

# DIRECT ACTION

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A FORTNIGHTLY SOCIALIST NEWSPAPER

## LABOR CHALLENGED ON SPY BASE



## The Vietnamese Revolution & Nixon's World Strategy



# DIRECT ACTION

No 36 February 22, 1973

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## EDITORIAL SPIES, U.S. IMPERIALISM & AUSTRALIAN COMPLICITY

At the 1971 Launceston Federal Labor Party conference, Gough Whitlam himself moved the motion which is present ALP policy on the stationing of Australian troops overseas, i.e., that they should only be committed where there is a "clear and public international agreement". In the case of the Australian troops in Singapore the meaning was clear - a Labor government would withdraw them. Furthermore Mr. Whitlam gave an explicit undertaking to do this in his pre-election policy speech last year. Now Whitlam and the ALP right are trying to renege on their promise. However, the Labor left, specifically the Victorian Socialist Left, is mobilising against this attempted betrayal.

The ALP government's "left" shift of recent months now looks a little threadbare. Mr. Whitlam's principles of 1971 and even of three months ago are not standing up too well to the pressure of the defence establishment and bourgeois opinion.

For socialists in the ALP there is only one principled course of action - to demand that the Australian garrison in Singapore, spy base and all, be withdrawn immediately, and Australian participation in imperialist military arrangements be ended completely. Clearly, the listening post spy base is integrated into the general, American spear-headed imperialist offensive in South East Asia. No party of the Australian labour movement can exercise anything but the most resolute opposition to such an operation.

The base's eavesdropping activities are unlikely to be directed towards the "friendly" bourgeois dominated countries of Singapore, Malaysia or Indonesia. What would be the point? Far more probably, it is oriented towards the revolutionary movements in Indochina. A swap agreement provides for the turning over of all such information to the United States. Thus the base, in all likelihood, constitutes an aspect of Australia's continuing complicity in the American aggression in Viet-

nam.

Despite the illusions they have created, Labor hasn't ended Australia's Vietnam complicity. The troops are withdrawn but we still provide electronic services to the Americans. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam will be recognised, but so is Thieu's bloodstained clique. This is not why we put Labor in office. Labor's electors want a clear and complete break with Australia's involvement in counterrevolution in Asia.

Antiwar sentiment was a big factor in Labor's December victory. In their majority the Australian workers and youth want an end to our Vietnam complicity and want the Vietnamese to be allowed to determine their own future free from imperialist intervention. If Labor is to keep faith with principle and the hopes of its supporters the spy base must be withdrawn. The Singapore garrison must be withdrawn - if one of its purposes was camouflage for the spy base, it was also intended to help stamp out any future "communist insurgency" in Singapore or Malaysia, i.e., to help prop up an antidemocratic regime against its own people (as in the 1948 "Emergency" in Malaya).

Labor must break all Australian involvement in attempts to prop up the repressive capitalist regimes in Asia. A Labor government should withdraw Australia from all imperialist military pacts. A Labor government should place Australia on the side of the workers and poor peasants in Singapore, Vietnam and elsewhere who are fighting for social justice and an end to their oppression.

The Socialist Left has shown the way forward. The left in the ALP and outside must mobilise to demand - Withdraw the troops from Singapore now; disband the spy base; take Australia out of SEATO and ANZUS; end Australian complicity in America's continuing Indochina aggression.

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## What the Vietnam Accords Will Mean

BY NITA KEIG

"New possibilities for easing tension for consolidating security and world peace open now. The political settlement in Vietnam can be expected to have a positive effect on relations among states involved in one way, or another in events in Indochina. Moreover, this shows it is possible to find a solution to other conflicts, to liquidate the danger from existing hotbeds of war, above all in the Middle East. . . ."

"A road for peaceful, democratic development for upholding true independence and for conducting the policy of national concord and unification opens before South Vietnam. . . ."

These words were not spoken by Nixon, or Kissinger or any other spokesperson of imperialism, but by Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, as he addressed a banquet honouring North Vietnamese negotiator Le Duc Tho on January 30. At a similar function for Le Duc Tho, held in Peking two days later, Chinese Premier Chou En Lai hailed the accords as a "great victory" for a struggle that had been waged under "difficult conditions".

Speaking with obvious pride at seeing the fruits of their diplomacy, the leaders of the world's two most powerful workers' states described the Paris accords and the cease-fire agreements. It is clear to those who have observed the course of the Vietnam war, particularly over the past few years when U.S. aggression has been unparalleled in its viciousness, that China and the Soviet Union have played no small part in making these conditions difficult. The outdated nature, and limited quantities of war materiel provided by the Soviet Union show up as a tiny fraction of the resources that the United States has poured into the conflict, on the side of reaction.

Aid from the Chinese workers' state has also been inadequate. Following the mining of North Vietnamese ports, China controlled the flow of supplies to North Vietnam and used this to increase its political leverage on Hanoi. Throughout the war both powers have consistently aided and abetted U.S. imperialism by failing at any point to make it clear that any attack on North Vietnam would be considered an attack against themselves. Washington was well aware that it had valuable allies, and did not fail to turn to them when bombs proved ineffective against the Vietnamese. The culmination of this complicity, the greatest public betrayal of all, came with the official visits of Nixon to both Moscow and Peking.

Betrays of this kind and the enthusiasm with which the leaders of the Soviet Union and China greeted the signing of the cease-fire accords, can only be understood in the context of the Stalinist policy of "peaceful coexistence". Both of these bureaucratic leaderships want to put an end to the Vietnam war, no matter what the cost to the Vietnamese, as quickly as possible in order to improve relations with Washington. It is this victory, rather than the victory of the Vietnamese, that is being toasted in Moscow and Peking.

Sino - Soviet rivalry has played a significant part in the dealings which have taken place to bring about this "peace". China's concern about the increasing Soviet influence in South East Asia, and its desire to win the favour, against Moscow, of U.S. imperialism, has been apparent in the Chinese press and in public statements made by its leaders.

This rivalry, on both sides has meant that in an effort to accommodate the demands of U.S. imperialism, both Moscow and Peking have been able to pressure the North Vietnamese to accept "peace" conditions which, until recently, have been totally unacceptable to them. In other words Nixon has succeeded in playing one off against the other at the expense of the Vietnamese revolution.

The Paris accords are divided into two separate parts - one concerns the conditions of the ceasefire and the other the political future of South Vietnam. The conditions of the ceasefire demand that U.S. bombing of the north should stop

and that U.S. troops and materiel should be withdrawn within sixty days. North Vietnamese troops are permitted to remain in the south, but no new forces may be introduced. North Vietnam must withdraw its troops from Laos and Cambodia, ending the use of the supply routes through these countries. NLF forces may receive materiel to keep their supplies at their present level. Military prisoners from all sides will be returned within sixty days. The accords recognise that two armies and two administrations exist in South Vietnam, those of the PRG in some areas and of the Thieu government in others. Each is to remain in control of the areas it now holds.

The "political" part of the accords calls for free elections, release of political prisoners and recognition of basic democratic rights. The implementation of these provisions is left entirely up to the PRG and the Saigon regime, which will set up a three-part National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord. Each party has the right of veto. It is this council which is to hold new elections. This is basically what is contained in the provisions of the accords. The agreement also states that the "two South Vietnamese parties undertake to respect the ceasefire and maintain peace in South Vietnam, settle all matters of contention through negotiations and avoid all armed conflicts".

What do these conditions mean, particularly for the revolutionary forces?

Washington has ensured that Thieu has  
CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



Nixon



Thieu

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## Labor Left Challenge on Spy Base

BY JIM MCILROY

Two central points emerge from the recent controversy in the Labor Party over the secret Australian spy base in Singapore. One is the continued strength and broad influence of the Victorian Socialist Left in the Party. The other is that we see yet another manifestation of the ambivalent position Gough Whitlam finds himself in - that of a reform-minded Labor leader faced with pressures which seek to push him much farther to the left than he would like. These two aspects are related because they reflect the basic nature of the ALP as a party based on the organised labour movement, yet under a reformist leadership.

The question of stationing Australian troops in SE Asia is a very explosive one, considering the rising tide of national liberation struggles which are continuing throughout the region. With opposition in the ALP and amongst Labor supporters generally, to US and allied military aggression in Vietnam still strong, the pressures in the Labor movement as a whole against any military intervention in Indonesia, Malaya, Singapore or Hong Kong are tremendous. Labor policy on bases in SE Asia is quite explicit. It states;

"Australian forces should not be committed overseas except subject to clear and public international agreement."  
"No such agreement exists in the case of Singapore. In the ALP policy speech Whitlam unequivocally stated;  
"The Five Power arrangements do not require an Australian garrison in Singapore; the battalion and battery there will not be replaced when they complete their tour of duty."

The motion on the Singapore base question, sponsored by the Socialist Left and moved by Bill Hartley, which passed the Victorian State Council of the ALP (the main governing body in that state) by about a two-thirds majority, represented a broad current of opinion in the Labor movement. The precise text of the motion, which was reported by the major dailies, reads;

"In view of the federal government's progressive foreign affairs steps, it is with regret that we note the statements of the Minister for Defence concerning the retention of a large number of support forces in Singapore. Bearing in mind the tragedy of Vietnam, we are most concerned at the possible effects of continuing military commitments in Asia or elsewhere."

"We are also of the view that the Singapore government is anti-democratic and that Australian military association with Singapore is incompatible with Labor principles".

Not a single speaker dared to oppose this motion in the State Council. Even the government right wing was demobilized.

Why was this? Basically because a vast majority of the Labor movement, particularly in Victoria is now, as a result of the experience of Vietnam over a decade and the strength of the anti-war movement, opposed to any military involvement by Australian forces outside this country. No Labor



Hartley & Lee Kuan Yew

leadership can afford to ignore this. The actions of Whitlam, Cameron and Cairns during Nixon's terror bombing of North Vietnam last December were a response to this pressure. The magnificent boycott actions of Australian seamen and other trade unionists in defense of the Vietnamese were an expression of the breadth and intensity of this feeling in opposition to military attacks against a colonial people fighting for their freedom.

This was the feeling which spilled over into opposition to Australia's retention of troops in Singapore, with its obvious purpose of bolstering a dictatorial regime against its own people. However, this general feeling can only be focussed and made effective in the Labor Party by a vigorous left-wing leadership capable of mobilising support from various sectors. As in the case of the Victorian State Council motion supporting the NLF in April last year it was the SL which was able to do this. The strong influence which the SL holds in the ALP is reflected in the overwhelming vote for its motion demanding withdrawal of troops from Singapore. It is the political strength which derives from fighting in a disciplined way for principled political positions.

The SL has shown it is as much a force as ever when it pushes hard and clearly for left wing policies. The response of the so-called "centre" group is also instructive here. Faced with the necessity to stand up and be counted in the State Council on a vital issue such as this, many in the generally opportunist centre were pulled towards the left. The lesson of this is that the Socialist Left can grow significantly by reaching the unattached and wavering elements in the party. If it is able to catch the imagination of the majority of the rad-

ceeded only by its intent for the future?"

These are questions which are posed before Gough Whitlam and other government leaders. Dr. Jim Cairns responded with unequivocal support to Hartley's resolution. Other ministers, including Dr. Moss Cass, Environment Minister, Dr. Everingham, Health Minister, and Gordon Bryant, Aboriginal Affairs Minister support the Victorian stand. Whitlam was left floundering. Faced with strong pressure from the left, a potential revolt in the ministry and the probability of further moves at the next Federal Conference, he sought to ease the pressure by leaking the true nature of the role of the projected 400-600 remaining troops in Singapore. That was, to cover an intelligence radio-monitoring base, operated by the DSD (Defense Signals Division)

As described in the original "leaked" report in the "National Times" (February 12-17) the DSD operates as a part of an international electronics intelligence "swap" linked to the National Security Agency of the United States. As Fred Brechly, the reporter put it: "Although DSD joined the UK USA (a top secret intelligence treaty signed in 1947) under a Labor government its very existence let alone its treaty arrangements were not known by senior Labor ministers when they won government again 25 years after the treaty was signed. There is some feeling among Labor ministers that the 1947 treaty is not only a one-way operation in America's favour, but that operations by an organisation such as DSD in Singapore are not consistent with Labor aims."

To put it mildly indeed, Whitlam himself was thought to be against the spy base. Its removal has now been officially announced (which was the intention of the Gorton Liberal Government anyway by 1975.) Whitlam is caught, as always, in the middle. Through the Defence Department the demand is for the base to remain. All socialist and labour principles deny the right of such a counter-revolutionary operation to continue.

Public reaction against the real reason for the troops remaining in Singapore has been strong. Whitlam will be forced to make a clear statement before too long. The fact that Whitlam, as Opposition leader, was purposefully left uninformed on the spy base, as on many other government matters, shows the class hostility and fear with which Liberals viewed the possibility of Labor in power. Liberal arrogance shows no bounds with demands for Dr. Cairns's dismissal, and cries of a "serious breach of responsibility" and "imperilling the national security" by Snedden directed at the Prime Minister shows the polarisation which has occurred on this issue. "The Age" (February 15, 1973) calls it the government's "first inexcusable political blunder."

This issue represents perhaps the first serious test of strength between left and right in the Labor Party since the elections. It is a real challenge to Whitlam's leadership. The conclusion of this test and the many more which will develop with greater frequency will decide whether the Labor leadership's temporary shift to the left will be abruptly halted, and whether the real left-wing alternative will be strengthened in the Party.

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# Unemployed Teachers in N.S.W.

BY STEVE PAINTER

For the first time since the depression of the 1930s, substantial numbers of teachers are unemployed in New South Wales. 1,100 teachers are out of work, not because there are too many teachers, but because the state government says that it has no money to pay them.

Some of the teachers are experienced; one has been teaching for fifteen years. Others are fully qualified, having just completed courses involving a university degree and a diploma of education.

Classes in many NSW schools at the present time contain over forty students, a size which reduces the schools to little more than child-minding centres and makes meaningful education virtually impossible. Enlightened bourgeois educationalists recommend classes of around 20 to 25. There is no shortage of work for the unemployed teachers.

The state government claims that it has no money to pay for the employment of more teachers and has appealed to the federal Minister for Education, Kim Beazley, for a grant of \$4.4 million to pay the unemployed teachers. Beazley replied that he had no power to make such a grant and that the request would have to be made from the NSW Premier to the Prime Minister.

The claim of the NSW government that it does not have the money sounds a little strange in view of Premier Askin's conduct during the recent by-election campaigns. One of the promises he made was that in the next budget the allocation of funds for private schools (which are mainly run by churches) would be increased by a total of \$3.5 million, an increase of 40 percent. Although the next budget will fall in the new financial year, it seems strange

that Askin can project such an increase while the state education system is so financially straitened.

The NSW Liberal Party government has been eager to create confrontations embarrassing to the federal Labor Party government since Labor won the election last December. The Liberals know that popular feeling is running against them and they are desperate. This could explain the attempt to foist the burden of solving the NSW education crisis onto the federal government.

Nevertheless, the education system is in crisis not only in NSW but on a national scale. In Victoria overcrowding is severe in many schools and ancient, inadequate school buildings are in use. Many immigrant students are unable to receive necessary language training because of a shortage of trained teachers. It is obvious that federal financial assist-

ance to the state education systems is necessary.

The refusal of both the state and federal governments to shoulder their responsibilities in the education sphere was eloquently condemned recently by a group of thirty teachers who staged a game of "political football" outside the Education Department headquarters in Sydney. The game was between two teams, the federal government and the state government. One teacher gave a running commentary on the game: "The object of the game is simple. . . to survive and do nothing. You should not get caught with the football (symbolising teacher unemployment and overcrowded classes) and in no way should you let it get out to the public arena". After a few seconds the game was stopped because things were moving too quickly. After a rest period it was started again with the two teams yelling at

each other "You should do it, this is not our responsibility". After another rest period the rules were changed for the coming state by-elections, the commentary on this part went: "Quick, nobody touch the political football, keep it out of sight. But jump up and down, show the public your exercises."

As a result of the government's refusal to employ the teachers, the Teachers' Federation Council, composed of representatives from all parts of the state will meet on March 10 to consider action. This could bring to a head the question of an application by the NSW Public Service Board (PSB) to deregister the Teachers' Federation as a union. The PSB earlier indefinitely suspended its application when the Teachers' Federation decided to discontinue its policy of calling on teachers to refuse to take classes above their normal work load.

The Liberal Party's neglect of the NSW education system is not new, they have pursued their present policies over a long period of time. Both the rising militancy of the teachers and the increasing unrest among students give an indication of the present situation in NSW schools. Students attending last year's secondary students' strike in Sydney complained of inadequate toilet facilities, overcrowded classrooms, and authoritarian administrative regimes among other things. The unemployment of the teachers is only another result of the Liberal neglect. The needs of industry for both unskilled workers and trained technicians are being adequately met by an education system which sees no role for the schools other than as glorified day care centres which may or may not impart a minimal amount of knowledge depending on the capabilities of the individual students. The Liberals see no need for change.



Unemployed teachers stage a game of 'political football' outside the NSW Department of Education building.

# BHP at Prices Tribunal

BY SOL SALBY

The Labor Attorney-General, Senator Lionel Murphy, has indicated that the establishment of a Prices Justification Tribunal is going to be the most important task of the new government. In the meantime the inquiry into BHP's proposed price rise has given an excellent preview as to how effective or otherwise such a tribunal can be.

The inquiry by Judge Moore was of course very much on an ad hoc basis. As such it contained certain features which are unlikely to be included in any future price-fixing authority. Nevertheless the major lessons are there.

The first thing to be noted about the price rise was that BHP wasn't granted what it asked for. Under a Liberal government there would have been no obstacle to BHP raising its prices by the full

amount and a whole two months earlier. Under Labor there are some restrictions. The disappointment of the Company's executives wasn't completely feigned. This becomes evident when it is already speculated that the government will vigorously oppose any other rise in the next eighteen months.

(The tears the executive shed were quite genuine; instead of increasing their profits by \$22.8 million it will go up by only \$9.6 million, a loss of \$13.4 million. Even hardened BHP executives can't take such a loss and keep smiling.)

Primarily Judge Moore's report has given BHP a 3% price rise on the basis of very limited information. Any union applying for an increase in its award on the basis of a similar amount of information is likely to have its case thrown out of court. Moreover BHP had several other concessions granted to it; the parties making submissions were not able to see

BHP's arguments in advance. Finally, the speed with which the inquiry took place undoubtedly created a new record. Fourteen days after the opening it was all over with the report being released to the public.

BHP, having increased its prices by 3.7% in January 1970, by 8.0% in June 1971, and by 5.3% a year ago was granted just under half the 7.1% it sought in its application. In contrast, the ACTU which was granted nothing in 1971 and a meagre \$2 in 1972 was granted nothing last December after having to wait a lot longer than a fortnight, and after presenting a meticulous case.

Much is being made of the likely impact on prices, particularly by the "Australian Financial Review". They used figures calculated on the basis of an input-output model constructed by a team of Monash University economists headed by Dave Evans. Technically the model

is probably flawless. What it does omit is the tendency of capitalists to equalise the rate of profit and for Australian employers to follow each other in raising their prices in a similar way to that of unions seeking a flow on. There is no doubt that the impact on the Consumer Price Index will be much more than the 0.03% figure calculated.

The lessons to be learnt by Australian workers from the BHP inquiries will retain their validity when the Prices Justification Tribunal is established. The Tribunal can't halt inflation. Despite claims to the contrary by Country Party leader Anthony the Tribunal is going to keep employers' profits as a major criterion in making its decisions. Quite obviously the standard of living of the working class is not going to be substantially protected. What is needed is an escalator clause in all awards and contracts, i.e. regular adjustments of wages tied in to the cost of living index.

# Whitlam's Indonesian Trip

BY JAMIE DOUGHNEY

"Relations between Australia and Indonesia are very good and the Prime Minister's visit offers to make them even better." Thus Indonesian president Suharto commented on the visit of Gough Whitlam to Indonesia.

His statements followed announcements by the Australian government giving Indonesia a squadron of sabre jets and a promise, revealed by Whitlam at his February 6 press conference, that it "was willing to make similar arrangements as were made with Singapore and Malaysia". In practical terms this means the possible supply of troops, facilities, training courses and equipment to the Indonesian army, adding the finishing touches to the policy of strengthening relations with the Indonesian government which was initiated by the previous Liberal government.

Some of the progressive stances taken in foreign policy since the election of Labor last year, exemplified by the decision to withdraw the remaining aid and advisors from Vietnam have tended to obscure the more backward policies of the new government. We are now witnessing the adverse effects of the practical application of Labor's attempts to make alliances with "our Pacific neighbours", regardless of the politics of those neighbours. There is no clearer example of this than the Whitlam government's willingness to deal with the present government composed of the most reactionary militarists.

Before the visit Whitlam would do well to take a cursory look at the recent history of Indonesia and the methods of Suharto's dictatorship.

Using the fabricated pretext of "an attempted communist coup", Suharto's regime came to power in 1965 on the crest of a wave of vicious bloodletting against the left. During the following months an estimated 500,000 opponents of the new government, mostly members of the Indonesian Communist Party, were openly slaughtered. Since then the regime has tolerated no opposition. Anyone suspected of having sympathies towards the left can be summarily arrested and without trial, condemned to detention for what could amount to the rest of their lives.

At present there are something like 100,000 political prisoners being held throughout Indonesia, although the true figure may be much higher. They are kept in the most miserable conditions, and the majority have been in that situation since the September events of 1965. There is virtually no hope that they will be tried, and many face a sure death due to the disease-ridden environment in which they are forced to live. Whitlam should also take a look at the report released by Amnesty International over a year ago on the despicable treatment of political prisoners in Indonesia.

In this light it is interesting to look at the statement made by the Niuginian Prime Minister, Michael Somare, after returning from a recent trip to Indonesia; "The Age" of February 15 reported him as saying that his visit was to familiarise him with Indonesia and learn from it, as his country would be independent soon."

The type of alliance envisaged by Labor would have the effect of legitimising and supporting one of the most brutal governments to arise in the twentieth century. To be sure, Labor's foreign policy is an improvement on that of the Liberals. However it cannot be said that the possibility of this sort of alliance was excluded from the scheme laid down in the pre-election period. Labor's foreign policy draws up short of taking up positions which stand against the injustices perpetrated by the dictatorial regimes in SE Asia. Taking such positions would pose too much of a threat to the status quo.

It is up to those Labor supporters who voted for the workers party on the basis of its progressive policies, to stand up and oppose such alliances. Labor must end all political, military and economic ties which serve to support a ruthless political dictatorship against its own people who are striving for a better way of life.

# Women in Revolt



## ABORTION POLL

Australian nationwide Opinion Polls (ANOP) which very accurately predicted last year's Federal election results, has released the results of a national poll on abortion. The poll reveals that eighty-six percent of Australians favour abortion on demand or in certain circumstances.

Twenty-five percent of people favoured abortion on demand, sixty-one percent favoured it in certain circumstances. These circumstances included: (in order of preference) danger to the life and health of the mother, danger to her mental health, risk of physical or mental deformity to the child, financial hardship, and the woman being the victim of rape, unmarried or immature, thirteen percent were against abortion in any circumstances, and one percent was undecided.

Upon examination of the religion of the people interviewed in relation to their views, it was clear that the minority who opposed abortion in any circumstances was largely Catholic. Liberal voters also tended to be conservative, and Labor voters progressive in their opinions. There was little difference between the opinions of women and of men.

Fifty-eight percent of people supported the setting up of abortion clinics such as that which Dr Bertram Walner set up in Melbourne recently. These results only confirm what was apparent at the time of the elections- that there is overwhelming support for the right of women to abortion. The Labor Party can only follow in the footsteps of the Supreme Court in the United States, in repealing laws which deny women the right to abortion, as the feelings of people on this issue can only become stronger.

## INTERNATIONAL ABORTION MEETING

Following from the news on January 22 that a majority of US Supreme Court judges had decided in favour of giving women almost complete legal rights to abortion, the Women's National Abortion Action Coalition (WONAAC) held a victory rally on February 2 in an auditorium at New York University.

More than 200 women and men filled the auditorium which was decorated with a large banner reading "1920- The Right to Vote, 1973- The Right to Abortion - The Struggle Continues." Featured speakers were Jean Touche from Belgium and Nicole Marie from the French Movement de Liberation des Femmes (MLF- Women's Liberation Movement). Telegrams were received from the Canadian Women's Coalition to Repeal the Abortion Laws and from the first conference of the Women's National Abortion and Contraception Campaign in Britain, congratulating WONAAC and the abortion rights movement for their achievement in influencing such a decision. Another congratulatory telegram was received from Simone de Beauvoir.

Plans were also read out, concerning a meeting on the "International Struggle for Abortion Rights" which WONAAC is organising for March 10 in New York City to take the place of the previously scheduled International Abortion Tribunal which was to have taken place over three days on March 9-11. This change of plans was necessary because of the change brought about by the Supreme Court decision, the reduced potential for raising funds, getting large numbers along etc.

At the March 10 meeting, speakers will include Gisele Halimi (the French lawyer who won the Marie-Claire Chevallier case in France- see DIRECT ACTION No. 33) as well as Michelle Chevallier

(Marie-Claire's mother who was also a defendant in the case) and Claude Servan-Schreiber a noted woman journalist for Le Monde, the Paris daily, who, along with Halimi is a leader of the French abortion rights group Choisir (Choice).

WONAAC feels that this meeting, which will also hear speakers and messages from all over the world on the struggle for abortion, will be an excellent opportunity for American women to express their solidarity with the struggles in other countries.

Ginny Hildebrand of New York WONAAC, who announced the plans for March 10, told the audience, "The momentum of a first victory is a powerful weapon which we now hold. We have a responsibility to wield it in support of our sisters around the world and to further our own struggle."

## GOVT. GRANTS AID FOR FAMILY PLANNING

\$350,000 will be given to family planning agencies by the Federal government, the Minister for Health, Dr Everingham has announced. This is the first government assistance that such agencies have received. The Family Planning Association of Australia will be given \$200,000, a national Catholic family planning agency will be given \$100,000 and \$50,000 will be distributed among other voluntary organizations who provide family planning services.

In speaking about the government's decision to grant this financial assistance, Dr Everingham said that the government believed that every person should have ready access to family planning advice and said that Australia was trailing behind about half the nations of the world on this question.

The provision of these services on a wide scale will help avoid many unwanted pregnancies and will aid women in their efforts to gain complete control over their fertility.

## ARD FHEIS DEBATES WOMEN'S LIBERATION

One of the most interesting discussions at the Official republican convention, or ard fheis held in Dublin last December 16-17 centred around women's liberation. The resolution put forward, and the discussion of it, revealed that a far more conscious and dialectical analysis was being made of this key social issue.

At the 1971 ard fheis, most of those who spoke on the women's liberation resolution were still nervous about raising specifically women's demands, preferring to view the female sex as simply a disadvantaged part of the working class with special economic interests. Also, the strong influence of the Catholic Church and its moral values was very apparent. There was obvious uneasiness about the demand to legalise contraception, which, like divorce and abortion, is banned in the South, where Roman Catholic teachings on the family and morality have been written into the constitution. The question of abortion was not even raised.

At the last convention, however, discussion was more serious and thorough. The republican women's liberation activists were clearly well on their way to challenging not only the dogmas of the Catholic Church but of vulgar "Marxism" as well. The preamble of the resolution said:

"Recognising that both men and women are oppressed by the capitalist system, we believe that women are conditioned

in a particular way to accept a secondary and submissive role in society and that this conditioning has led them to accept inequality of education, low wages and opportunity. We believe that the special function of women in child-bearing has been exploited by the capitalist state as a means of oppressing women, in that they are forced to bear the full responsibility of rearing children without adequate and guaranteed support or protection for the vital work that they do.

"Recognising also that in a state in which the moral code of a particular church is enforced by law, women are denied the right to control their own bodies and ultimate destiny. . . ."

The call for the right of women to control their own bodies is in fundamental contradiction to the Catholic conception of morality and the family. If the Official republicans follow the principles set forth in this preamble, they cannot help running up against the institution of the family itself. They have to examine its real social role and origins.

Article 41 of the Free State constitution reads:

1. The State recognises the Family as the natural primary and fundamental unit group of Society, and as a moral institution possessing inalienable and imprescriptible rights, antecedent and superior to all positive law.
2. The State, therefore, guarantees to protect the Family in its constitution and authority, as the necessary basis of social order and as indispensable to the welfare of the Nation and the State.

1. In particular, the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved.
2. The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home.

1. The State pledges itself to guard with special care the institution of Marriage, on which the Family is founded, and to protect it against attack.
2. No law shall be enacted providing for the grant of a dissolution of marriage.
3. No person whose marriage has been dissolved under the civil law of any other state but is a subsisting valid marriage under the law for the time being in force within the jurisdiction of the Government and Parliament established by this Constitution shall be capable of contracting a valid marriage within that jurisdiction during the lifetime of the other party to the marriage so dissolved."

Because of the religious underpinnings of both Irish states, the women's liberation issue has direct implications for the struggle for a united Ireland. In fact, the present feminist currents in Ireland seem to have been given their initial push by the development of the crisis in the North.

Since it is in the area of morals and the family that the church's power is manifested most clearly and is most resented, virtually every women's liberation demand and strike at the concrete influence of Catholicism as an institution and as a philosophy. In the Irish context, moreover, such demands tend to have a general antireligious thrust.

A mass women's liberation movement in Ireland could provide the basis for a struggle that, by uniting the victims of a concrete form of oppression, could bring other layers of society into the struggle against a system that degrades all human values and aspirations.

.... NITA KEIG.

# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

BY JENNY FERGUSON

On March 8, 1908, women garment workers demonstrated in the streets of New York's Lower East Side against long working hours, low pay, intolerable working conditions and for the vote.

On February 17, 1909, the first women's day was organised in the United States. Socialist women in cities from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic organised demonstrations and meetings to demand political rights for women. In New York a meeting of over 3,000 women adopted a resolution protesting against non-recognition of women's right to vote.

Thus, the observance of a national women's day by U.S. women gave a lead to other women all over the world. The Second International Conference of Socialist Women was held in Copenhagen in 1910, where 100 women from seventeen countries designated March 8 as official International Women's Day.

## SYDNEY

WOMEN'S COMMISSION  
TEACHER'S AUDITORIUM,  
300 SUSSEX ST.  
SAT MARCH 17, 10am to 5pm.  
SUN MARCH 18, 10am to 5,30pm.

## BRISBANE

RALLY  
TO REPEAL ALL ABORTION LAWS  
KING GEORGE SQUARE  
SATURDAY MARCH 10th, 10,00AM

Two of the most significant March 8, celebrations occurred in the next few years. On that day in 1914 Clara Zetkin (militant socialist leader) organised thousands of women to protest Germany's pell mell course towards the First World War, and Rosa Luxemburg was arrested and convicted for speeches opposing the coming imperialist war.

On March 8, 1917, striking women textile workers from the Vyborg District in Petrograd held an International Women's Day Demonstration centred around demands for bread, opposition to the Czarist Autocracy, and opposition to the war, which sparked off the Russian Revolution.

It is difficult to trace the authentic history of IWD in Australia, but it appears, celebrations were held in Sydney in 1926 and in Melbourne in 1934, around the demands for better working conditions and peace.

## THE RIGHT TO VOTE

The struggle for suffrage raised the whole question of women's rights and status in society and helped pave the way forward to wider issues concerning women. The earliest countries to achieve votes for women were: Wyoming State (1869), Australia (1902), Finland (1906). It also for the first time brought women into direct political life i.e. anti-slavery bill in America; great revolutionary struggles in the USSR and China; the industrial struggles - the development of the Labor Party and Federation in Australia; the fight against fascism in Europe.

Today, International Women's Day assumes greater significance than it has ever had for the past fifty years, because the new wave of feminism has once again taken up the banner to continue the past struggle for the full equality of women.

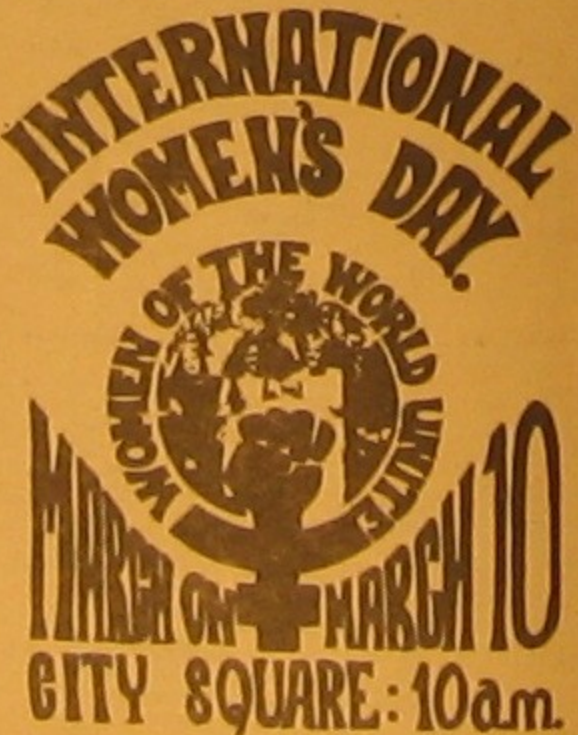
The possibilities for building the Women's Liberation Movement into a significant fighting force for women's rights can be increased through actions such as the demonstration planned for Melbourne on March 10 and the Commission organised by Sydney Women's Liberation for the following weekend.

We encourage all women to help us continue to celebrate International Women's

Day in the tradition of the earlier IWD actions by making it a date associated with feminist struggles and helping to build these struggles and the movement in the future.

## MELBOURNE

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY  
MARCH ON MARCH 10,  
CITY SQUARE: 10AM







September 20 high school strike in Sydney, 1972.

## High School Strike

BY MIKE JONES

Preparations are now going ahead in all states for a national secondary students strike on April 11. The strike is being organised by various groups affiliated to the National Education Action Coalition.

In Sydney, the strike will be organised by the NSW Education Action Group. The EAG's coordinator is Manda Lenane, a student at Sydney Girls' High. Manda, who was elected at the February 4 meeting of the EAG, has been active in the students rights movement since the founding of the EAG.

Press coverage of the movement has so far been hostile. The Daily Mirror, for example, ran an article on Manda which concentrated exclusively on her smoking habits, completely ignoring the fact that she was the coordinator of an organisation demanding democratic rights for an extremely oppressed section of the population.

It appears that the strategy of the establishment is to refuse to take the students rights movement seriously. They can find no plausible way of attacking the program of the EAG, so they attempt to laugh it off as the adolescent pranks of a few "militant Billy Bunters". (As one report put it). Such an attitude, however, cannot last. Once it becomes apparent that students are prepared to fight for their rights in an organised way the press and the establishment in general will be forced to take them seriously. Once students are recognised as people with serious needs and demands their fight is half won.

Any students who are interested in fighting actively for their rights should contact

the EAG at P.O. Box A444, Sydney South, NSW 2001.

The first issue of the newsletter of the National Education Action Coalition is now available. It contains the proceedings of the conference, and costs 5 cents. If you would like a copy posted, send 5 cents, together with 7 cents postage to PO Box A444, Sydney South, 2001.

For further information:  
 SYDNEY: Manda Lenane  
 Convenor, NSW Education Action Group - PO Box A444, Sydney South 2001  
 BRISBANE: Tim Smith, 36 1599  
 Treasurer, Queensland Secondary Students Union, PO Box 109, Indooroopilly.  
 MELBOURNE: Ted Murphy, 477771  
 Representative, Victorian Education Action Group, P.O. Box 130, Carlton  
 ADELAIDE: Bruce Hannaford, 564364  
 Convenor, SA Education Action Group, c/- 1 Shirley Cres., West Beach, SA  
 CANBERRA: Jon West, 86 2760  
 President ACT Secondary Students Union c/- 41 Waite St, Farrer, ACT  
 NATIONAL COORDINATOR: Mike Jones  
 PO Box A444, Sydney South, 2001.

## HISTORY OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

For space reasons the fourteenth and final instalment of Pierre Frank's "History of the Fourth International" has been held over until the next issue. Readers who have missed earlier instalments may order back copies of DIRECT ACTION at 10 cents a copy, from 139 St John's Rd, Glebe, 2037.

# SYA 4th Conference Preparations

Preparations are continuing for the Fourth National Conference of the Socialist Youth Alliance, to be held in Sydney over the Easter long weekend (April 20-23). At the conference students and young workers from across the country will meet to discuss perspectives for the revolutionary socialist movement in the coming year.

During enrolment week for first year students at NSW campuses, SYA activists were out selling Direct Action, handing out the Young Socialist! (the SYA campus newsletter) and telling students about the conference and about SYA. As a result of this activity many students (most just out of secondary school), have expressed an interest in attending the conference.

Four resolutions and an international report will be discussed at the conference. Two of these resolutions, the secondary students' and campus reports are now available from SYA branches. The secondary students resolution "A Socialist Strategy for the Secondary Student Revolt" explains the international nature of the student movement and then proceeds to examine the role of secondary education under capitalism. It discusses such matters as the discrimination against women in schools, relations between students and teachers, private schools, and the crisis of the bourgeois education "experts". It also runs over the history of the secondary student movement, the importance of the September 20, 1972 strike action and the formation of the

National Education Action Coalition. It ends by pointing out some of the mistakes that the student movement has made and showing how these mistakes can be avoided in the future.

The campus resolution "A Socialist Strategy for the Campuses" explains the increasing tendency toward proletarianisation of intellectual labour under capitalism and points out how this leads the interests of the workers and other oppressed social layers. It examines the main tactics of the bourgeoisie in attempting to halt the student radicalisation - for example the division of the students into universities, colleges of advanced education and teachers' colleges, and projects some measures to combat these tactics. It also assesses the lessons of the La Trobe University struggle of 1971-72, explains the position of the Australian Union of Students (AUS) and discusses student government bodies and their importance. As well, the document examines the role of the far right on the campuses. The resolution also explains the need for links between the campuses and outside social struggles, particularly the need for student support for workers' struggles and the gay, black, women's and anti-war movements.

All of the documents to be presented at the conference are action documents. They examine past experience and make projections concerning the tasks of socialists in the coming year, and how these projections will be realised. This flows

# Unemployment Falls

BY SOL SALBY

A new tone of complacency has been introduced into the labour movement following the releases of the provisional unemployment figures. The Minister for Labour Mr Cameron led the way when he completely revised his own attitude. Only three weeks earlier his main emphasis was on the large pool of the unemployed. Now he attempts to claim credit on behalf of the Labor government for the meagre improvements which have taken place.

The actual figures themselves show that unemployment fell in January by 1,022 bringing it down to 135,747 or 2.3%. On seasonally adjusted figures it fell by 6,494 to 94,435 which represents 1.66% of the work force. While it is true that for the first time in 27 years unemployment fell in January and that the general trend is probably downward no one should fall into complacency, particularly if all factors are considered.

The January unemployment figures are still the highest January figures to date. There are also several other factors which tend to exaggerate the trend on this occasion. These have been acknowledged even by conservative writers such as Alan Wood, the "Sydney Morning Herald" economic writer, and even by arch reactionaries like Maxwell Newton.

One of the factors involved is the introduction of the Metropolitan Unemployment Relief Schemes. If the 2,000

people employed by the new scheme are included with the unemployed - as they were in December then the trend would be a thousand up, not down. As for the marked fall in seasonally adjusted unemployment, it is due mainly to the inbuilt faults of seasonal adjustment which tend to underestimate unemployment in December and January and overestimate during the rest of the year.

Seasonally adjusted unemployment has now been falling steadily for the last six months. The working class however can't afford to become complacent about this issue. There are many factors yet to intervene. Unemployment has also been falling in most overseas countries but the international trade war is now once again in full swing. We are yet to feel the impact of Nixon's budget or the U.S. devaluation, or for that matter the Australian revaluation of December 23.

The labour movement has been warned about the possibility of unemployment stabilising around the one hundred thousand mark. The Labor government should be forced to prevent that happening. Everyone who seeks a job should be able to obtain one. Nothing less than that is acceptable. Until such a situation is achieved all measures necessary should be undertaken to reduce unemployment. These include comprehensive public works schemes and the cutting down of the working week without any loss of pay.

## N.S.W. By-Elections

BY FRANS TIMMERMAN

The NSW state by-elections, held on February 17, in the country seats of Hawkesbury, Byron and Armidale provoked plenty of interest as a "barometer" of support for the ALP.

The conservative Sun and Herald dailies hailed the Liberal/Country Party victory in all three seats as a "rebuff" to the federal Labor government. This claim is based on the fact that the ALP vote had dropped compared to the last federal election figures in these seats.

This reasoning is not altogether accurate, considering that electors were voting for a state parliament and that these same newspapers have just published Gallup poll figures showing that support for the federal Labor government is up by one per cent at the expense of the Liberals and the DLP.

A more plausible reason for Labo's inability to win any of these three seats is the timid and conservative approach of the NSW Labor leadership. It has failed to provide any clearcut alternative

to the reactionary Askin government. For example, on the issue of abortion, Hills and Co. went out of their way to demonstrate that they were just as conservative as Askin on the issue. Yet on a federal level, abortion was found to be a clear vote-winner for the ALP.

However the vote in Hawkesbury and Armidale showed a swing to Labor since the state elections in February '71, a swing sufficient to unseat the government if generalised for the whole state.

The already shaky finances of the state government will take a further battering if Askin honours all the promises he made to rural producers during the election campaign. The handouts promised amount to millions of dollars per year in the form of abolition of the road transport co-ordination tax, and increased rebates on motor vehicle and death duty taxes for primary producers.

Clearly Askin was prepared to spend plenty of money in order to sustain the dwindling Country Party rump in the coalition government.

# 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 John's Rd, Glebe, NSW, 2037.

# Behind the Currency Crisis

On December 18, 1971, the finance ministers of the world's 10 richest capitalist nations met in Paris. Their task was to negotiate the basis on which to fix the exchange rates between the world's major currencies, and in doing so attempt to find a solution to the international monetary crisis which had by then reached major proportions. Regardless of what was decided it was only a matter of time before heightened international competition and continued inflation on an international scale would erode the basis of any agreement reached and undercut the parties it formulated.

With the announcement on February 13 that the United States had unilaterally devalued the dollar by 10%, and the subsequent re-adjustment of other currencies, the terms of the monetary system propounded at the Paris meeting were dealt a blow.

This devaluation now takes one step further the trade war launched by the United States against its "trading partners". In announcing this, along with other measures aimed at protecting American business from its overseas competitors, Nixon stated that "devaluation of the dollar is only a temporary solution." Giving warning that further protectionist measures can be expected, to "get a fair deal and a fair shake" for US capitalism. It also gave a clear indication that further monetary crises are in the air, and that the actors in the recent drama can prepare for a return performance.

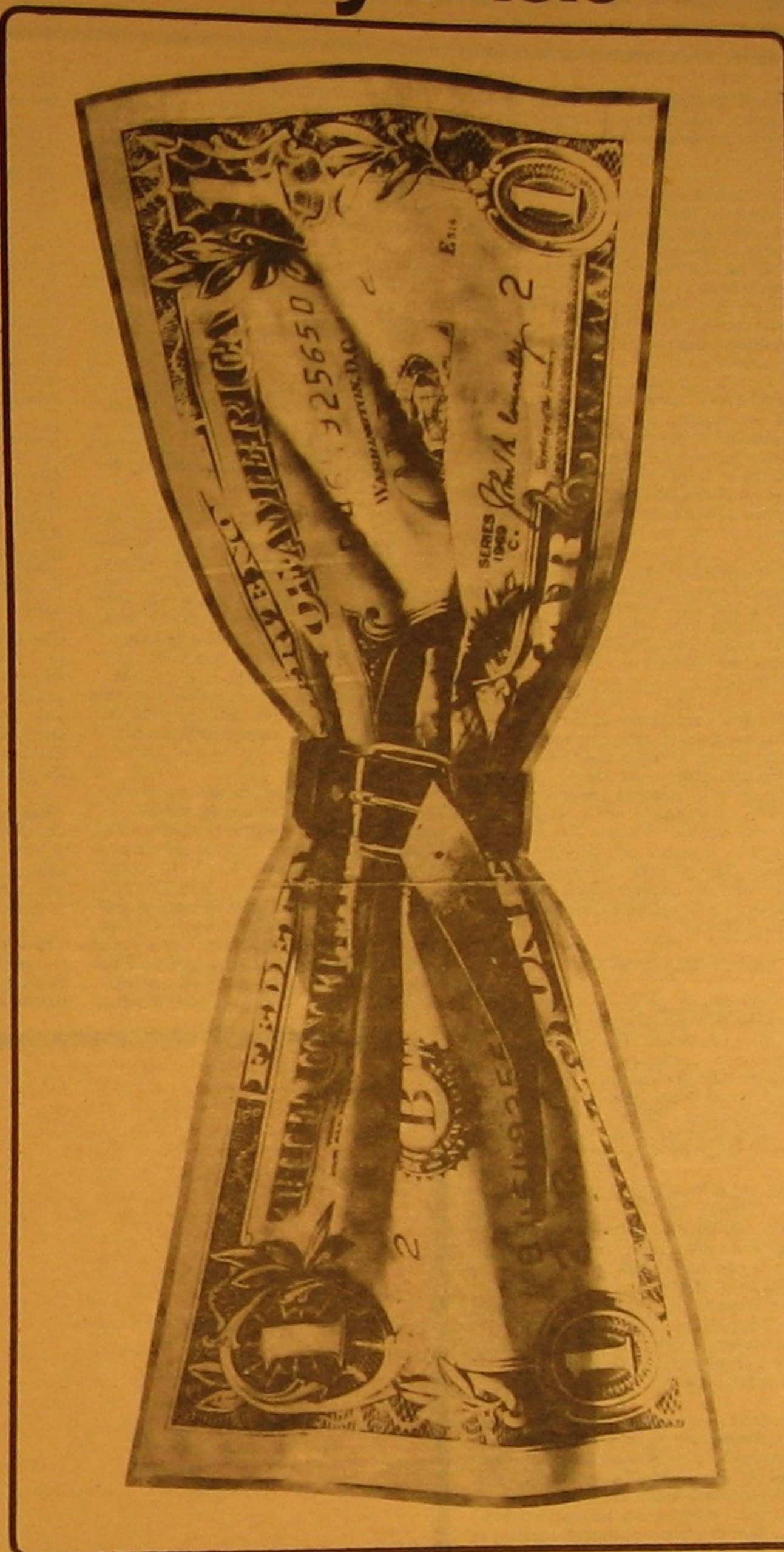
The present phase of the crisis started in earnest when European and Japanese markets were opened to a flood of US dollars, as speculators, anticipating a devaluation in the near future, bought up other currencies in order to register a profit. This followed the release of figures which revealed that the deficit in the US balance of payments for 1972 was a massive \$6500 million.

What followed was a wild international scurry as the leading manipulators of the respective countries financial affairs dashed from meeting to meeting, trying to reach a solution. Eventually it was resolved that the dollar would be devalued.

Following from this Japan decided, much against its wishes, to "float the yen", which by virtue of its position vis a vis the dollar would mean a revaluation. By the 16th the yen had floated upward to the point where it amounted to a 17% revaluation. A step that both the United States and Europe had been after, for it concretely makes Japanese goods costlier on the world market and hence less competitive. It came as no surprise then, that the European financial barons welcomed the devaluation, with the subsequent revaluation of the yen; as "an international solution to the monetary crisis". If only to add later that it is of only a "temporary nature." The Australian dollar was kept at its present level, much to the ire of the leading magnates of the mining and rural industries. This "sit-pat" stance in effect means a revaluation against the dollar of 11.1%, and taken with the previous revaluation means that the Australian dollar has appreciated by approximately 19% relative to the US dollar. Quick to applaud the Labor government's first revaluation move the Australian bourgeoisie is now adopting a more cautious "wait and see" approach, indicating that the Whitlam government should do the same.

Since Australia has recorded a \$400 million trade surplus with the United States it can be said that to a minor extent it was part of the target at which the devaluation was aimed. The most important effects to be gleaned from this de facto revaluation of the SA, however can be seen as extending those trends flowing from the December 23rd revaluation decision by Labor. These were expounded in an article "Revaluation and Unemployment" by David Nixon in "DIRECT ACTION" No. 34.

At this early stage it is still too soon to estimate the eventual outcome of the past weeks of financial manoeuvring. But whatever the case two things will be certain. Firstly the "solution" will not be lasting for its root causes in inflation and the inability to convert the dollar into gold will not be eradicated from the system. Further, the brunt of any unjust consequences of the crisis will be borne not by the rich of those countries affected, but by their working classes, through some form of incomes policies,



or other devices at the disposal of capitalism.

The objective of the 10% devaluation was clearly to increase the competitive position of US business in relation to its principal competition, in particular Japan and to a lesser extent West Germany who were continuing to return large trade surpluses with the United States. It reflected the comparative weakening of both the US and of the dollar as an international currency which the latest moves have definitively ended as a stable world monetary standard.

To see the reasons behind the downfall of the dollar in a clearer light it is necessary to observe the background to the present monetary crisis, a background marked by the increasing fallibility of the present system.

After World War II, at the Bretton Woods conference a new international monetary system was established. The US dollar was given a pivotal position to enable the US to rebuild the capitalist economies of Europe. The US dollar was made to be "as good as gold" to allow US imperialism to restore its competitors in order to avoid social upheaval and revolution in Europe.

As the economies of Japan and Europe were restored a contradiction developed between the need for the dollar to be highly flexible in its value for the domestic purposes of the US and the need for the dollar to be inflexible in its international role.

The basis for the continuation of the

Bretton Woods system was that the loss of purchasing power of the dollar, due to the permanent inflation, would be less than that of other currencies. If not, the supreme position of the dollar would be eroded and the concomitant imbalance would manifest itself in gross deficits in this US balance of payment. That is, imports from other countries would far outstrip exports in the economy of the most powerful nation in the world.

This is precisely what happened. Western European countries, Japan and others were able to strengthen their economies to such an extent that the buying power of the deutsch - mark and yen etc. were declining at a rate less than that of the dollar. Consequently the US balance of payments deficit skyrocketed as the competitiveness of US goods declined due to their comparatively inflated prices.

This deterioration of the monetary system and its eventual collapse was accelerated by the worsening economic situation, reflected in the onset of the 1969-72 recession. This necessitated the drive for new trading markets in foreign countries.

Drastic action was needed by the United States to protect its position. Hence the August 15 1971 announcement to float the dollar (in fact devalue it) and, less importantly, to codify what had defacto been policy of not exchanging dollars for gold. As well as this, a 10% surcharge was placed on all imports into the US in an attempt to protect the home market from a flood of over-

seas commodities. This meant an open declaration that the US was out to make others pay for its economic troubles - with the bone being unmistakably pointed at Japan. The December 18 meeting of Finance Ministers followed, 'laying down a temporary compromise situation. Japan and West Germany revalued upwards 18.5% and 12.5% respectively, although this was not as much as the US had originally demanded. Nixon was to glibly remark, "neither victor nor vanquished."

What Nixon was after with the Aug. 15 counter attack was to cut across the inroads made by European and Japanese capital in the fields of trade. That is, in concrete terms, to export unemployment to other countries and to increase the export of US products as compared with imports, thus reducing the enormous balance of payments deficit.

No success was registered at all. The balance of payments deficit is greater than ever. Herein lies the basis of the 10% devaluation, as well as the introduction of measures aimed at giving Nixon greater powers to implement protectionist legislation against the impact of massive quantities of foreign goods being imported into the US. The failure of the US to achieve all it aimed for on August 15, 1971, led to the need to take further action against its competitors in an attempt to force valuations upwards.

Nevertheless it would be wrong to deduce from this as so, that the capitalist economy was or is on the verge of collapse. In fact it can be observed that all of the major capitalist countries are emerging from the recent recession expecting to see increased growth in the coming year. Industrial production has already risen in the United States, Japan and West Germany. And although we have entered a long term period of decline, in which crises like the one from which we are just emerging will become more regular and severe, the present period is marked by a conjunctural recovery, even though it may be only temporary and short lived.

The end of the capitalist recession didn't help US capitalism. On the contrary, it seems to have had the opposite effect. Increasing employment and income have led to an increased demand for imports of overseas goods which are still cheaper. Further, the social crisis and the increasing militancy of the working class on an international scale also has a strong impact. The increased radicalisation which reflects itself in increased working class militancy and a world-wide turn to labour and social democratic parties has meant some adjustment to the capitalist way of thinking. Working class upsurges can be expected now at a lower level of unemployment than say ten years ago when similar recessions took place. As a result, the lowering of the total amount of unemployment in the major capitalist countries has not reduced the need for shifting the burden of unemployment onto other people's shoulders.

Latching on to monetary crises to imply that a recession, or even a depression, was in the offing is not only to ignore the basic realities of the situation but to deny a fundamental economic fact: that is that monetary phenomena are mere reflections of economic events, not their cause.

It is more accurate to say that the present monetary dealings were more in the nature of an attempt to re-align currencies to obtain the best competitive advantage in the overall content of an economic stabilisation. Nevertheless, the prospects before the international monetary system are very gloomy indeed. Ernest Mandel outlined these in a recent article ("After the International Recession" - see DA 35, February 8th, 1973.) when he wrote that:

"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."

A little more than a month after the writing of this article its analyses have been vividly demonstrated in practice.







# A.U.S. Moves Left

BY SOL SALBY

When the CIA financed International Student Conference (ISC) came under attack in 1967, its staunchest defender anywhere was the National Union of Australian University Students (NUAUS). Even after the American left-wing magazine Ramparts exposed the Central Intelligence Agency involvement in the ISC the Australian student leaders were unmoved. Five and a half years later delegates to the now re-named Australian Union of Students (AUS) ended the ISC's 37th Annual Council with the singing of the Internationale.

The shift to the left which took place in AUS was of course reflected in more than just singing. The whole discussion at the Annual Council including the resolution and acceptance of socialist ideas clearly showed how far the Union has moved to the left. The increasing numbers of allegedly conservative students of Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs) have not had an adverse effect.

The leftward trend in AUS itself reflects the continuing radicalisation of students on both university and CAE campuses. As masses of students move left this shift reflects itself in the campus governing bodies (usually called student's representative councils or students' union council) and eventually the AUS itself.

Although the "Internationale" was sung, this year's conference was a far cry from a Bolshevik gathering. Some delegates had to be fetched out of their beds two hours late to get a quorum; discussion on many occasions was confined to people fond of their own voices; the level of debate and understanding of the question of the environment was abysmally low. These are of course only a few points picked at random. There were many others. Nevertheless nothing can detract from the positive aspects and progress of the council.

One severe setback for AUS was organisational. A group set up by August council called the "Planning Committee" recommended over a hundred organisational changes. At the core of those was the regionalisation plan. The effective result of the plan is a weakening of the central voice of the student government. It also means inevitable degeneration to parochialism and an obstacle to building up of a coherent student leadership.

But on a more positive note the Internat-

ional and National Affairs sessions provided some valuable discussion and motions for action.

One of the most controversial items in the International Affairs session concerned the Asian Students Association (ASA) in particular the action of Australian delegate John Vines in voting for the admission of the National Union of Israeli Students. While no criticism of Vines was raised it was finally resolved by a motion moved by University of Queensland Union and seconded by the University of NSW that: "AUS, having met in full Council, no longer believes that NUIS should be recognised as a member of ASA, and rather, believes that the General Union of Palestinian Students and Arab Students Unions (of the Israeli universities - SS) or any non-Zionist student organisation should be recognised in their place."

On the subject of Israel AUS Council also decided to undertake to protest and publicise the recent campaign of repression launched by the Zionist state. In particular the International Research Officer is required to publicise the recent arrests and torture of Jews and Arabs following the frame up of over fifty people on spying and sabotage charges.

In a similar vein the following resolution was carried concerning the repression in Argentina:

"That AUS condemns the extreme repression unleashed by the Lanusse regime in Argentina. The unconstitutional attacks on the civil liberties of its opponents is exemplified by:

- 1) The unwillingness of the prosecution to provide details of the accusations to the accused or their lawyers.
  - 2) The use of the illegal death penalty.
  - 3) The constant use of kidnapping and torture by the police and other government agencies.
  - 4) In the case of the kidnapping and death of Fiat manager, Sallustro, seven of the accused including a candidate for the death penalty were arrested a day before the shoot out and could not have possibly been involved in the killing.
  - 5) The murder in cold blood of sixteen prisoners a day after their peaceful surrender at Trelew airport following their escape from Rawson penitentiary.
- That AUS demands from the Argentinian Government:
- 1) The immediate release of all political prisoners.
  - 2) The cessation of the use of torture.

3) The immediate restoration of all democratic rights.

Finally we resolve that the International Research Officer circulate details of the repression as well as a copy of a petition to president Lanusse."

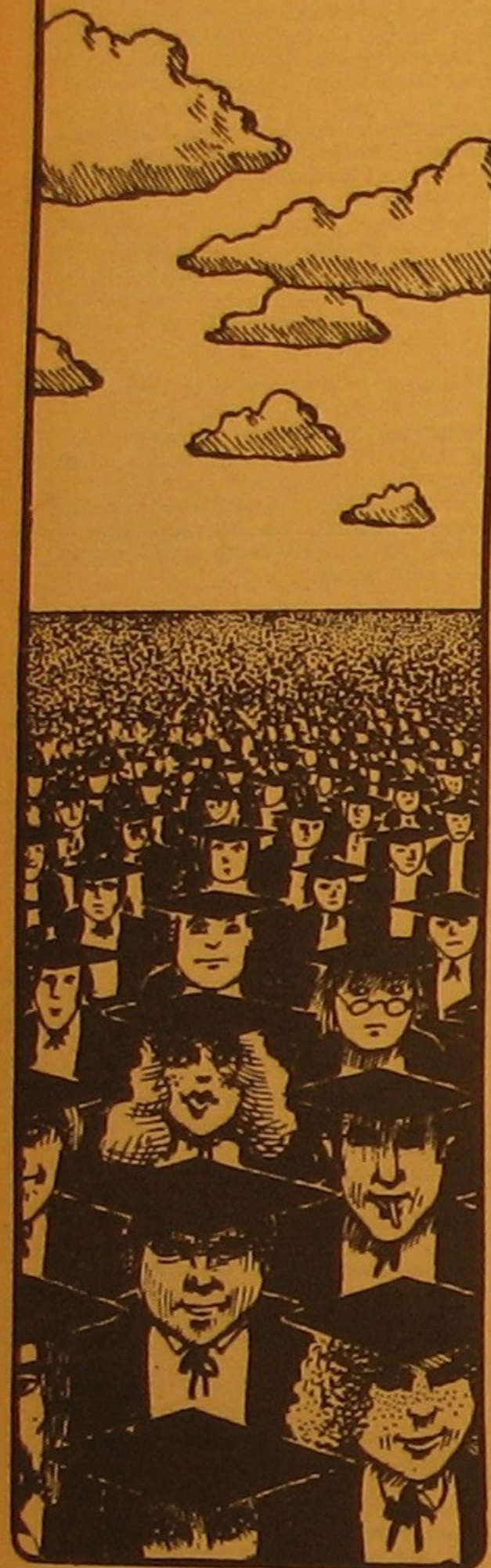
The biggest and most important debate in both International and National Affairs sessions concerned the antiwar movement. In the international session a motion calling for a massive propaganda effort exposing the fraud of the ceasefire and demanding the withdrawal of all US military personnel from Indochina, the release of all political prisoners, the end of Australian complicity in the Indochina war was sponsored by the majority of University and CAEs present.

The visit of the North-Vietnamese Trade Union delegates was undoubtedly the highlight of the conference with all attending giving the Vietnamese a standing ovation for several minutes. The AUS delegates representing 180,000 students stood up as a mark of solidarity with the people for whose self determination they have taken to the streets on so many occasions in the past.

The value of students' mass action was acknowledged by the delegation members. Vu Dinh, a member of Parliament of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam stated that "Australian students helped us in the most effective way".

In two local spheres race relations and education council adopted a progressive approach. In race relation AUS acknowledged the right of black people to determine their own affairs. In accepting the principle of black control of the community, council appointed non-student blacks to lead the work in this field. In education, council acknowledged the right of students to be paid the minimum wage now, not at some future stage in a socialist utopia.

The adoption of this and other demands show that with the right kind of leadership AUS can not only adopt a fighting programme but can also use this programme for students rights and for educational institutions designed to serve the interests of the working people, not a small capitalist minority. The shift to the left by AUS demonstrates clearly the possibility of building a revolutionary alternative leadership in the student movement to the bureaucrats who still try to dominate student governments and mass organisations.



# Television Technicians Strike

BY RENFREY CLARKE

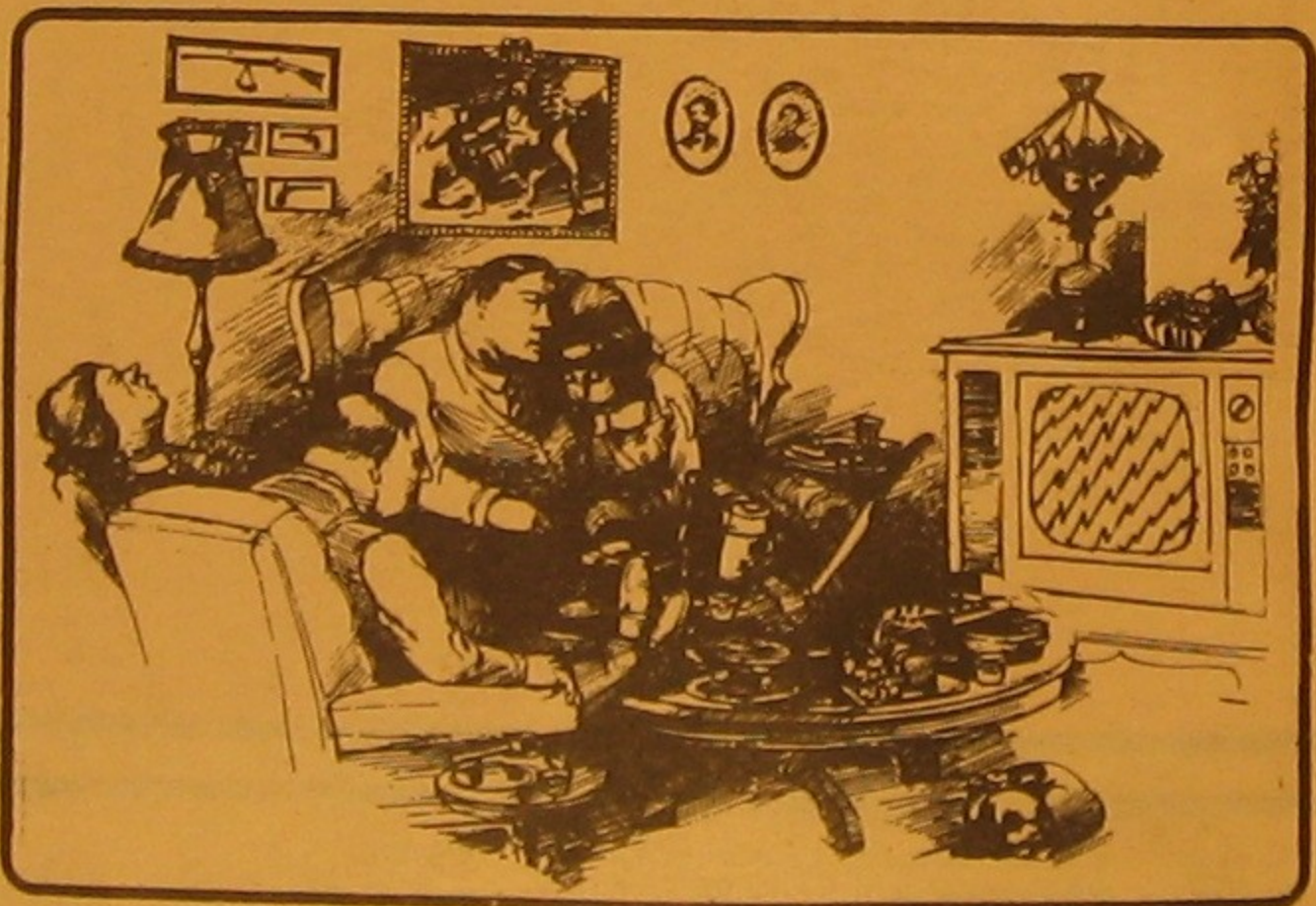
It is becoming increasingly clear that those sections of the entertainment industry involved in television are not at all satisfied with their work situation and the material which both the private and government stations broadcast. This has been shown by the attitude of ABC employees with regard to programme changes, involving This Day Tonight. Not only are those people who are actually "out in front" alienated by the material which is shown supposedly to entertain or educate, but this feeling of having no control over what they produce extends to behind the cameras - to the technicians.

On February 8 a stop work meeting was held by the Australian Theatrical and Amusement Employees' Association members in Melbourne. The demands submitted to the mass meeting were exclusively economic, but the militancy with which the rank and file pushed beyond them to demand real, structural changes suggests widespread bitterness with a demoralising work situation. Its implications are broader: professional people are recognising their actual status as employees and the fact that they must defend their interests against a ruling monied class. In a period of economic decline capitalism is compelled to let drop its minor privileges given to some sections of the working class. To guard its profits it must attack salaries and wages alike.

Despite these developments, the leadership of the ATEA still seems to subscribe to the myth that "professional" employees

do not strike. Faced with the fact that its members indubitably had, it resisted and diverted motions which struck at the real core of the situation. The basic demand for a one-union industry, that the ATEA refuse to recognise any other union operating in its sphere, it attempted to dismiss as "a shop floor matter only". The arbitration system was implicitly recognised by the leadership as an impartial brake on the undue demands of both management and labour, and to be assiduously cultivated for what it might condescend to give. That the union bureaucracy, and not the employees, had consented to submit to a judicial decision in the absence of agreement, was presented as being to the union's credit. ATEA members were also supposed to feel privileged in that their case had somehow been given precedence over 15 others. An immediate return to work would appear as a profession of good faith, which hopefully would keep the judge on side. To suggest that the arbitration system is an intolerable attempt to defuse the class struggle, and ought on principle to be attacked as an institution, would no doubt also have been dismissed as inadmissible.

But as it happened little alternative existed to returning to work, negotiations having achieved nothing, or to waiting for the award to be handed down. Minimum transmission was being kept up, and the strike effectively sabotaged, by members of the Professional Radio Engineers' Institute, which had accepted the stations' initial offer of a 10% increase. Economic bargaining was obviously



ly futile until the whole balance of power in the industry had been altered; the membership set about this with a series of overwhelmingly popular motions. The return to work was made conditional on no reprisals being made against strikers. A telling blow for union solidarity was the insistence that employees of country stations be covered by the same award. The collaborationist role of the PREI, which has a 15-year record of selling out its members, was detailed; the revelation that the Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations has been trying to set it up as the official industry union prompted cries of "scabs" and "rats". The meeting overwhelmingly decided to use the dispute for a final showdown with the PREI, and to fight for a single-union closed shop by March 31.

It was left to the usual defenders of the faith to plead for the "democratic rights of members of other unions", the rights of ATEA members during 15 years of obstruction and sell-out going unremembered. The membership had no sympathy for the fantasies of this group, in whose minds the context of trade unions is that of a debating society, of a highly mannered and ultimately inconsequential contest between parties whose courtesy and probity are mutually irreproachable. It is profoundly encouraging that the rank and file of a "professional" union, engaging in its first major industrial action of this type, should recognise decisively that its real context is the deadly serious one of class struggle against an inherently vicious system of exploitation, a struggle necessitating vigilance and a high degree of solidarity.

# Communist Party Moves Right

BY GORDON ADLER

Where is the Communist Party of Australia heading? Is it moving away from its traditional adherence to Stalinism, in the direction of revolutionary Marxism? Does it base its programme and strategy on Marxism as the only sound foundation for revolutionary socialism in the current period of world history? Does it see the role of the conscious vanguard of the workers, the subversive element, the party, as of decisive importance for the victory of proletarian socialism? Has the CPA a Bolshevik-Leninist party? Has it broken with the world organisations dominated by the Stalinist rulers of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the bureaucracy and the Soviet Union, the bureaucracy and the Soviet Union? Has it dissociated itself from the betrayal of the international socialist revolution through the policy of peaceful coexistence with world imperialism, in particular the glaring example of the detente between Nixon and the Moscow and Peking bureaucrats that so greatly aided the counter-revolution in Indochina? John Sendy, national president of the CPA, answers some of these questions in reports published in the CPA newspaper "Tribune" of January 16-22 1973.

Sendy attended the twentieth congress of the Communist Party of France (PCF), December 13-17 1972 as a delegate from the CPA, and addressed a public meeting in the Sarcelles district on December 15. He also represented the CPA at the celebrations in Moscow of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the USSR. His attendance at the Moscow celebrations is of particular significance in view of the efforts of the CPA's chief rival within the Stalinist ambit, the Socialist Party of Australia (SPA), to obtain the imprimatur of the CPSU as the sole representative of communism in Australia. At its first national congress last year the SPA attached great importance to an expected message of greeting and official recognition from the CPSU, a message that would demonstrate conclusively that the Russians regarded the CPA as a renegade tendency, an organisation beyond redemption in their eyes. But the message never arrived, to the great disappointment of the ultrastalinists of the SPA. The CPSU had still not abandoned the hope of bringing the CPA back into line, despite all the events of the last four years, and the sharpness of the attacks of the CPA on certain aspects of CPSU policy, and certain acts of the Soviet government.

The CPA, for all its losses in recent years, is still considered by the CPSU to be more important in the furtherance of its aims than the rump organisation of the SPA. The fact that both organisations were invited to attend the fiftieth anniversary celebrations was no accident, and indicates a willingness on the part of the CPSU to negotiate the return of the CPA to the fold. Such a magnanimous gesture by the CPSU, of course, is not without strings. The CPSU is willing to recognise the bona fides of the CPA if it will renounce some of the "wild men" like Grant Evans and others whose writings in "Tribune" reflect "Trotskyist" tendencies, in Stalinist parlance.

How far has the CPA gone to meet the Russians in this miserable compromise with Stalinism? A study of John Sendy's reports reveals a marked shift to the

right in the position of the CPA in recent months.

The Communist Party of France is notorious as the most Stalinised communist party in any of the capitalist countries of Europe. It relies heavily on financial support from the CPSU, and it has a long record of class collaboration with sections of the French bourgeoisie. It played a counter-revolutionary role in the great mass working class struggles of 1968 and attacked the Paris student demonstrations as the work of ultraleftists. It draws a considerable proportion of its electoral support from the middle classes, and has shown itself afraid of fighting for an independent proletarian socialist programme for fear of alienating this middle class support. After the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 it criticised the CPSU, only to

comment, and in the context of the article it can only be assumed that the CPA approves of the role of the PCF in this coalition. There is not a word of criticism of either the record of the PCF in the past or in its strategy for the future, nor is there any discussion of the means by which the electoral victory of the Left Union could contribute to the establishment of working class rule and socialism in France.

Sendy quotes Georges Marchais, general secretary of the PCF, in reply to questions about the programme. Would the implementation of the programme constitute a socialist society? "Of course not!" Marchais replied. The programme "corresponded to the needs of the working class, the middle class and the great bulk of the French people, but would not constitute socialism."



recant within a few months, under pressure from the CPSU. Its record, since the days of the popular front government in 1936, apart from the period of the second world war when the harshness of the conditions of the occupation compelled it to participate in the resistance, is one of capitulation to the bourgeoisie in times of crisis. One hundred and eighty years after the first great bourgeois democratic revolution in France, the PCF is raising the demands of the democratic revolution as the limits of working class struggle in the period ahead.

How does the CPA view the politics of the PCF? John Sendy was extremely enthusiastic about the congress. From the tone of the article it is clear that he and the national leadership of the CPA have high hopes for the PCF and the Union of the Left which is expected to win the French general elections next month. The essential features of the programme of the Left Union are listed without

"We have socialism as an objective, but it cannot be decreed from on high. The working class and other forces must be won over to the idea of a socialist society."

Apparently, the PCF will edge towards the socialist objective if driven by overwhelming pressure from the rank and file workers, but it will not lead the way into battle. That would be "decreasing socialism from on high." True workers' control, it seems, means that the party must not fight for socialism until the most backward sections of the working class ask it to do so. In "Tribune" of January 30 a correspondent, S. Cooper, draws attention to the list of 13 "multinational" corporations closely tied with U.S. multinationals, and applauds the statement in the programme that further nationalisations will be carried out only if the majority of the workers in the enterprise request the government to do so.

"All this is a sign of the times," writes

the correspondent, "and another incentive for the more hidebound socialists to rouse from their slumbers and realise that 'workers' control' is being taken literally by millions of workers, as a result of their own experiences."

The implications of this section of the programme for the strengthening of French capital in relation to foreign, and particularly U.S. capital are clear enough, but the publication of this letter in "Tribune" without editorial comment suggests that the CPA also subscribes to this strange concept of "workers' democracy."

In his report on the fiftieth anniversary celebrations John Sendy draws attention to the festive atmosphere throughout the Soviet Union during December, and refers to the presence of prominent foreign guests such as Fidel Castro, Dolores Iberurri, Georges Marchais, Enrico Berlinguer and leaders from "all socialist countries except China and Albania."

The Soviet leaders must have been well pleased with this demonstration of the healing of rifts within the Stalinist world system. In this presence of the CPA was of particular importance to the Russians in closing the ranks against the Chinese and Albanian renegades. The CPA can now proudly claim that it was up there on the platform with the most respectable people. Its career as a small but independent party striking out into the wilderness to forge a new path of its own is now over. Its leaders have found the loneliness too great, and have preferred the comfort of the warm fireside of the Stalinist hearth. It goes without saying, of course, that no Trotskyist organisation would or could be represented at such a gathering, and the presence of the CPA illustrates the vast gulf between it and the revolutionary marxist forces throughout the world.

Sendy quotes from the main speech at the meeting, by Leonid Brezhnev, who "traced the history of the formation of the USSR in 1922 and dealt with the economic and cultural progress made in the various republics."

Not a word about the real history of the first fifty years of the first workers' state. Not a word about the purges, the Moscow trials, the monstrous edifice of lies and slander against Trotsky and the opponents of Stalin. Not a word about the labour camps, the crimes of Stalin, the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of loyal Soviet citizens, not a word about the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact, the defeats in the early stages of the war and the responsibility for these defeats. Not a word about the sabotage of the revolutions in Spain, Germany, China, Greece, only a hypocritical diatribe against US imperialism and the usual shibboleths about the Chinese. Of course it is necessary at the fiftieth anniversary to recognise the great achievements of the October revolution and the efforts of the workers of the Soviet Union to create a socialist society, but to confuse this with the devious efforts of the heads of the Soviet government to come to terms with US imperialism in the interests of the stability of the bureaucracy is to show a poor understanding of the real significance of the revolution. The fact that the national president of the CPA can report on the 50th anniversary celebrations and Brezhnev's speech without comment or criticism, reveals the very sorry state of degeneracy to which the CPA has descended, and shows that there can be little hope of the CPA ever being capable of breaking with Stalinism and becoming a revolutionary Marxist party.

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# THE WORLD REVOLUTION

## Workers Alternative In Argentine Elections

(The following are major excerpts from an article describing the position of the Argentine PST (Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores - Socialist Workers Party) on the elections scheduled for March. The PST, which will be on the ballot, initiated a broad Workers Front (Frente Obrero) involving rebel trade-union leaders and activists from around the country. The party is offering 75 per cent of its possible candidacies to the Workers Front.

The article is reprinted from the December 20 issue of the PST's weekly newspaper, "Avanzada Socialista". The translation is by "Intercontinental Press".)

In June 1969 in the city of Cordoba, we began to say "Enough!" to hunger, exploitation at the hands of imperialism and the national bourgeoisie, persecution, torture, and also to the sellout directives of the trade-union bureaucrats, who always embraced whatever government happened to be in power. Hundreds of strikes and mobilisations followed the Cordobazo (the semi-insurrectional uprising that occurred in Cordoba), engulfing entire cities in raising the demand for bread, dignity, and justice for the workers.

We are far from having obtained these things. But the oligarchic and imperialist dictatorship, which had planned to rule for twenty years, had to renounce its plans, change its list of priorities, and call elections.

With the elections the regime is attempting to divert us from our struggles by getting us to place our trust in electoral promises and to support the various fronts put together by the old politicians of the bosses. In order to accomplish this, it was obliged to allow Peron to return and to permit the participation, within certain limits, of the Justicialist (Peronist) movement.

### NO FAITH IN FALSE PROMISES

Our party is also intervening in the elections. By doing so, we are going to defend the small amounts of legality that the masses have won and respond to the challenge of the government and the bosses' parties. We are taking part in the elections in order to proclaim a very simple truth: In the face of the economic disaster in the country, which constitutes a merciless burden on the backs of the working people, there is no possibility of getting out of the situation without removing the oligarchy, imperialism, and the big national bourgeoisie from political and economic power.

All the parties of the bosses are promising everything under the sun in exchange for our votes. Yet, underneath all their pompous phraseology, none of them are guaranteeing real solutions, none are calling for a showdown and a break with the oligarchy and imperialism, and none foresee a reorganisation of the country in the interests of the workers.

We are going to unmask all these parties with the truth that only struggle and mobilisation can guarantee bread, dignity and justice for the workers - never the

promises made by bourgeois military men and politicians.

### IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN, LET'S BUILD A WORKERS' AND SOCIALIST FRONT

But we are also taking part in the elections in order to build a most necessary instrument: the workers' and socialist front.

For many years, the workers' movement has been the captive of a trade-union and political leadership that has brought it defeat after defeat.

For years, thousands of working class activists and leaders have been rebelling against this kind of leadership and searching for an independent path to follow. Generally, they have been kept down by the weight of the government, the bosses, and the bureaucracy, or else they remain in a state of cautious expectation, knowing that if they take chances, they will be crushed. In any case, this independent, antibureaucratic vanguard is desperately looking for a way to unite in order to create a new, alternative leadership for the workers' movement.

The election campaign and political struggle are giving us the historical opportunity to do this. The PST's call for the formation of a workers' front has coincided with the hopes of this vanguard, of hundreds of union committees, delegates, and activists - many of them fired from their jobs - and heroic union leaderships like that of SITRAC-SITRAM (Sindicato de Trabajadores Concord-Sindicato de Trabajadores Materfer - Concord Workers Union-Materfer Workers Union), which led the Cordobazo.

Thus, we have been able to launch a workers' front in which the class-struggle union vanguard, community representatives active in the mass mobilisations, and activists of various organisations have come together. We are united around one, principled point, which differentiates us from all the other forces: Our candidates are neither generals, nor bosses, nor trade-union bureaucrats, but workers elected by the Workers' Front. While the trade-union bureaucrats are calling for support to Campora, and while every front put together by the bosses is looking for a general or digni-

ary with links to the oligarchy or with "progressive" credentials, the Workers' Front has sought out the best fighters of the workers' movement and working-class communities, and the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores has turned over 75 percent of its spots on the ballot to these candidates.

The Workers' Front is the only movement that is offering a solution to the great problems facing the people. On the one hand, through its programme it is seeking to reorganise the country to meet the needs of the workers. On the other hand, by organising the workers on a trade-union and political basis, it is laying the groundwork for the future workers' and people's government that will be capable of carrying out these solutions to the problems of hunger, high prices, unemployment, housing shortage, lack of medical care, and imperialist and capitalist exploitation in general.

### THIS CAMPAIGN WILL GIVE US A CHANCE TO BUILD A STRONG WORKERS' AND REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

The elections have led to a small subsidence in the struggles of the working people. While the bourgeois parties are seeking frantically, by making promises on all sides, to prolong this subsidence, we are certain that the struggles will begin anew in the near future.

But the indisputable precondition for enabling the coming Cordobazo to end in a triumph of the workers and the people is that when they break out they find a workers' vanguard, organised into a great revolutionary socialist party, that is able to set political goals for the struggles. Without it, the battles will have only a partial character, they will be frustrated, or they will be co-opted by the bosses. The PST, the only workers' party that is challenging the bourgeoisie in the opening offered by the elections, is planting the seeds of this great revolutionary party that will lead the coming, inevitable struggles to the taking of power by the working class.

Enough of military and capitalist governments! For a workers' and people's government!

Free the political prisoners and those imprisoned for related social reasons; apply democratic freedoms! Down with the repressive legislation!

For an immediate 40 percent wage increase, a minimum salary of 1,200 pesos, and a periodic adjustment of wages to keep up with the cost of living. For an end to plant shutdowns and for the nationalisation under workers' control of any factory that stops production or shuts down.

Expropriate summer or luxury homes and distribute them among those who have no roof overhead. For loans to build housing amortised at a rate of 10 percent of family income.

Free medical care and medicine through nationalisation of medicine, clinics, and laboratories.

Equality for women in work, wages, opportunities, and rights. Free, twenty-four hour child care centres. Allowances to unmarried or separated mothers equivalent to half of their wages for each child.

For control over retirement funds by the retired. Authorise the nationalisation, under workers' control, of those establishments that do not pay into the retirement funds.

For a university government consisting of a majority of students and made up of students, teachers, and nonteaching workers.

Nationalise the imperialist and national monopolies; nationalise foreign trade under workers' control; repudiate the foreign debt.

For the immediate recognition of Cuba, withdrawal from the OAS (Organisation of American States) and all international bodies that tie us to imperialism, and repudiation of all colonising agreements.

For diplomatic and material support to peoples struggling against imperialism - above all to the heroic Vietnamese people - and any step toward national independence taken by the people of any Latin American country.

For an economic plan worked out in a Rank-and-File Convention of the CGT (Confederacion General del Trabajo - General Confederation of Labor) in order to develop the national economy in the interests of the workers and the country.

Nationalise and distribute the big rural landholdings, thereby implementing a new rural settlement programme.

### FILL THE COUNTRY WITH COMMITTEES OF WORKERS, YOUTH, AND SOCIALISTS FOR THE CANDIDATES OF THE WORKERS' AND SOCIALIST FRONT

Since March, the PST has opened one local a week in the main cities in the country. These fifty centres represent the base of support and the leverage with which the workers' and socialist front will be able to begin its election campaign. In these centres, and in the limited time allowed by the restrictions and the deadlines set by the statute on political parties, we have drawn up the lists of workers' candidates. Unfortunately, the restrictions and obstacles prevented us from reaching thousands of working-class, youth, and socialist fighters, who have remained off these lists and who would deserve to have been placed on them in the interests of making them more representative. But all these compañeros must now link up with the political struggle that is beginning, thereby assuming a role of enormous responsibility. Hundreds of support committees for the workers' and socialist candidates must be created in every factory, neighborhood, union, and locality. These committees will have all the autonomy they need to democratically debate positions and to decide on the form, methods, and content of the electoral campaign. These committees will be the nerves and life-blood of the workers' front. We especially call on the working-class and student youth to form youth support committees.

The youth, together with the working women, constitute the most exploited sector of the people; that is why they sparked the Cordobazo, and that is why we believe they will be able to begin, without the aid of tutors, to organise themselves into the workers' and socialist front by forming their own committees.

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Nationalise and distribute the big rural landholdings, thereby implementing a new rural settlement programme.

# Review: SOLIDARITY FOREVER

By Bertha Walker. . . Publisher: The National Press, Melbourne, 1972

To an earlier generation of Australian radicals no song was more loved or more moving than "Solidarity Forever". Appropriately, Bertha Walker has chosen this title for the book she has written about the life and times of her remarkable father, Percy Laidler. Appropriately, because it was a song her father loved, and also because he was a man who devoted his life to socialist and radical causes, and who genuinely believed, in the words of "Solidarity Forever" that . . . "we can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old".

Laidler was born at Corindhal, a small township on the western fringe of the Ballarat Goldfields, in 1884. It was a time when Ballarat was making a rich contribution to the strength of the Labor movement. James Scullin was born only a little distance away at Trewalla.

In 1902, while living in Melbourne, Laidler became involved with the visit and the socialist campaigns of Tom Mann, probably the most successful and remarkable of the early socialist agitators to visit Australia. Mann came to Australia with a name already famous in British socialist circles from his involvement with the great London Dock Strike of 1889. Mann, and the other dockers' leaders had never forgotten the "miracle" of a £30,000 donation from Australian workers which had saved the dockers from starvation and helped them win their great strike in 1889. Mann's visit to Australia had an immense impact on the rising labour movement. A brilliant orator and organiser, Mann spearheaded a dozen great campaigns and

strikes which developed the political consciousness of the Australian working class. In an age of deepening social and economic strife Percy Laidler was deeply influenced by Mann. Like Mann he embarked on a lifetime of political struggle.

For the next half-century, Laidler would be in the forefront of every major campaign for social advancement in Victoria. No cause seems to have escaped his attention - anti-sweating, unemployment, educational reform, free speech, anti-conscription, and anti-imperialism campaigns all earned his generous support.

The decade before WWI was one of astonishing socialist ferment in Melbourne. Despite its remoteness Australia was visited by a host of radical thinkers and politicians, ranging from Mann and Henry George, to the Wobley, exiled Russian revolutionaries and famous figures like the noted Spanish radical-educationalist, Francisco Ferrer, later judicially murdered in Barcelona in 1909 for opposition to the Spanish autocracy.

The infant Victorian Socialist Party was a gathering place for many who would play a fundamental role in the development of the labour movement. Laidler worked and struggled alongside men like John Curtin and John Cain.

In "Solidarity Forever" Bertha Walker uses simple direct prose to give a direct and at times moving account of the struggles of the times, and the very real hazards and hardships which the pioneers of the labour movement faced in Victoria. She captures also the rich diversity of the early socialist movement, and the large and often vigorously non-conforming characters who made up its ranks.

When she recounts Laidler's work in Broken Hill in 1909, she gives us a sharp and dramatic account of the events which culminated in one of the most fundamental strike-confrontations ever to occur in Australia. Broken Hill, long a centre for radicalism, and one of the most politically conscious cities in Australia, was gripped in 1909 by a strike of such scope and bitterness as to be revolutionary in its implications. The struggles of 1909, involved a lock-out by the mine management who hoped to reduce the low level of wages even further. The miners reacted with picketing and sympathy strikes among other unions. Significantly, one great workers' procession was headed by a banner reading: "Behold, The Workers Think". Of another "The Argus" said: ". . . there were massed bands, and at the rear of the march a regiment of women with three red flags". The Broken Hill dispute saw Mann and other socialist leaders goaded, but generated an immense wave of radical concern in Australia. One of the goaded leaders, Harry Holland, later became Opposition Leader in New Zealand's parliament.

In these and other events of the time Laidler was an energetic participant. In 1910 he had married a German woman, Chris Gross, daughter of an emigrant German socialist, fleeing the repression of the Bismarck era. Later in life, Percy Laidler was to manage Melbourne's most famous radical bookshop, that of Will Andrade.

In the decade before WWI, Laidler became involved with the new ideas and theories of the Syndicalists, and later still with the work of the Industrial Workers of the World. Yet for Laidler, as for most of the labour movement,

the great political crucible was the war and the anti-conscription struggles. For Laidler as for many others, the defeat of conscription and resistance to the war and its effects became the central activity of their lives. Flowing from the war, Laidler, like many others, was at first puzzled then fascinated by the events of the Russian Revolution. He was one of the first people to see the fundamental political importance of this vast event.

While a tireless worker for social change at home, Laidler was unusual in the breadth of his international view, at a time when many in the labour movement were parochial if not downright racist in their world view. He raised support for British seamen during the international seamen's strike in 1925, he worked to raise political consciousness among Melbourne's Italian, Spanish and Aborigine communities. He aided victims of fascism and raised the banner of the Spanish Republic, working to send aid to Republican Spain.

"Solidarity Forever" is a remarkable account of an involvement in radical political activities extending over a lifetime, and touching on some of the most fundamental events in Australian history. Future labour historians will owe a debt to Bertha Walker, for she has given to them a valuable source-book, which will serve as a starting point for future research in a host of areas, some hitherto neglected or forgotten.

She has also given a remarkable picture of the roots and origins of Australian labour radicalism.

. . . BRIAN MCKINLAY

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## DISUNITY ON THE LEFT

Dear Comrades,

I am disappointed that the issue of Jan 18th has no "Letters to the Editor" in it. I originally suggested this alteration in your format. I hope you can afford space for this letter.

Although I am renewing my subscription and admire your newspaper, I do think it proper to point out to you, that the vicious attacks on the C.P.A. and S.P.A., are somewhat regressive, if not in some cases unwarranted.

Lets face it - the combined membership of the Radical Left wing parties or groups in Australia would amount to less than 10,000. Compare this with the national membership of about 20,000, of the National Civic Council. I would think an objective observer might see the Left Movement in Australia as caving in on itself. We have the chance, with a little more co-operation, to heighten the consciousness of Australians. During the previous 23 years, a Conservative Government has held sway, a more progressive government is now in power - why not grasp the opportunity?

There seems no excuse for what Caroline Lund writes in "Direct Action" (Jan 18th) - "By failing to come to the defense of the Vietnamese in more than a routine fashion the Kremlin and Peking rulers are telling Nixon - as they have many times in the past - that as far as they are concerned he is free to resume the bombing with impunity in the future."

There may be very good reason, empirical evidence to presume this - but to say this without any substantial qualifications, is cutting things a bit fine.

More and more, I'm sad an intellectual Left Wing elite. Take for example the "name dropping" that is pursued. Opinions of, and the "correctness" of certain attitudes and policies have to be made clear, but why slur

people, and certain attitudes? Dwelling on personalities only generates antagonism.

Anyway, keep up the struggle.  
Gavan McCarthy

## DA REPLIES

We shan't debate Gavan McCarthy over our analyses of the Vietnam war, etc. Our viewpoint has been presented often enough for our readers to decide whether we have made "inexcusable" charges.

Many people newly radicalising take a subjective attitude to the divisions on the left and wish it could present a united face to the bourgeoisie. However, the divisions on the left in Australia have deep historical causes. Fundamental questions of principle and concepts of social change are at stake. Any unity that was achieved on the basis of slurring over these differences would be unprincipled and therefore highly unstable.

However, as revolutionary socialists we believe in unity in struggle. Thus we seek out opportunities for common action against capitalism on a principled basis whenever possible. For example, in the antiwar movement we worked with diverse left forces (Moscow-line Stalinists, Peking-line Stalinists, pacifists, ALP people, etc) on the limited programme of "Out Now!" - we did not ask them to accept the rest of our programme and we certainly did not endorse theirs. All forces retained their freedom to criticise the others.

The rule established by Lenin and Trotsky in the Russian revolution was - march separately but strike together. In their struggle the Bolsheviks carried out the most vigorous polemics against other trends in the Russian labour movement, yet they carried out joint action whenever the principled basis was present. This struggle, for political clarity, was essential to their success in 1917.

The struggle for political clarity is essential to socialism in Australia, too. We put forward our positions and defend them - Others can do the same. We have every confidence that our ideas will prove their correctness in action.

## SIGN NOW

Dear Sir,  
As one in general sympathetic to DA's analyses of the Vietnam war, permit me two critical observations.

First, the slogan "sign now". Of course any sensible person favours an unconditional withdrawal of all American forces from Indochina (including Thailand, Guam, and the Gulf of Tonkin), of course most of us deplore the fact of the Russian and the Chinese sellouts of the Vietnamese, specifically. But facts are facts. We can't inhabit political Cloudcuckooland. In particular, you can't be to the left of the people doing the fighting. There is ample evidence that the north Vietnamese and the NLF desire a ceasefire - now. It is ludicrous presumption and arrogance for us to tell them that they are suffering from false consciousness.

However, respect and support for the Vietnamese desire for a ceasefire is one thing. Total scepticism concerning the continuing "peace" propaganda on the part of Nixon, Kissinger and other agents of American capital, is another. The two are consistently distinct.

This brings me to my second remark. It's not surprising when the bourgeois press "analyses" American practice in Vietnam in terms of the ego-tripping, power-mania, petulance, or whatever, of Nixon. It is surprising when this occurs in the Marxist press, too (see e.g., the editorial, and both articles on P. 3 of the Jan. 18 DA).

Such concentration on one isolated "concrete" individual is in reality a reification of an abstraction: the omnipotent Ruler. Consequently, such focusing on appearances can only mystify. Concretely in the present case, this occurs through a failure to distinguish, and analyse the relations between, an agent and the ruling class whose interests such agents serve.

To fail to make and to analyse this distinction is to abandon a Marxist standpoint. I would welcome the space in the near future to provide just such an analysis.

Yours fraternally,  
Pat Flanagan.

## DA REPLIES

Pat Flanagan misunderstands what Direct Action has said about the treaty. The right of the North Vietnamese and

the NLF to make a compromise with imperialism is incontestable, and we have not criticised them for signing the treaty. It is impossible to tell from a distance whether the assessment of the Vietnamese leadership of the capacity of the masses to continue the struggle is correct or not. However, they have weakened their struggle by not telling the whole world the exact content of the treaty; and by presenting it as a victory they have contributed to the confusion of the international antiwar movement.

The Vietnamese "desire" a ceasefire because their Soviet and Chinese allies desire one. Their dependence on aid from the workers states leaves them no alternative but to bow to the pressure of the bureaucracies who want an end to the war which is an embarrassment to their much-sought detente with US imperialism.

We have said that the factors which impel the Vietnamese to compromise do not apply for antiwar activists here and our position must be to demand a total, immediate and unconditional American withdrawal from S.E. Asia. It would be unprincipled for us to support the treaty which the Vietnamese have been forced to sign. We do not recognise Nixon's right to negotiate with the Vietnamese over anything.

The supreme historical example in this regard remains the Bolsheviks who in 1918, as a result of their extreme weakness, were obliged to sign a rapacious treaty with German imperialism at Brest-Litovsk. The Bolsheviks signed but used the negotiations to carry out revolutionary propaganda. All the negotiations were carried out in full view of the world labour movement and the rapaciousness of the German aims clearly explained.

The Bolsheviks frankly stated the treaty was a partial defeat for the revolution but would enable them to carry on the struggle. When the right wing Social Democrats in Germany supported the treaty (pointing to the fact that the Bolsheviks had signed it) Lenin called them "swine". Bolshevik propaganda called on the German workers to take power and nullify the treaty.

Finally, as regards Nixon, we sometimes use his name to signify the dominant, "hard-line" wing of the American capitalists. Similarly, one says "Moscow" to signify the Soviet bureaucracy or "Hanoi" to denote the North Vietnamese leadership. Such a shorthand is, in our opinion, quite clear. Direct Action has always clearly explained that our enemy is the world capitalist system as a whole, not this or that capitalist politician.



"Long live the workers' candidates! The Workers Front of Cordoba is present!" reads the banner held by Cordoba workers at the founding conference of the Frente Obrero.

## Arabs and Jews Indicted in Israeli "Spy" Trial

Four Israeli Arabs and two Jews were indicted January 25 in the "espionage and sabotage network" case.

Daoud Turki, Ehud Adiv, Subhi Naarani, Dan Vered, Anis Darawi, and Simon

## Canadian Young Socialists Meet

The Canadian revolutionary socialist youth organisation, the Young Socialists-Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes, held its national convention December 28-31 in Toronto. Nearly 250 young people attended. Following a seven-month pre-convention discussion period the convention dealt with the international situation, including the developments in the Vietnam war; a critique of the guerrilla warfare strategy; the stage of the radicalisation of Canadian youth; strategy for the women's liberation movement; and analysis of the Quebec nationalist struggle and last spring's upsurge of the Quebec workers movement.

According to a report in the February issue of the "Young Socialist", the



# AUSTRALIAN LABOUR HISTORY PART 4

# LABOR IN THE 1920's BY PETER CONRICK



DELEGATES AT AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY CONFERENCE, BRISBANE, OCTOBER 1921

Front row: J. H. Catts (M.H.R., N.S.W.), R. S. Ross (W.A.), J. Kean (Vic.), Mrs. K. Dwyer (N.S.W.), Arch. Stewart (general secretary, Vic.), W. H. Demaine (Qld.), W. J. Riordan (M.L.C., Qld.), E. C. Theodore (M.L.A., Qld.), W. McCormack (M.L.A., Qld.), G. E. Yates (S.A.), S. R. Witford (M.P., S.A.), M. J. Murphy (S.A.)  
 Middle row: J. Cunningham (M.L.C., W.A.), W. Carey (N.S.W.), W. Lambert (M.H.R., N.S.W.), R. Cosgrove (M.H.A., Tas.), A. H. Panton (M.L.C., W.A.), L. McDonald (M.L.C., Qld.), H. Kneebone (S.A.), M. M. Blackburn (Vic.), F. Withers (W.A.), C. S. McHugh (S.A.), J. Speedy (minute secretary, Qld.), F. Williamson (official reporter, Qld.)  
 Back row: E. C. O'Dea (N.S.W.), D. L. McNamara (M.L.C., Vic.), J. H. Scullin (Vic.), J. L. Price (M.P., S.A.), D. Weir (M.L.A., Qld.), J. McDonald (M.L.C., Tas.), J. Hannan (Vic.), G. Callanan (W.A.), L. Halvorsen (W.A.), J. M. Power (M.L.C., N.S.W.)

This is the fourth part of our series on the history and development of the Australian Labor Party. Previous articles dealt with the origins of the ALP, Labor's first years in office, and the war years and the anti-conscription fight.

### THE FINAL WAR YEARS:

"There exists a deep feeling of war weariness that if taken in hand, can be used to checkmate the jingoism and sophistry of the patriots and ultimately bring about a stop-the-war feeling."

F. J. Riley, secretary of the Peace Alliance, 1917.

The author may well have added that Labor did not sense this change in mass feeling towards the war. A.L.P. parliamentarians continued as the most enthusiastic supporters of the war, despite their opposition to overseas conscription. At the same time, pressure from below had forced the passage of a strongly worded anti-war resolution through the N.S.W. Branch which tended to be under the control of more progressive unionists. The motion was passed at the N.S.W. Conference in June 1917, declaring war was the inevitable outcome of capitalism and that "peace can only be accomplished by the united efforts of the workers of all the countries involved". In spite of opposition from Labor parliamentarians this motion was passed unamended. It was an accurate and revealing reflection of the terror of A.L.P. politics: on the one hand there was a militant and responsive industrial based wing, on the other a flabby and timid parliamentary body. As the war became more and more unpopular the tension between these rival tendencies increased.

Labor emerged from the war in complete political disarray, still licking its wounds after the exodus of the Hughes group who now held parliamentary office in a coalition with anti-Labor forces. Like most deserters from Labor's ranks, Hughes moved effortlessly along a right-wing, supra-nationalist road. The explanation for this rapid shift was not a sudden "ratting" by Hughes, but the logical outcome of the pro-imperial using of parliamentary Labor.

The 1917 split had effectively liquidated Labor's electoral fortunes and ushered in almost a decade of Nationalist government, first under Hughes, then under the mediocre leadership of Bruce. The social and economic upheaval of the war had resulted in new divisions and realignments in Australian politics and the creation of new parties, all of which tended, at one stage or another, to displace the position of the A.L.P. as the focus of working class politics.

The failure of the A.L.P. to command national politics in the 1920s was partly due to the destructive influence of the split; but also to the division in the Labor movement itself between those sectors who actively supported the October 1917 Revolution and those who remained committed to parliamentary reformism. The impact of the Russian Revolution and its morale boosting effect on rank and file militants necessitated an even firmer re-affirmation of the principles of gradualism by the official Labor bureaucracy.

### NEW DIRECTIONS IN ECONOMY:

The upheaval in political life was an approximation of the new directions of the Australian economy in the closing stages of the war and the years immediately following. Except for a brief recession in 1922 the manufacturing industry enjoyed a period of expansion and diversification under solid tariff protection, high export prices, and continued government spending. An important change in manufacturing was the growth of heavy industry and a move away from the old comprador industries of the colonies. In real terms this meant a lessening of direct company ties with British imperialism. The history of manufacturing in the 1920s was that of government aid to industry, helping to make inroads into imports and ultimately capture the home market from Great Britain. Despite tariff preference, British imperialism found its share of the Australian market had dwindled to almost 2/3 of its pre-war position by 1928. The United States benefited from these developments and doubled its share of the market and established a firm hold in the local economy.

The growth of heavy industry was epitomised by the founding of a large scale iron and steel works nourished on government contracts and protection.

The nullification of the old colonial industries and corresponding rise of modern manufacturing produced a general instability in the allocation of labour. Particularly in the years 1919-1922 people found themselves out of jobs and thrown into new work situations. The militancy of the final years of the war did not fade away but was carried on into a whole series of bitter and prolonged strikes and lockouts.

### THE INFLUENCE OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION:

One of the reasons for the upsurge in the closing months of the war was the impact of and widespread sympathy for the first successful proletarian revolution in Russia. News of the February Revolution reached sympathetic ears in large sections of the population. A dearth of factual material had condemned the Bolsheviks as liberals in most peoples' eyes. Little authentic news was available, since most international socialist publications had been banned by regulation under the War Precautions Act. However the Bolshevik victory and the peace on the Eastern Front were widely welcomed by almost all extra-parliamentary sections of the Labor movement. Australian socialists tended to support the majority of the British and French sections of the Second International. News of the minority Zimmerwald Left led by Lenin and Luxemburg was scant and it was left to Russian emigres in Australia, many of them Bolshevik sympathisers, to explain the details of the factional situation in the European Left.

From the beginning of 1918 the most militant of the Australian industrial organisations - the Barrier A.M.A. and the Brisbane Industrial Council - were calling for a Commonwealth labour and trade union conference to put pressure on the government to declare itself for immediate peace. By and large the official labour bureaucracy ignored this call and support-

ed Hughes' demand for unconditional surrender.

### LABOR'S REACTION TO THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION:

The general upturn in the revolutionary movement internationally gradually spread through to many in the A.L.P. E. J. Holloway, secretary of the Melbourne Trades' Hall Council, wrote a preface to "a wonderful speech" by Trotsky, concurring with his analysis of the imperialist crisis. Holloway's position typified that of many inside the A.L.P. who responded to the October Revolution in a romantic, sometimes semi-mystical fashion. Basically, the concept of a Leninist party (such as it was understood) was seen as irrelevant because Labor's dominance in Australia "had firmly laid the basis of a new nation". Labor ideology was to seek an Australian exception to the unfolding of a class society. While acknowledging the existence of class in Australia, the ideologies of parliamentary labour hoped to unite all classes in a utopian state that was above class itself.

More than any other event, the Russian Revolution and the mass support which it evoked, sponsored a "genuine revolt of the unionist background of the Party against the time-serving and inaction of the politicians".

### THE FORMATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA:

Few radical Australian historians have grasped the peculiar circumstances leading to the formation of an Australian Communist Party, and the repercussions that these circumstances had on the orientation of the C.P.A. to the mass working class party. It would be impossible in the space available here to analyse this in detail, but perhaps our understanding of the nature of the relationship between the C.P.A. and the A.L.P. will be clarified by recalling that the C.P.A. was formed largely by militants disillusioned with the Labor Party. In this sense the C.P.A. at its emergence in October 1920 began with a rather eclectic and haphazard attitude to the A.L.P. The indigenous suspicions and fears of early Party leaders such as Miles and Sharkey were compounded by the intervention of the Stalinized Communist International after 1927. Now one way, then the other, the Communist Party scuttled about the fringes of the labour movement searching for a line of clarity, which it never found - the continuity of confusion exists to this day.

The Communist Party of Australia was formed at a meeting in Sydney on October 30 1920 which was attended by 26 people. At its foundation the party encompassed three main groupings, already dealt with in previous articles in this series: former IWV militants led by Jack Garden, members and former members of small socialist parties and the largest socialist party then in existence - the Australian Socialist Party.

Two months after its formation, the Party split over its strategy towards the A.L.P. The IWV group favoured "White Acting" or boring from within, the remnants of the socialist sects opted for an even more sectarian approach, befitting their petty-bourgeois outlook and former isolation

in the labour movement. Rivalries carrying over from the pre-amalgamation period led the ASP also to distrust the Garden group and it shortly refused to pool its resources into the new party. The ASP and the CPA this came to compete with one another for the honour of becoming the Australian Section of the Third International, the world revolutionary party founded by Lenin and Trotsky in 1919. Finally, after delegates from both parties had attended the third congress of the International, the CPA was granted affiliation (August 1922). The bulk of the membership of the ASP then left their former party to its fate and joined the CPA.

While the founding congress of the Third International had adopted a policy of open hostility towards the labour and social democratic parties which had betrayed the working class in the war, it changed that in 1921, after the ebb in the world revolution. It changed to a policy of forming united fronts with labour parties, a tactic devised by Lenin and Trotsky to prevent the newly formed communist party from becoming isolated sects, sealed off by traditional working class allegiance to the mass parties such as the ALP.

Reluctantly and gradually, the CPA took up this policy, but the ebb of militancy in Australia reduced its influence in the Labour councils to almost zero. Notwithstanding this recalcitrance, some members of the Party joined the ALP.

A proposed official united front policy at leadership level between the ALP and CPA was defeated due to the ALP bureaucracy's suspicions and instinct for survival. ALP leaders too, had heard Lenin's dictum that communists should support them "as the rope supports hanging man." Only in 1924 did the CPA win a brief success at the N.S.W. A.L.P. Conference when it was granted provisional affiliation. It was then expelled a few months later.

For the remainder of the 1920s the CPA was forced back into an essentially propagandist role where it lay estranged from the mass of workers.

Labor, on the other hand secured the support of a new layer of militants with its so called "socialisation" objective.

### THE SOCIALIST OBJECTIVE:

The adoption of a policy in favour of the socialisation of Industry, Production, Distribution and Exchange by the Labor Party in 1921 was conceived from two contradictory directions. While acknowledging its vulnerability to the new found working class militancy, Labor leader Scullin also went to great pains to point out that the objective was an attempt "to prevent revolution by force". Years later Arthur Callwell explained that the socialist objective would combat "the spurious claims of the communists to be a working class party...". Indeed, one of the more remarkable aspects of socialist objective was the procession of repudiations it suffered immediately following its adoption. Despite its aura of progressiveness, the objective was never more than talked about. In many ways it became the concentrated expression of Labor's role as a bloc to a genuine social-

# IN BRIEF:

### NOT IMPRESSED

One released US prisoner of war isn't impressed by the ballyhoo surrounding the release of the POWs. Richard Waldhaus has refused to leave Vietnam to go to the official "welcome" in the Philippines. His explanation - "I'm against war and want none of this homecoming hero crap".

### YOUNG PEOPLE NOT INTERESTED IN COUNTRY PARTY DUE TO RADICAL PLOT.

Speaking in Brisbane recently, Country Party Leader Doug Anthony said that introduction of the right to vote for fifteen year olds would have serious consequences. "It means the few, but radical teachers who have been exercising some political influence on our children are going to be given a distinct advantage over children who could be going straight to electoral polls." Of course there are no right wing teachers, "so we as a political party, as reluctant as I am to advise you to do it, will have to find ways and means of interesting our young people, and probably form political branches in high schools and universities."

Anthony must have forgotten that in order to form political branches anywhere a party must have supporters. Perhaps the policies of the Country Party have something to do with the students' lack of interest in it. The racist Bjelke-Petersen regime in Queensland is the only Country Party government in the country at the present time, perhaps students don't like discrimination against black people, the use of police to stop people from handing out leaflets near high schools or acts such as the 1971 declaration of a state of emergency so that the South African racists could play rugby.

### FISHERMEN DROWNED

Twenty-one Japanese fishermen were recently drowned off the coast of Southern Tasmania. Their vessel was fitted with a radio incapable of being tuned to international distress signal wavelengths - it was solely for communication with the owners in Japan. As a result there was a twelve hour delay in getting aid to the boat. There was one survivor.

### AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT AIDS INDONESIAN DICTATORSHIP.

Within the last two weeks the Australian government has given sixteen Sabre jets to the Suharto government in Indonesia. Australian instructors could be in Indonesia for up to a year training pilots to fly the jets. Suharto's history of butchering and locking up political opponents doesn't seem to turn the Labor governments stomach any more than it did McMahon's!

### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

ist movement in this country - this was especially true in the years of Lang's pre-eminence in the 1930s. Nevertheless, those proposals for socialisation, in the words of one ALP delegate were "from 700,000 trade unionists", not just from the delegates at ALP Conference.

While the post-war period saw a rapid growth of the confidence of the workers' movement, this growth soon stagnated and by the mid-20s the Nationalist government felt prepared to struggle to win back those concessions it had made in the past. The rate of growth of the economy had slowed down from a reasonable 3.5% p.a. in 1920 - 21, to 1.5, in 1926. The impetus of a backlog of demands on consumer durables, and new industries under tariff protection had spent themselves out by 1926.

### THE GOVERNMENT OFFENSIVE:

The ruling party throughout the 1920s was a combined Nationalist and Country Party coalition under Bruce. Factional interests and personality clashes meant that Bruce's government was a precarious one, it was never solid within itself. That problem was largely negated by the absolute ineffectiveness of Labor as an opposition to Bruce, in pure parliamentary politics the A.L.P. was an erratic and rather flabby current; a reflection of its confusion in the debate between the supporters and opponents of the October revolution. The Labor bureaucracy just did not know where it stood.

Bruce suffered no such confusion. He was

### CIVIL RIGHTS UNDER ATTACK

On February 9 the Melbourne City Council banned all political meetings in the City Square. Councillor Hanna Pan commented on the ban: "I believe in freedom of speech, but political rallies have no place in the City Square." She also said that business houses in the area had complained about noise from the rallies.

It seems that the council is growing nostalgic for the days before 1969 when it was illegal to hand out leaflets on the streets of Melbourne. A mass campaign forced the repeal of the restrictive law (by-law 418). It seems that a similar campaign will now have to be launched for the right to use the City Square.

### PALESTINIAN DEMONSTRATION.

At 5 p.m. on Friday March 2 a demonstration in solidarity with the dispossessed Palestinian Arabs will be held in Melbourne's City Square. All people who support the right of the Palestinians to determine their own future should attend.

### RIGHT OF ASSEMBLY UNDER ATTACK.

Following an anti-Nazi demonstration in Melbourne's City Square on June 11 last year, seven people have had charges laid against them by the police. The charges include "unlawful assembly" and "riotous behaviour." The charges are clearly politically motivated and constitute part of an attack on the right to assemble for political purposes. The charges will be heard at Sunshine Magistrate's Court on Monday February 26.



"Payroll? Hell, lady, we're delivering the lamb chops."

... STEVE PAINTER

### NOT AUSTRALIAN ENOUGH

When the Aboriginal Rugby League team approached the Australian Rugby League Federation for permission to wear green and gold guernseys during their overseas tour, they were told that the green and gold colours are reserved only for true Australian teams.

### VICTORIAN CENSORSHIP BILL

Victorian Premier Meagher is attempting to push an "anti-pornography" law through parliament. However, even in the Liberal Party the Bill is not popular and Meagher has been forced to take extraordinary measures to whip up support for it. For example: since Meagher ordered the police to clamp down on "pornography", 72 tons of literature have been seized.

Why this sudden concern for the morals of Victorians? Well, Meagher isn't saying, but the state elections are only a few months off and Labor has an excellent chance of winning for the first time since 1952. Perhaps he remembers Premier Bolte's election tactics - show them who's boss, hang someone. Meagher probably couldn't get away with a hanging so he's chosen a "pornography" clampdown.

### VICTORIAN SPECIAL BRANCH

Deputy leader of the Victorian Labor Party Wilkes recently stated that if Labor won the state elections it would abolish the Special Branch of the Police Force. - Wilkes referred to the Special Branch as the "political arm" of the police. He also revealed that the Special Branch has files on one quarter of all of the people in Melbourne.

Wilkes doesn't intend to abolish the political police, he merely intends to hand over the work of the Victorian Special Branch to the Federal body, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO).

### EDUCATION DEPARTMENT RENDERS EXAMS UNNECESSARY

A NSW Education Department spokesman recently commented on the fact that 2,500 qualified students were refused admission to NSW universities: "They would have dropped out or failed examinations at the end of the year. So the authorities have done them a favour by knocking them back now". The Education Department should have told the world earlier about its ability to know in advance which students will drop out or fail exams - it would have saved the universities the bother of having to set exams to determine which students they consider qualified to continue with their courses.

### BUTCHER PREPARES SIMPLE WELCOME.

Indonesia's President Suharto, who ordered the 1965 massacre of thousands of political opponents and who has imprisoned thousands more without trial, is preparing a simple little dinner for Prime Minister Whitlam's visit. One of the courses will be an ice cream cake a yard wide at the base and shaped like Mount Krakatau - just like the Indonesian peasants eat.

### WOULDN'T KNOW HIM FROM ANY OTHER PERSON IN THE STREET.

NSW Premier Askin, speaking to the press on February 16 described as scurrilous an accusation by state Labor leader Einfield that there were personal links between him and Ampol chairman W.M. Leonard. Askin went on to say that his only contact with Leonard had been at public and social functions attended by other leading businessmen. The Sydney "Sun" commented in its editorial that day: "Of course the Premier should know the boss of Ampol. And the chairman of another 100 big companies too... That surely is a premier's job. Getting about. Knowing the rich and the poor." I'm sure the premier wouldn't distinguish between rich and poor company directors.

### LEFTIST . . . ?

Gerry Stewart in the February 7 "Australian" writes about reaction in Germany to the fortieth anniversary of Hitler's accession to power. Old newspapers are being reprinted, newspapers are discussing Hitler's rise and panel discussions are being conducted. Stewart goes on to describe how "some newspaper commentators used the occasion to urge West German youth to learn from the past and not fall for the ideas of leftist radicals who advocate nationalising banks, insurance companies and major industries" . . . Leftist radicals? . . . Seems like the past has confused some newspaper commentators.

### MAKES IT WORTHWHILE

Each US prisoner of war returning from Vietnam will receive a gold plated lifetime pass good for admittance to any professional baseball game.

the Arbitration Act in 1928. This refusal and incapacity to respond to the interests and desires of the majority of the population cost Labor an election. In 1929 Labor won a landslide and Bruce became the first and only Australian Prime Minister to lose his seat.

### THE END OF THE 1920S

Although Labor had been eclipsed nationally throughout the 1920s it had enjoyed a resurgence in state politics. There were Labor governments in all states at various periods during the decade.

But the militancy of the workers' struggles, particularly the Timber Workers and Coal Miners in the last years of the decade took Labor by surprise. The willingness and audacity of the trade unionists to adopt innovative forms of action, aside from the use of the strike, only drove the Labor bureaucracy back even more firmly to arbitration and reconciliation with the industrial courts. Under the witch-hunt atmosphere of the Bruce government the workers looked to political Labor for leadership. Instead, Scullin, Theodore and Co. responded with support for some of the most reactionary anti-union legislation ever framed in this country. While ALP parliamentarians carefully avoided the task of leading the working class in a political fight against Bruce, the industrial section of the Party made some token efforts to carry on "an unremitting and intensive fight against the arbitration proposals." Again, the ACTU effectively side stepped the key to the issue by refusing to indicate what form of action should be taken against

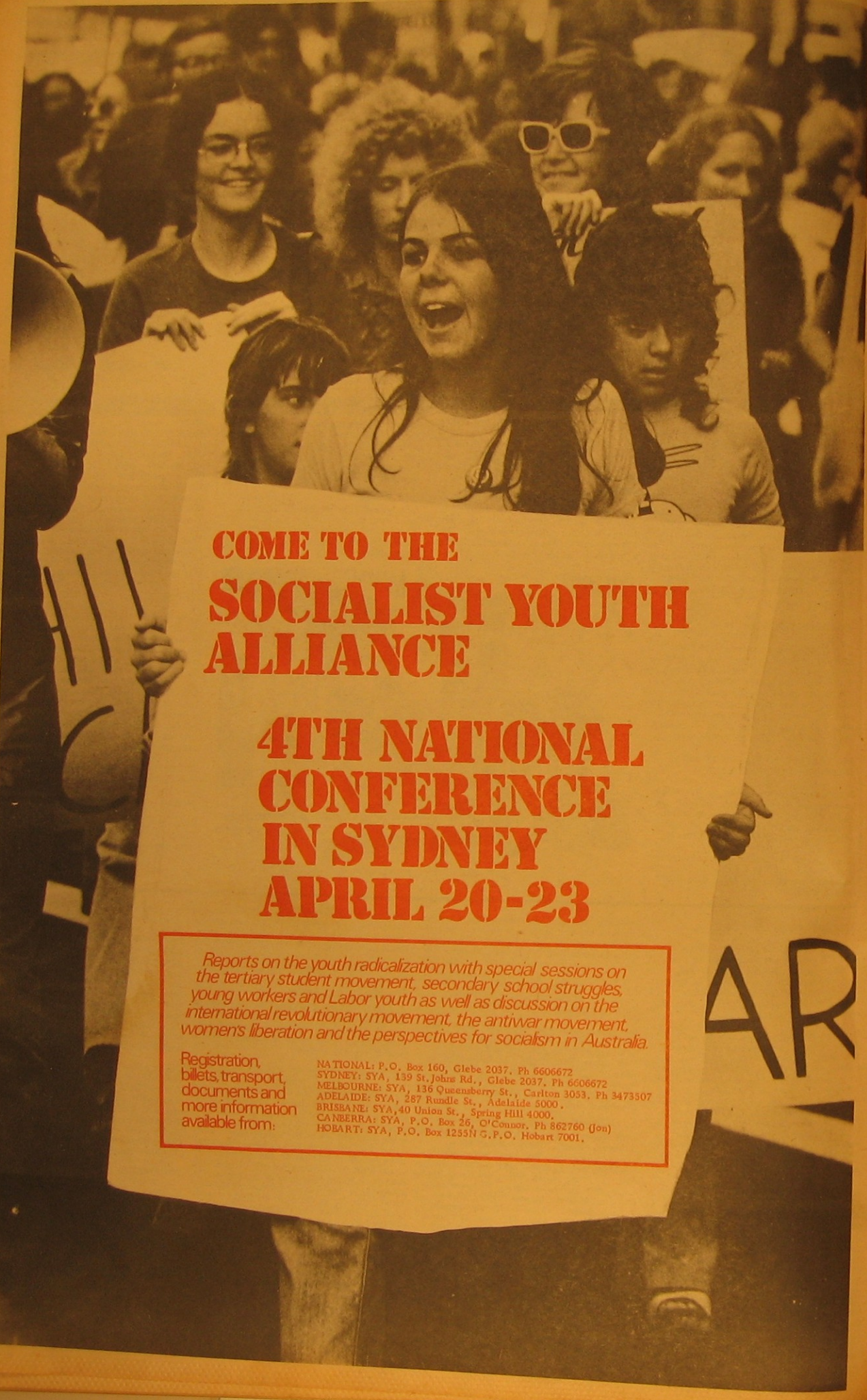
the amendments. Thus the way was left open for the Nationalists to protect the N.S.W. coalmine owner John Brown who had locked out thousands of miners from his collieries. The refusal of Bruce to prosecute Brown was a triumph for the capitalist offensive, despite the fact that the Brown case finally provoked political Labor into action. Labor's return to power was aided by the Government's "pledge to defeat the class struggle" and the ruthless attempts to defeat the seamen's strike in 1925 by deporting leaders of their union, Walsh and Johnston.

Out of office for 15 years, Labor had no difficulty in persuading Australians that it would be a step forward from the most reactionary politics of Bruce - it was a negative example, but a good one and so Australian capitalism found its most severe crisis - the depression of 1929 - 1932 with the Federal Labor Government of James Scullin.

### FOOTNOTES:

1. cited in Turner, *Industrial Labor and Politics*, p 172
2. See Foster, *Industrial Development in Australia 1920-1930*.
3. E. Trotsky, *The World Crisis*, forward by E. J. Holloway, Melb, 1922
4. R. S. Ross, *Revolution in Russia and Australia*, Melb, 1920 p.49.
5. V. G. Childe, *How Labor Govers*.
6. cited by McQueen, H. "Glory Without Power" in *Australian Capitalism*, (ed. Playford and Kinsler), p 360.
7. Report of 1921 Commonwealth Conference, ALP p 26.





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