waa - that's been going on for years.

DA: Are the prices different for itinerant workers?

Michael Anderson: Yes, I was just about to say that one of the local churmen that I was talking to, when I said that I would like to investigate the local food prices, told me that prior to the Cotton season all food prices are increased. I've seen a man there in the past few years go from a tin shed to a beautiful big air conditioned supermarket. He's got a two-storey home; he's making a fortune.

DA: Is there anything else you'd like to say?

Michael Anderson: Only that I'm very disappointed in the State Government. Particularly Mr Waddy's department, because they're not taking immediate action to use the \$40,000 that has been granted for developing cottage and toilet facilities. Early last year, before the cotton was started, the Government granted the money, and Waddy has held it up in his office because he wanted to give it to the local council. But, the local council wouldn't take on the responsibility so that in the meantime black people have suffered, because one white man doesn't want the responsibility and the other white man wants to give it to this man who won't take it.

DA: Why do you think the council would not do it?

Michael Anderson: If I had that answer I would be able to challenge them.

AUSTRALIAN LABOUR HISTORY PART 3 LABOR AND THE WAR BY PETER CONRICK



THE WOULD-TO-GOD BRIGADE

This is the third part of our series on the history and development of the Australian Labor Party. The first part traced the origins of the ALP, and the second part covered the period of Labor in power.

War is an acid test for all political parties, particularly the parties of the working class. The pressures of an imperialist war such as the one which opened in 1914, proved to be no exception. Capitulation, chauvinism and narrow national interests triumphed in the European sections of the Second International. Only the Bolsheviks and a handful of individuals remained steadfastly in line with the principles of internationalism.

If parties under the leadership of men with the capabilities of Kautsky and Plekhanov succumbed so effortlessly to bourgeois patriotism, what of the reaction of a dual class party such as the ALP?

LABOR'S RESPONSE TO THE WAR

Given the hegemony of imperial economic ties and ideology dominant in pre-war Australian society it was destined that large sections of the masses would temporarily swing in favour of the war in its initial stages. The claim of the Labor Party leadership to represent a variety of classes and interests melted into an open and enthusiastic support for the prosecution of the war. It was Labor Prime Minister Fisher who attempted to call off the federal elections scheduled for September 1914 in the name of "national stability". The conservative government in control of the House of Representatives went ahead and called an election which the ALP won, gaining control of both the Representatives and the Senate.

The support of the Party's leaders for the war was not an isolated and precipitous act of patriotism. It flowed from the class collaborationist line pursued by the leadership well before the war and was the extension of the militarist foreign policy advocated by Hughes and others to maintain Australia as an outpost of European civilization.

The characteristic reaction of the union movement was usually along the lines that "we must protect our country. We must keep sacred from the mailed fist this splendid heritage." (1)

Among the followers of the Second International in Australia, the Victorian Socialist Party offered a public condemnation of the war. At the same time the VSP chose to work inside the ALP because of the influence of "the unions and leagues and conferences at the back of the Labor Party." Besides, claimed the VSP, "the workers stood a better chance with Fisher than with the conservatives." (2) Other socialist sects expressed their opposition to the war outside the context of support for the ALP. Rather than drawing towards the masses of workers who blindly followed the ALP leadership into the war, the majority of the socialist groupuscules adopted the approach that the leaders of the Federal Party were "fakers, twicers and bloodsuckers". Such predilections belied a fatal attempt by some of the early socialists to bypass the hold of the ALP on the organized working class.

As for the parliamentary wing of the ALP, its position on the war was defined thus: "Our interests and our very existence are bound up with those of the Empire. In time of war half measures are worse than none. If returned with a majority we shall pursue . . . every course necessary for the defence of the Commonwealth and the Empire." (3) There was never any question amongst the Labor leadership about national defence. Even national republicanism was prepared to forego "independence" in favour of imperial service to Great Britain.

HUGHES AND CONSCRIPTION

The pressures on the right wing leadership, from Britain, for troops, increased during 1915, when Hughes replaced Fisher as Prime Minister. Hughes immediately launched an attack upon the working class organisations. His first move was to ban the IWW which had maintained a persistent anti-war stand and by late 1915 was gaining some influence among government workers in the railways and transport industries.

Concurrent with this note of repression was the calculated weight of Hughes' own political base in the trade union movement. In Hughes' case, his influence lay in the Australian Workers' Union which had the largest number of delegates to AIP Conference. The AWU was a conservative union which favoured arbitration to settle disputes and usually condemned strike action.

The dilemma of Hughes' position was this: "On the one hand stood the British War Council demanding new divisions of troops for the war of attrition that was developing on the Western Front and on the other, his realisation that there would be fierce opposition to the introduction of conscription. When in August 1916 the War Council cabled to the Australian government a threat that one of Australia's divisions would have to be disbanded, Hughes was forced to move.

The proportionally enormous casualties suffered by the Australian Imperial Forces at the Battle of the Somme and throughout the allied imperialist summer offensive in 1916 extended the already strained load on the Australian Army. Hughes took great pains to point out to his audiences that the homogeneity of the AIF would be destroyed unless conscription was introduced. He did this in the most calculated demagogic and chauvinistic terms possible: ". . . every Australian is bound by every sacred tie of honour and of duty, every instinct of loyalty and self-preservation to do his fair share in the mighty effort of the Empire." "Hughes had a long record (4) of militarist sympathies and he needed no great moral persuasion from the allied command to commit Australian troops to Europe under compulsion.

THE UNION OPPOSITION TO HUGHES

The Prime Minister did not speak for the rest of the ALP, nor for the whole Labor movement. Opposition to the conscription proposals inside the working class organisations, rested on the assumption that national service would weaken the trade union movement and

lay open the way for a capitalist class attack on wages and conditions. Under the wartime circumstances of state intervention in industrial production, the manufacturing sector had expanded and diversified into chemicals and rubber. But unlike European capitalism, wages in Australia remained at a relatively high level. The threat of compulsory military service to the worker became a welcome medium for the industrial bourgeoisie to cut costs. In particular, the replacement of adult males by female and child labor resulted in the reduction of wages by 50% in certain industries.

The allegation that conscription would turn Australia into a "black man's hell" was an integral and racist component of the campaign against Hughes organised by the Labor bureaucracy. While the more progressive sections of the workers' movement rejected the blatant racism of some trade unionist arguments others tended to centre on the ambiguous, but just as dubious issue of "mass immigration". Of course, Hughes was just as guilty of racist paranoia as some of his opponents. As a matter of fact, a large measure of the Prime Minister's assessment of the danger to Australia lay in an undisguised fear of Japan.

It was the Melbourne Trades Hall Council that delivered the first blow against Hughes' promise to the British Government. In May 1916 a special conference was convened to define Victorian Labor's attitudes towards conscription which resulted in a resolution being passed opposing conscription. Hughes returned to Australia from a trip to London in July 1916, as yet uncommitted to national service. On September 1 of that year he attacked a meeting of the Victorian executive and tried to gain support for his conscription proposals, but failed. Despite an alliance with Premier Holman in NSW he failed to carry the party in his own state. On September 15 Hughes and Holman were expelled from the Labor Party.

Hughes walked out with a ginger group of four ministers and seventeen parliamentarians, although there was still no formal split.

THE CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGNS

Hughes was forced to abandon his hopes of getting conscription through parliament. Even if he had been able to steer the bill through the House of Representatives, he would have faced an open revolt of Labor senators. The decision to put the question of conscription to a referendum was precipitated by several ministerial resignations. Ultimately the referendum was the only way for Hughes to oppose the demands of the unions that he drop his militarist posturing. Besides, he thought he could win.

The mass campaign that followed the announcement of the referendum was the largest and most intensive confrontation between the industrial and political organs of the working class and the front organisations of the Australian bourgeoisie. For scope and depth of mass involvement Australia has never

witnessed a more open battle. Conscription and the issue of whether working people should be forced to fight and die for imperialist war became the touchstone of a renewed radicalisation of the working class. Under pressure from thousands of workers, the Labor movement eventually swung behind the upsurge of strikes and lockouts that followed the aftermath of the referenda and the 1917 general elections.

The first referendum was decided on October 28 1916 and resulted in a rejection of conscription. Hughes ignored this edict and a second referendum in December 1917 saw an even firmer rejection of conscription.

Both results were crushing victories for official Labor and a clear, unmistakable voice against Australia's continued involvement in the war. The true winning margins of the referenda have never really been released. One sector of the vote was especially embarrassing for the supporters of conscription - that was the voice of the A.I.F. The official statistics registered the army vote as a narrow victory for compulsion, however many reports have since indicated that the final figures were tampered with - on several occasions Hughes' agents in London reported on the unrest of A.I.F. soldiers at the Front. If the army did record a 'yes' vote it was only by the support of reservists uninitiated in trench warfare.

THE MASS CAMPAIGNS AND THE IWW

Socialists and syndicalists alike played a leading part in rolling back conscription. The audacity of the IWW and their stress on rank and file organisational forms won them the support of a considerable section of the labour movement during the war. Moreover, the IWW produced a regular weekly "Direct Action", which sold at around 10,000 per issue at the height of its influence. The importance of "Direct Action" as a focus for building the anti-conscription campaign cannot be underestimated. Its attraction was borne out by the considerable attention the Wobblies received from the state repressive apparatus, including those former Labor men gathered around Hughes.

One of the most influential organs of the imperial bourgeoisie, "The Round Table", gives this revealing summation of Hughes' position in the Labor machine. "Mr Hughes has always been at daggers drawn with any section which has sought to identify the Labor Party with the outlook of industrial unionism. "The Round Table" benignly excused the working class for accepting "that the governing classes of all countries were responsible for the war." The Journal concluded that the conscription campaign had been largely a struggle between Hughes and "the alternative of violence and the class war - the social revolution to be achieved through . . . the brute force of organised unionism." (5)

The unremitting anti-conscription campaign of the IWW resulted in a growth of support for the movement among the working class. This influence could have

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IN BRIEF:

PHILIPPINES SAFE — FOR SOME

Launching a tourist promotion in Sydney recently, Pablo Borbon, director of the Philippines centre claimed that visitors to the Philippines have benefitted from the imposition of martial law. The crime rate has dropped and all the night-clubs are still open. However if you happen to be on the streets between midnight and 4 A. M. you may have some problems with military patrols. The Philippines are now safe for tourists — but it's a different story if you happen to live in the Philippines and have a few disagreements with President Marcos.

A NEAR THING

Closing the Australia Day ceremony in Sydney, Lord Mayor Griffin almost forgot to play the national anthem. He was about to announce the departure of the VIP guests when horrified officials reminded him of the anthem. Thank goodness, who knows what horrors might have befallen the nation if such goings on were allowed to continue unchecked.

WHERE'S HE BEEN FOR THE LAST FEW YEARS?

On January 26 Taffy Davies in his "Sydney Today" column in the Sydney "Sun" commented on "a group of youngsters trying to flog a dubious publication called 'Direct Action' which had blaring red headlines: 'US out now!' Davies said "Bilmev, where've they been all the week?" Presumably he had swallowed the rubbish which the "Sun" and most of the other daily papers had been printing regarding the imminence of peace in Vietnam. In October the afternoon press came out with headlines announcing peace — and not long afterwards some of the heaviest bombing raids of the war were launched against Vietnam.

Davies probably also believes that the recently signed agreements have brought peace to Vietnam despite the fact that a cursory examination of the daily press reveals that fighting is still going on and that Thieu is already making noises about the treaty having been broken and preparing the way for reinvigoration of the US in the war. If Davies knew anything about Indochina, he would know that the US is maintaining its presence in the area — they have aircraft carriers around the coast and they have bombers in Guam and Thailand ready to interfere in the struggle of the Vietnamese people at any time they decide that they don't like the way things are going. This situation is not new — where has Taffy Davies been for the last decade?

BOSSSES VICTIMISED

The director of the Queensland Employers' Federation J. R. James said on February 1 that proposed federal government legislation lifting bans clauses from industrial awards and exempting union officials

from civil action over "damages" caused by strikes amounted to "employer victimisation" and would lead to a period of industrial anarchy, violence and chaos. He also said that employers were prepared to lock out workers who pressed their claims too vigorously.

What he really meant was that for the past twenty three years the Liberal government has allowed the bosses a free hand in crushing workers' struggles and they don't like any changes in this situation, no matter how slight they may be.

PERMISSIVENESS, RED TERROR LOOSE IN VICTORIAN SCHOOLS

A. Clarke, president of the right wing Victorian Teachers Union told the recent VTU annual conference in Melbourne: "There is a danger of licentiousness being mistaken for liberty." He went on to say that there was experimentation in the schools and that politics was increasing in importance in the schools and "To me, this is a reversion to mob rule, the very antithesis of democracy and is the forerunner of Che Guevara's urban guerrillas." Clarke's evidence for this startling news? Well, there are increasing pressures for student rights and student representation on committees as if student opinions . . . were essential for decision making. "Is there not the danger in this development of our children being encouraged to question the answers rather than to answer the questions?" Students asking questions . . . students wanting representation . . . students having the temerity to claim that they have their rights . . . Let us hope that the present trends continue and that



CLARKE CHOKES ON HIS INDIGNATION — THE EDUCATION SYSTEM WILL BE THE BETTER FOR IT.

AUSTRALIA PARTY — PROGRESSIVE?

During the federal elections many people, including members of the Communist Party thought that the Australia Party stood to the left of the ALP because of its liberal stand on many social issues including legalisation of abortion. We pointed out that such a position ignored the fact that the Australia Party was a capitalist party incapable of fighting for the demands of the working people. The party had its origins in a group of liberal capitalists who broke away from the Liberal Party. Now the Australia Party is beginning to reveal its social roots a little more clearly — in the by election for the NSW seat of Armidale it has decided to allocate its preferences to the reactionary Country Party rather than the ALP.

THE JOYS OF LIVING UNDER CAPITALISM

Addressing a recent conference of the AMP insurance company's salespeople, H. M. Collier the NSW manager said that one in every twenty people in this country probably attempted suicide at some time during their lives. The official statistics show a suicide rate of one person in every seventy, but a large percentage of suicides are concealed by the courts and the police.

EMBASSY CHARGES DROPPED

The Federal government recently announced that it would not proceed with charges laid against demonstrators at the Aboriginal Embassy in Canberra last July. It also announced that fines imposed but not yet paid will not be collected. However those fined under the Liberal Party government will not be compensated or have their convictions quashed.

MASS MURDERER DIES

On Tuesday January 23 Lyndon Johnson former president of the United States died. He will be remembered by working people everywhere for his brutal attacks against the people of Vietnam — his use of up to half a million troops and a campaign of mass bombing of civilians in order to impose the will of United States capitalism on the people of Vietnam. He deserves to be placed alongside monsters of the stature of Hitler and Nixon.

SECTARIANS DISCOVER VIETNAM

After virtually ignoring the struggle in Vietnam since the formation of their sect, the Socialist Labour League devotes one and a quarter pages to the issue in the January 22 edition of their paper "Labour Press". Previously "Labour Press" regarding the struggle in Vietnam as an unimportant question for the working class, has confined its comments on the matter to small token articles to the extent that this group which calls itself Trotskyist has a worse record regarding defense of the Vietnamese revolution than the Stalinist Communist Party of Australia and in fact, any other left-wing organisation in Australia.

The article, going under the heading "Mobilise to Defend Vietnam Revolution" is the text of a statement by the so-called International Committee of the Fourth International. In fact this "International Committee" is nothing more than the British Socialist Labour League's name for itself plus the few tiny groups which cling to its coat tails in other parts of the world. The heading reads rather strangely in "Labour Press" which has never regarded the Vietnam struggle as important enough to carry regular articles on it — let alone support or assist those who sought to mobilise people in defence of the Vietnamese. It will be interesting to see whether the SLL's words about defence of the Vietnamese will be followed up with action. Its past record including its refusal to work to dispel illusions sown among the mass of the population by Nixon's and Kissinger's diplomatic manoeuvres indicates that it won't. Only now, after the imperialists have bludgeoned the Vietnamese into an unfavourable agreement has the SLL dared to speak out on Vietnam. However fine their words might sound, their actions reveal their hollowness.

NO PURPOSE IN LIFE

Speaking at a passing out parade in Brisbane on February 2 Major General A. L. MacDonald told the 1,000 regular soldiers assembled there that they might feel a lack of purpose and that there was not much point in soldiering on now that the last Australian troops were out of Vietnam and conscription had been abolished. But the Major General has not lost heart, no doubt he's hoping that the Liberals will return one day and maybe even decide that some other South East Asian people need the help of Australian capitalism in working out how they should live.

. . . STEVE PAINTER

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been extended into the army. But rather than having an interventionist orientation towards the army, the IWW exhibited a certain naive anti-capitalist puritanism which ultimately led to isolation from thousands of workers already in the AIF.

The absence from army agitational work was in line with a general syndicalist rejection of all forms of political struggle.

Thus the IWW rejected all parliamentary action. It made no distinction between reformist politics and revolutionary politics, and analysed the opportunism of the ALP purely in terms of its commitment to parliamentary activity. "Direct Action" claimed that "For the first time in the history of the working class movement in Australia a paper appears which stands for straight out direct actionist principles, unhampered by the plausible theories of the parliamentarians, whether revolutionary or otherwise." . . . (6)

The IWW was to learn that such sectarian party did nothing to mobilise the ranks of Australian workers who shared their hopes and aspirations to the ALP.

THE INDICTMENT OF THE IWW TWELVE

In 1916 the Central leadership of the IWW was arrested and charged with conspiracy to commit arson. It is quite probable that this was a false charge, but

the government availed itself of the opportunity presented by the trial to pass the Unlawful Associations' Act, banning the IWW and the publication of "Direct Action".

Still the bulk of the IWW remained un-reconciled towards the ALP. Some sections of the movement reformed themselves under new names to avoid the act. The ban on the IWW led directly to the formation of the One Big Union (OBU) which unsuccessfully attempted to unite all trade unions into one massive organisation along the lines of industry, rather than by craft ideas. The still born plan for the OBU had the support of those who were to become the nucleus of the Communist Party. Its most enthusiastic supporters were the Socialist Labor Party, independent socialists, left wing ALP and ex-IWW members. In real terms the OBU had cashed in on a period of upsurge in 1917, otherwise its organisational and political influence was negligible.

THE 1917 GENERAL STRIKE

Two upsurges on the industrial front represented the culmination of widespread discontent over wartime profiteering, high food prices, long hours and speedup methods in production, plus the refusal of the Arbitration Courts to increase wages sufficiently to offset the increased cost of living.

The lead-up to the big strike of August, 1917 was the coal-mining dispute of

October 1916 which effectively closed down all mines in the Commonwealth, causing a serious dislocation of most other industries. Despite its limited demands for shortened hours, its political impact was magnified by the threat posed to wartime production.

This tactic was extended to other industries by the adoption of go-slow methods. In the railway workshops in NSW, where syndicalist influence was considerable, posters began to appear, proclaiming: "Slow work means more jobs. More jobs means less unemployed. Less competition means higher wages, less work, more pay." (7)

Attempts were made by the government to speed up work — all such efforts met with walk-outs throughout Australia. The strike rapidly spread to other industries — coal and metalworkers and others such as carters and storemen who refused to handle black goods. At its climax, close to 100,000 workers were involved in what turned into the biggest industrial upheaval experienced in Australia.

It was not until 19 September that the strike was defeated by the unions agreeing to sign application forms for re-employment.

THE EFFECTS OF THE SPLIT

When Hughes finally broke away from the ALP in early 1917 to form the Nationalist Party, he left the parliament-

FOOTNOTES

1. The Worker, 6 August 1914
 2. Socialist, September - August 1914
 3. The Labor Manifesto
 4. Hughes, Melbourne September 21, 1910. Cited in Main, J. Conscription: The Australian Debate, page 40
 5. The Round Table, Vol 7, 1910 - 1917 pp 389 - 391
 6. Cited Campbell, E. W. History of the Australian Labor Movement (Sydney 1943) p 70.
 7. IWW poster 1916. In Turner, I. H. Sydney's Burning, p 90
8. See Sutcliffe, J. A. A History of Trade Unions in Australia pp 225 - 232 for details of strike. Also Campbell, Op cit, pp 78 - 102.

The international capitalist recession seems to have ended. All the imperialist countries, except Italy, foresee accelerated growth in 1973. The three key countries of the international capitalist economy—the United States, West Germany, and Japan—are experiencing a clearly ascending phase in industrial production. The time has therefore come to sketch out a preliminary balance sheet of the 1969-72 recession, to examine its specific features, and to deduce some general tendencies in the comprehensive development of capitalist economy.

The Most Serious Recession of the Postwar Period

The 1969-72 recession was undoubtedly the most serious experienced by the postwar capitalist economy. The volume of trading on the Wall Street stock exchange fell by 40 percent in anticipation of the recession. This time, in contrast to the preceding recessions that have occurred since 1945, nearly all the imperialist countries, except France, were drawn in. Also unlike earlier recessions, recovery came very slowly, especially in the United States and Great Britain, and was accompanied by a persistent and even accelerated inflation.

Certainly, the recessions in the United States, West Germany, and Japan were not completely simultaneous. There was a space of about six months between the bottoming out in the United States and the beginning of the downturn in Germany. International capitalism had great need of these six months; without them, the situation would have been much more serious than it finally was.

Moreover, if the recession was serious in the United States, it was less so in West Germany. The decline in employment suffered by the West German economy during the 1971-72 recession was only about half what it had been during the 1966-67 recession. Nevertheless, the slowness of recovery in the United States was such that most capitalist countries felt the effects of the West German recession before the effects of the American recession had faded away. Hence the persistence of economic difficulties and of unemployment in Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Belgium, and Australia, to mention only a few of the countries affected by the repercussions. It is only now, when the United States is reaching full production and when recovery is under way in West Germany that the situation is beginning to ease up.

The deepest causes of the recession have been described many times. The central motive forces of the postwar capitalist boom drew to an end. Productive capacity expanded beyond the consumptive capacity created by "effective demand" (that is, the buying power determined by the relations of class antagonisms under capitalism). Conditions of excess capacity have appeared in a series of key sectors: coal, steel, shipbuilding, natural and synthetic textiles, electrical home appliances, and no doubt also in the automobile and electronics industries. These branches now experience only shorter and shorter periods of expansion, interrupted by increasingly persistent periods of stagnation and decline.

The long period of expansion bolstered the militancy and organizational strength of the working class. The workers are not prepared to pay the cost of rising inflation, the only way for the capitalist system to avoid a very serious crisis. Hence the exacerbation of on-the-job conflicts, the proliferation of strikes, of higher and higher wage demands to keep pace with the rapid rise of prices. Because the employers have not succeeded in definitively breaking the workers' mili-

itancy, the rate of profit has been eroded by two factors: by the decrease in the rate at which capacity is utilized and by the stagnation of the rate of exploitation of the working class.

A long-term decline in the rate of profit coinciding with an unfavorable conjuncture usually results in bankruptcies and spectacular crashes. So it was this time. Penn Central, the largest U.S. railroad; Rolls Royce, the symbol of English capitalism; Montedison, the Italian chemical giant—all went down the drain. A few other "showpieces" of international capitalism, such as the U.S. aircraft companies Lockheed and Boeing,

monetary field, the competitors of the United States were unable to get together and organize a collective response. On this level American imperialism therefore scored some points. Nixon exported inflation. It declined in the United States and increased in the rest of the imperialist world.

Paradoxically, in the area of trade, success was elusive. The deficit in the American balance of trade is greater than ever. American imports continue to increase faster than exports. The short-term chances for a leveling off of the American balance of payments deficit are hardly propitious. Under these circumstances the resis-

tionary field, the competitors of the United States were unable to get together and organize a collective response. On this level American imperialism therefore scored some points. Nixon exported inflation. It declined in the United States and increased in the rest of the imperialist world.

Recession, Inflation, Class Struggle

For the first time, the 1969-72 recession was accompanied by accelerated inflation on an international scale. More than ever, inflation remains the only way to halt the crisis at a certain level (that is the big difference between "classical" crises and today's recessions). But a stronger and stronger dose of inflation will be needed to do the job. The Republican Nixon, theoretical champion of the "balanced budget," could end the recession only by deficit spending at a record level in American history. In Great Britain industrial production picked up only after an increment on the order of 25 percent in one year in the amount of currency in circulation.

Why, under these conditions, has inflation been able to slow down in the United States? Basically because the American working class—under the pressure of the betrayal of the trade-union bureaucrats, who "went along" with the wage freeze imposed by Nixon—has allowed its standard of living to be reduced and has suffered massive unemployment. In capitalist Europe the workers' resistance to any form of incomes policy has been stronger and until now has prevented the bourgeoisie from making the workers foot the bill by raising prices.

But this situation will hardly last forever. With accelerated expansion, unemployment will no doubt finally decline in the United States. Then the workers will be able to take revenge for the "lean years" imposed on them by Nixon. As soon as unemployment seriously drops, outbreaks of strikes can be expected.

Thus, in the long term, Nixon will have succeeded in exporting inflation and unemployment only to import an upsurge of workers' struggles. Small comfort for U.S. imperialism!

In the rest of the imperialist world, inflation will remain at a high level, and with it the discontent and the related militancy of the workers. These will combine with the structural causes of class conflict revealed by May 1968—reaction against speedup, against intensification of exploitation, against the brutalization of assembly-line production, against management authority, and against the relations of capitalist production in general. All these phenomena have been accentuated since the recession. They will scarcely disappear with the end of the recession.

The prospects for the international capitalist economy are thus hardly optimistic. While it may be able to rely on some new openings in the Eastern countries, while the agricultural crisis has been somewhat ameliorated by the shortage of beef in West Europe and by the massive grain shipments to the Soviet Union and China, while the prospect of an "oil shortage" will stimulate investment in the energy industry, the currently beginning boom will not last very long. The pre-1967 situation will not reappear. Monetary, financial, and industrial difficulties will combine with the growing social tensions to make the 1970s as a whole a decade of slowdown of economic expansion and of multiplication of explosions of the class struggle.

After The International Recession



By Ernest Mandel

the "greats" of the Italian electrical appliance industry, and most of the German metal trusts, came within a hair's breadth of crashing. Only the big banks continued to steadily increase their profits.

Trade War and Export of Inflation

As is always the case during an international capitalist recession, inter-imperialist contradictions were exacerbated during the 1969-71 period. Above all, the West European powers and Japan made serious inroads into positions held by American imperialism since the second world war, both in trade and finance. Then, beginning with Nixon's August 15, 1971, speech, American imperialism passed to the counterattack.

Did the counterattack succeed? In the

stance of the USA's partner-competitors to accepting "devalued dollars" as payment for this American balance of payments deficit will increase. The dollar is less and less suitable for the role of world currency. "Confidence" in it has been badly shaken.

American imperialism will continue its trade-war offensive, which will take on a pronounced protectionist character in several areas. Nevertheless, inflation continues at full steam, and with it the attempts to gain some advantage by adjustments in the rate of exchange (that is, by devaluations).

This growing disorder in the international monetary system threatens to halt extension of credit and of international trade. The imperialist powers will have to react. Freedom to manipulate national currencies will become increasingly limited. Already, Euro-