

# DIRECT ACTION

NO.18

MAY 1 1972

10 CENTS

A FORTNIGHTLY SOCIALIST NEWSPAPER



## END REPRESSION!

1. Against the  
Australian Left p.3

2. High School  
Students p.6

3. University  
Students p.10

4. Latin America p.13  
5. Ceylon p.14

also in this issue .... **IS YOUTH CULTURE REVOLUTIONARY?**

















# MAY DAY



Both of the above photos were taken from a 1920 motion picture. The crudely doctored version below, eliminating Leon Trotsky and another person, is typical of the Stalinist falsification of history.

People attending Melbourne's Mayday committee delegates' meeting on Friday, April 14th, were witness to one of the most bizarre spectacles provided by the left for many years. In classical Stalinist fashion a motion was passed indicting the Trotskyists for being "agents of fascism, imperialism and counterrevolution" to name but a few of the more slanderous epithets. The motion was intended to become part of the Mayday platform and its content to be distributed in leaflet form on the day of the march. As if that wasn't enough, the Mayday leadership displayed its contempt for the Women's Liberation movement by presenting as a speaker for Women's Liberation a woman under censure by the Melbourne Women's Liberation Coordinating Committee.

This situation reflects the state of chronic disease besetting the Mayday committee. In the past it zig-zagged to the vacillations of the Stalinist CPA. Now, under Maoist domination, it reverts to gutter politics, nationalism and male chauvinism.

At a time when enormous opportunities for revolutionary socialists are presented by the new radicalization we should endeavour to utilise the celebration of Mayday to extend the radicalisation into the ranks of the working class. It is a time when workers can be brought out onto the streets with a socialist perspective and a sense of solidarity in struggle with their international counterparts. In the January issue of *Direct Action* we wrote:

"May Day... the day of the revolutionary proletariat and their allies; the day when past victories are recalled and further battles are foreshadowed; the day when we join with our comrades around the world to demonstrate our faith in the ultimate conquest of power by the dispossessed of the earth.

"There are some socialists who question the value of the celebration of May 1st. May Day they say, is not part of the tradition of the Australian working

class. They claim that socialists have attempted to implant an activity which can have no relevance to the class struggle in this country.

"We of the Socialist Youth Alliance and the Socialist Workers League, believe that the celebration of May Day should be understood as a means of politicizing Australian workers."

Now compare the principles of Mayday with the attempts of some to rehabilitate long discredited Stalinist excretions about the counterrevolutionary nature of Trotskyism. Particularly at a time when the squalid spectre of Stalinism can be objectively evaluated, this is all the more absurd. We may now look back into the past and see the details of countless betrayals of the revolutionary movement by the Soviet bureaucracy. And now in our own time, with Indonesia, Bangladesh and Ceylon all fresh in mind we can see the spurious handiwork of the Maoist bureaucracy with real clarity. History has shown who was correct.

On a more humorous note a look at the manner in which the motion was presented may be interesting. The display was spearheaded by renowned "left-wing" charlatan and adventurer Dusty Miller. An avid fringe dweller of Australian Maoism, he temporarily buried the Sino-Soviet rift to form a man united-front with Moscow's Mal Mooney of the SPA. From the tragic, the debate went to the absurd when Mooney lumped the CPA into the Trotskyist camp and felt that in effect the motion included them.

To us Mayday means more than the policies of the leadership of its committees. It symbolizes the proletarian revolution, the international class struggle. Mayday will live on whilst those who are too stupid to learn the lessons of history will not. As Trotsky said, they will finish in the rubbish bin of history.

## WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!

# THE ORIGINS OF MAY DAY

BY ROSA LUXEMBURG

The inspired thought of introducing a proletarian holiday as a means of obtaining the eight-hour working day first originated in Australia. As early as the year 1856, the workers there resolved to call for one day of complete work stoppage; the day to be spent in meetings and entertainment instead — as a demonstration for the eight-hour day. The 21st of April was designated as this holiday. In the beginning, the Australian workers thought of instituting such a holiday but once, in the year 1856. But even this first celebration made such a great impression on the proletarian masses of Australia that it was decided to repeat the holiday annually.

As a matter of fact, what else could give the working people greater courage and confidence in their powers than a mass work stoppage of their own volition? What could give greater courage to the eternal slaves of the factories and workshops than the mustering of their own forces? Therefore the idea of the proletarian holiday was accepted very quickly and began to spread from Australia to other countries, until it conquered the entire proletarian world.

The first to follow the example of the Australian workers were the Americans. They designated the first of May as the day of general work stoppage in the year 1886. On this day, 200,000 of them left work and demanded the eight-hour day. Later, the persecutions of the government prevented the workers for a number of years to repeat this demonstration. However, in the year 1888 they renewed their decision and designated the first of May of 1890 as the next holiday.

In the meantime, the labor movement in Europe had developed greatly and become infused with new vigor. This upsurge found its highest expression in the international labor congress held in

the year 1889. The four hundred delegates assembled at this convention resolved to fight, first of all, for the eight-hour day. The delegate of the French trade unions, the worker Lavigne from Bordeaux, made a motion to give substance to this demand by a universal workers holiday in all countries. Since the delegate of the American workers called attention to the decision of his comrades in respect to the first of May 1890, the convention designated this date for the international holiday.

Actually, like the workers of Australia thirty years previous, in this case also the demonstration was thought of as occurring but once. The convention resolved that the workers of all countries would demonstrate together on the first of May 1890 for the demand of the eight-hour day. No one spoke of the repetition of the holiday in the coming years. Of course, no one could foresee how well this proposal was to succeed and how quickly it came to be adopted by the working class. It was sufficient to celebrate May Day once, in the year 1890, in order that everyone understood at once and realized that the May Day celebration should become a permanent, yearly institution. . . .

The First of May proclaims the slogan of the eight-hour day. But even after the attainment of this aim the May Day celebration will not be abolished. As long as the struggle of the workers against the bourgeoisie and against the government will last, as long as all demands are not fulfilled, the May Day holiday will be the annual expression of these demands. But even when better times shall dawn, and the working class will have achieved its emancipation in the entire world, probably even then, in memory of the battles fought and the sufferings endured, humanity will celebrate the First of May.



The on pre to Fo co sta  
Q1 CC the M. on A1 We sta the per att wa of use of and me Vi In pol cal int det bei ion Thi des of t The stat gov a 24 off arm larg and tort clat to t (Mc

Reb duri  
Sam Banc thes men clas vers those the t acti mat assa the t work  
Q11 Wha press been begi  
AN1 Well repre gove lead inter the s work gove ion t the t mass prom intro sures these prep Ceyl notes  
14