

# DIRECT ACTION

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20 cents

## Why Labor Is Not ...

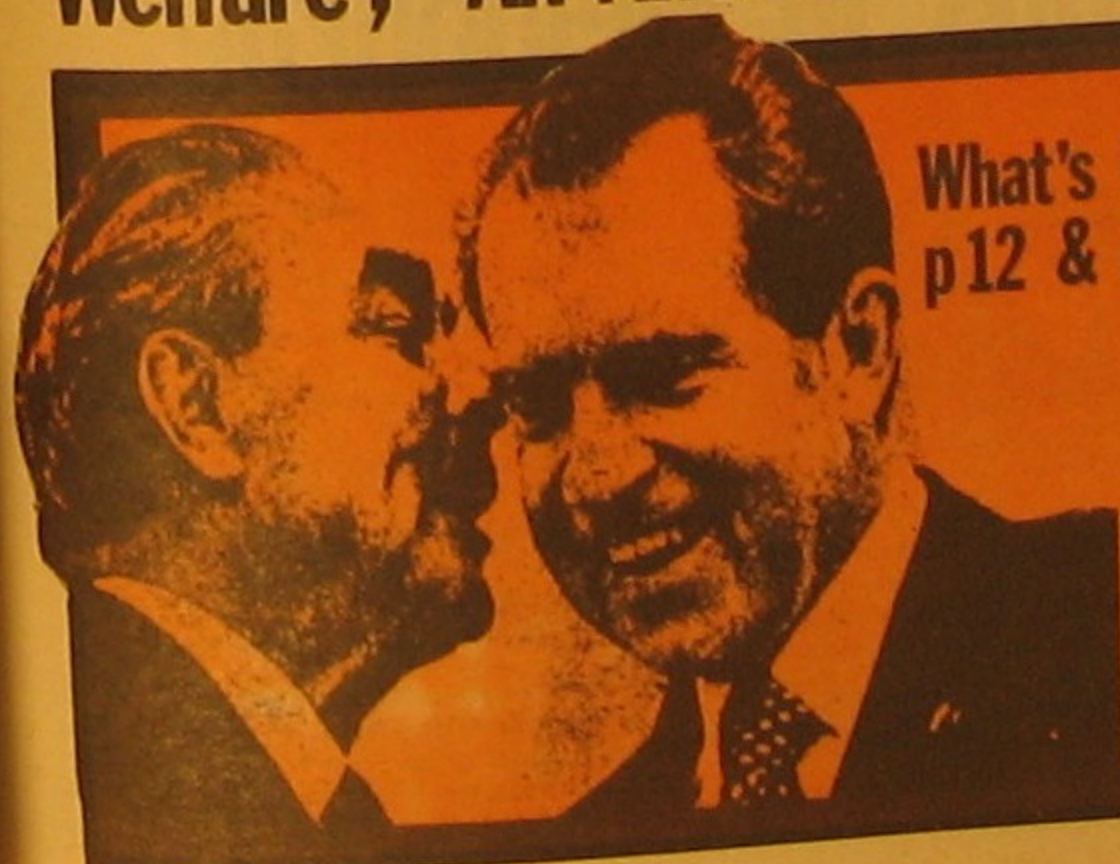
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ONE DOLLAR



## Fighting Inflation

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What's Behind the US Detente With Moscow and Peking  
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### THE TURN IN THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

















# The World Revolution



## Why Israeli State Commits Air Piracy

BY SOL SALEBY

World-wide condemnation has followed the recent hijacking of a civilian plane by the Israeli Air Force. The hijacking carried out under Israeli-Government orders even caused protests to emanate from the US Government and the Israeli Airline Pilots Union.

"We have been intercepted by Israeli planes and ordered to follow them. I am obeying instructions." The chartered Middle East Airlines Caravelle was only a few minutes out of Beirut airport when the radio message came. As the captain later explained he followed the orders carefully and did not even try to escape. The memory of the last act of mass murder committed by the Israelis when they shot a Libyan airliner and 108 people were killed was still fresh.

When the plane landed in a military airport in northern Israel, presumably Khazir, Israeli soldiers stormed into the plane armed with guns. A passenger was quoted in The Australian on

August 13 as saying: "They ordered us to put our hands on our heads and took all the men out of the plane one by one."

John Bulloch reported in the same report in The Australian: "The passengers were each asked to prove their identity and give reasons for their flight. After the interrogation they were given refreshments and sent back to Beirut in the plane after a two-hour stay in the Israeli airfield."

The near universal condemnation of this kidnapping of 74 passengers and seven crew members (all Arabs) even reached Australia. The acting Prime Minister, Lance Barnard, deplored the "forced diversion of the civilian aircraft." He said, "The Australian Government deplores all acts of interference with civil aircraft."

Barnard said that there were "implications of the gravest kind for the safety of passengers and for the security of international air transport generally in the action by the Israelis." He finally added: "The Australian Government is

concerned that the incident should not lead to an escalation of tension in the Middle East."

The wide condemnation can be attributed to the failure of the Israelis to achieve their real aim. The admitted objective of the kidnapping was the execution of Dr George Habbash, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). If they had succeeded in capturing Dr George Habbash then world reaction to the incident would have been substantially different.

The PFLP several years ago was responsible for the hijacking of Israeli and other planes. The PFLP however gave up this tactic some time ago. Evidently George Habbash and his followers were saved when they decided not to catch a plane. They were booked on Iraqi Airways flight 006 from Beirut to Baghdad. But the Iraqi plane was delayed three hours in London, so the airline chartered a Middle East Airlines Caravelle, called it flight 006A and put into service for the passengers waiting in Beirut.

The strange coincidence between the two terrorist acts allegedly committed by the Palestinians, and the Israeli hijacking may represent a link which is more than tenuous. One is reminded of the earlier "coincidence" between the Israeli-inspired allegation that the Black September group was part of Al Fatah and the attack on Fatah leaders in Beirut last April.

Habbash's regular practice of changing planes whenever anything unusual happens saved his life.

In their propaganda effort against Habbash the Israelis ascribed two recent events to the PFLP. One was the hijacking and destruction of a Japan Air Lines jumbo jet and the other was the recent attack on planes at Athens airport.

Some interesting questions are raised by these two incidents. Why have all known Palestinian organisations denied any responsibility for the attacks? After all they did not draw back from claiming responsibility for actions which have been classified by the capitalist press as being much more "savagely" such as the attack on Lod airport in Israel. In fact all Palestinian sources claim the actions were carried out by "free lancers".

While no conclusive evidence exists it seems strange that the Israelis could strike so lucky as to have two "Arab terrorist attacks" just before their attempted capture of Habbash. The close information available to them with regard to Habbash's movements suggests some possible co-operation from the Lebanese Government.

As usual the protests to Israel indicated considerable hypocrisy. While the hijacking organised by Israel is a serious crime in most countries Israel was only censured in the lightest terms. Despite the fact that it is a particularly serious crime under the new amendments to Israel's criminal code The Australian referred to the passengers as being "kidnapped" only in inverted commas.

While the Israelis were planning the execution of four passengers The Australian referred to Habbash as "master of murderers", "extremist" and suchlike.

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Habbash at a rare press conference

## Argentine Trotskyists Hold Congress

During the last week of July, the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST - Socialist Workers Party), Argentine sympathising group of the Fourth International, held an extraordinary national congress.

The congress dealt with the problem of building a mass revolutionary party in Argentina today. It agreed that this could only be done from within the ranks of the Fourth International, the nucleus of the world mass revolutionary party founded in 1935 in response to a call initiated by Leon Trotsky.

The problems facing Argentine Trotskyists today were divided into three areas: party activities, international situation, and national situation.

The delegates unanimously elected as honorary president the Uruguayan and Chilean masses and the recently deceased revolutionary leaders Mateo Fossa and Luis Jaroslavsky. Effective presidency was held in rotation by Rene Casamiquela, Francisco J. Paez, Beatriz Capponi and Lidia Sierra.

The congress adopted a resolution condemning the French Government for its banning of the Ligue Communiste, French section of the Fourth International and calling for solidarity with all working-class organisations under attack from the ruling classes.

The following is a much abridged translation of Juan Carlos Coral's report on the national situation. Coral is the PST's presidential candidate in the coming elections. The translation is by DIRECT ACTION.

"Due to this (the working-class combativity since the Cordobazo) in this dialectic, to this combative and class-conscious response of the workers, the bourgeoisie took the only way out that it had left: the broadest alliance of classes that the country has ever known, in which naturally the international financiers have hegemony, but in which the land-owning oligarchy and the national bourgeoisie are also integrated. This alliance has been concretised, of course, under the leadership of Peron, as the great bonapartist chief who is

given the task of arbitrating between sectors of the bourgeoisie and who counts on the support of the working class.

"But the working class is also preparing its response, through our party, to the politics of the bourgeoisie; the revolutionary mobilisations of the masses; the conquest of power by the working class through our revolutionary programme.

"This response consists in disqualifying all utopian, reactionary illusions of national revolutions because this economy is nothing more than one aspect of the integrated whole that is the world capitalist economy. There is no possibility of liberating oneself from imperialism without breaking with the chains of the capitalist system. There is no possibility of saving oneself from exploitation by 'Third-Worldist' formulations or national revolutions but only by changing the relationships of production, that is to say, by initiating the socialist revolution via the permanent revolution as exemplified from Russia to Cuba, passing through Vietnam,

"Here it is not a matter of placing the party in an electoral function, but of placing the elections at the service of the growth of the party. During this period, as during any other, we will comply with the triple revolutionary task which Lenin explained when he said: agitate the masses, propaganda our positions and educate cadres. This must be the basis of our electoral intervention.

"What I want to stress, in finishing, is that at this stage the consciousness of the urgency with which we must educate our cadre must take prime place, because what is certain is that an alliance of this latest attempt at an alliance of classes, the instability and the frailty of the bourgeoisie and the dominant classes in the Government, confronts us with a revolutionary moment, it will depend on the strength of organisation and on the capacity of the cadres whether this crisis will end in tragedy, like the Spanish Revolution, or in historic revolution, like the Russian Revolution of 1917."

# Socialists and the Argentine Elections

BY MIKE JONES

Eighteen years of direct military rule in Argentina ended on May 25 this year with the inauguration of President Hector Campora. Less than two months later, in early July, Campora resigned, ostensibly to fulfill his promise of returning ex-President Juan Domingo Peron to power.

Campora's election in March was one of the results of a new stage in Argentine history which began in May 1969. During that month the provincial city of Cordoba exploded in the first of a series of semi-insurrections that shook every major city in Argentina except Buenos Aires. The Cordobazo, as the upsurge was called, and the similar occurrences in Rosario, Mendoza, Mar del Plata, Tucuman and again in Cordoba in 1971 led to important changes in the relationships of power in Argentina. Firstly, the military dictatorship was taken over by Alejandro Lanusse, long regarded as the strongest military figure in the country. Secondly, it meant the end of working-class passivity in the face of repression. The militant workers, together with some other layers of Argentine society, began demanding a return to civilian

refused to participate in the Workers' Front and gave its support to the Alianza Popular de Centro Izquierda (Popular Alliance of the Centre Left), a small group in some ways to the right of the Peronists.

In the months immediately before the elections, the Workers' Front was constantly in the forefront of the working-class struggles against the dictatorship and against the bureaucracy. Its relationship with Peronism and Peronists was clearly defined. It had nothing in common with Campora (the Peronist candidate for President) or with the Peronist bureaucrats of the Confederacion General del Trabajo (CGT - General Confederation of Labor). The rank-and-file Peronists and Peronist sympathisers, the workers and students who make up the bulk of the Social Justice Party, were a different matter. While it could not bend to the ideology of Peronism, it made every attempt to work alongside the rank-and-file Peronists in their struggles against the bosses and the union bureaucrats. In posing an alternative to the Peronists, the revolutionary socialists in Argentina had to participate with the workers in their experiences, and that included their electoral experience.

becoming impatient with Campora.

During the period between March 11 and May 25, the Workers' Front, the PST and the Juventud Socialista de Avanzada (JSA - Vanguard Socialist Youth, the PST's youth group) threw their weight behind the campaign for the release of the prisoners. The prisoners were mostly trade-union militants and guerrillas. They had been subjected to continual torture and privation. In August last year, 19 young members of the Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP - People's Revolutionary Army) who had attempted to escape from Rawson prison were lined up outside their cells and shot. Sixteen of them were killed and the other three were critically wounded.

Due to mass pressure, Campora was forced to declare amnesty for the prisoners as his first official act on May 25. However, he did not agree, and still has not agreed to the reinstatement of the expelled workers. This still remains a major campaign for socialists in Argentina.

The continuing crisis in the Social Justice Party and in Argentine society as a whole forced Campora to resign in mid-July - two months after his inauguration. The circumstances of his resignation require a very careful examination. Ostensibly, he gave up his office to allow Peron to take over the presidency. (Peron had not been allowed by the military to participate in the March elections.) Yet the fact that two "left" ministers were excluded from the otherwise unchanged caretaker cabinet indicates that a certain amount of pressure was being exerted from the right. Also, Peron, aged 77, is in such a poor state of health it is unlikely that anything but a severe political crisis would have caused him to agree to taking office.

The new elections called to make Peron's assumption of power official have been set for September 23. It was strongly rumored that Peron would be contesting the elections with Ricardo Balbin as his vice-presidential candidate. Balbin is the leader of the Union Civica Radical (UCR - Radical Civic Union), the party which received the second largest vote in March. Such a coalition would have meant a large concession to the interests which Balbin represents, i.e., the section of the bosses who did not go along with the Peronists in March and a very important section of the military.

The PST pointed out the closeness of the UCR and the Peronists even before the March elections. The February 14 edition of Avanzada Socialista, the PST's weekly, noted:

"Despite all the imposed conditions and the recent prohibiting of Peron's return to the country, the main political forces of the bosses have ratified their participation in the March elections and, further, their 'agreement' for the future Government.

"Peron said: 'We have a fundamental agreement with Balbin's radicals: we will govern jointly. This is our understanding. If the Radical Party wins they will govern with us. If it is us who wins - as we hope and believe - we will call them into the Government.' And, like an echo, Balbin answered: 'Radicalism has already clearly demonstrated that will govern not only with one party but with all parties.' And the presidential candidate of the UCR finished off: 'What Peron says is that any government of the parties that have

the responsibility to govern will do so with all sectors of national life. This idea is being expressed everywhere by Dr Balbin.'

"The Peronist compañeros and all workers should consider whether this 'Agreement' resulted from above is not, in the final count, the same as what the armed forces were attempting. Remember that Balbin was one of the supporters of 'gorlismo' (the "gorillas" are the pro-coup generals - MJ), that the last Radical Government also starved the workers and put down their struggles... We cannot, therefore, suppose that a Radical-Peronist government would win the demands for which we have struggled so much since the Cordobazo."

The latest news, however, is that Balbin will not be running as Peron's Vice-President. That position on the Peronist ticket has been given to Peron's wife, Isabel. If the original intent was to have Balbin on the slate to placate the bosses and the military, his removal and replacement by a popular figure such as Peron's wife is an indication that the Peronists are more worried about placating the workers than anybody else.

The coming elections will be even more critical for socialists than the first. The Peronists have shown clearly that they are completely incapable of avoiding the crisis of Argentine society and socialists cannot afford to forfeit on their responsibility to offer an alternative once again.

The PST has again taken the initiative and is standing Juan Carlos Coral and Jose Paez for the positions of President and Vice-President respectively. They defined their position in the July 25 - August 1 edition of Avanzada Socialista:

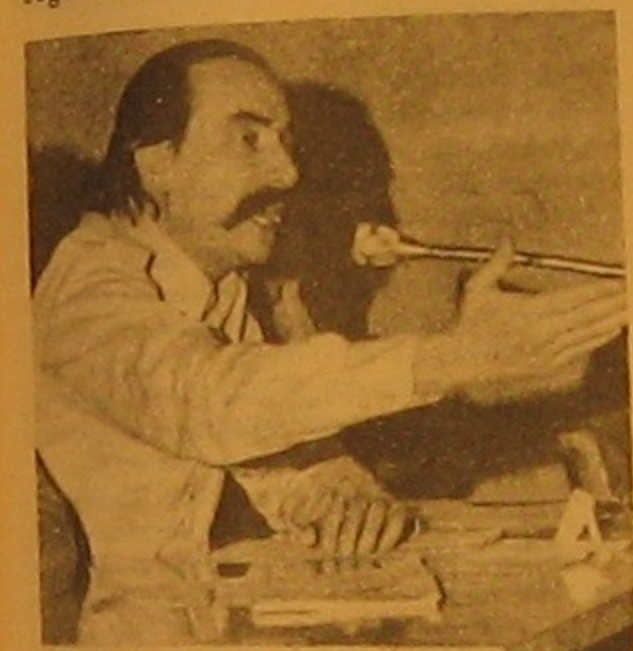
"This position is a continuation of the one we put forward on March 11. At that time also, via the Workers' Front, we called for a confrontation with the different bosses' tickets because they were all manifestations of the same Great National Agreement. At that time also we called on the workers and all the class-worker, revolutionary and socialist to put up an independent electoral option.

"As a consequence of this political position the union bureaucracy and the Peronist right considers us its political adversary."

"In defining the class nature of their position, the PST said to the members of the Communist Party: 'You call for the formation of a co-ordinating centre of all the democratic, progressive, anti-oligarchic and anti-imperialist forces'. Nevertheless, you don't declare where you stand on two crucial issues: what position will this co-ordinating centre take concerning Peron's candidacy? And what forces will have hegemony in this front?

"We are categorical: Tosco, Salamancas (leaders of the anti-bureaucratic struggle in the Cordoba unions - MJ), 'clacismo' and the anti-boss and anti-bureaucratic workers - together with the worker, anti-imperialist and socialist parties and currents - must head a worker and socialist alternative which, in order to be such, must begin by opposing the ticket of the right and of imperialism, with its mask of 'national union.'"

The coming elections will be a real test for the ability of revolutionaries in Argentina to carry forward the struggle for a socialist Argentina.



Coral



Paez

rule - or more specifically, a return to the rule of Peron.

Peron's previous period of rule was in 1945-1955. The fact of a general post-war economic boom coupled with the temporary lull in imperialist interest in Argentina due to the war meant that the Argentine economy was allowed a temporary buoyancy. Peron, an extremely popular figure during the war was able to win the support of masses of Argentine workers - something which the bosses are now counting on to placate the workers.

In the political situation that prevailed in Argentina at the time of the elections the Partido Justicialista (Social Justice Party, Peron's party) with its social base exclusively in the ruling class, its bourgeois ideology and programme and the bureaucratic structure officially written into its constitution in the form of 'verticalismo', posed a severe threat to the advancement of the Argentine working class. The crisis of Argentine society could not be resolved within the framework of Argentine capitalism, as this is inextricably linked to the world imperialist system and is entirely dependent on world imperialism.

Revolutionary socialists in Argentina realised this dilemma. They understood that the elections were only a manoeuvre and that Peronism would be the dominant force, so an effort had to be made to break the workers away from Peronism. Although one group put up the slogan, "Neither coup nor elections, revolution!" this was clearly not on the immediate agenda. The overwhelming majority of the workers either had faith in the elections or were willing to wait and see what they would bring.

Faced with this situation, socialists had to take a positive orientation towards the elections. They could not support the trap set by Peronism, so it was absolutely vital that a real working-class alternative be posed. The Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST - Socialist Workers Party), Argentine sympathising group of the Fourth International, made use of the electoral openings it had and turned over 75 per cent of its ballot slots to worker candidates from outside the party organised in the Workers' Front. They attempted to involve other left groups in this so as to broaden the class-alternative front as much as possible. In this they were unsuccessful. The Communist Party, the main left group in Argentina,

Immediately Campora was elected President, the workers and students lost no time in demanding he take drastic measures to repair the damage done by the dictatorship. The three main demands raised were for substantial wage increases, the release of all political prisoners and the reinstatement of workers fired for political activities.

During the time between the elections on March 11 and Campora's inauguration on May 25, the internal contradictions within the Social Justice movement came to a head. The Juventud Peronista (JP - Peronist Youth) the party's youth group, became increasingly active in the movement to free the political prisoners. Galimberti, the leader of the JP, was removed from office because of his left leanings. Workers would frequently take their demands to the Juventud Sindical Peronista (JSP - Trade-Union Peronist Youth) rather than to their own union leaders. This had its reflection in the party itself, where workers were already

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Crowds in Buenos Aires during Campora's inauguration



Sihanouk

# Sihanouk and the Future of Cambodia

BY RENFREY CLARKE

On August 15 the open military intervention by the United States in Indo-China supposedly ended when Nixon completed the six weeks of bombing of Cambodia that Congress had allowed him. The bombing halt coincided with a major offensive by the Cambodian liberation forces, the Khmer Rouge, which by August 15 had captured four towns and overrun many government outposts.

Despite these successes it is clear that the struggle against imperialism in Cambodia, and indeed the whole of Indo-China, is far from over. The threat of the direct use of military force is still present. Nixon has spoken of attempting to persuade Congress to renew the bombing, and in any case South Vietnamese forces or Thai mercenaries can be deployed if necessary.

Prior to the halt supporters of Nixon's bombing had become relatively isolated in American ruling circles. It was felt by a significant section of the capitalist class that for imperialism to be preserved Nixon's action, in aiming to preserve Lon Nol and impose a Vietnam-style peace settlement, was ignoring the prospect that Prince Norodom Sihanouk, if his position was not weakened, could be relied upon to thwart any moves to bring about a revolutionary social and economic transformation of the country. And further that the leaders of the heterogeneous Khmer Rouge, who to a large degree are ideologically isolated from the sway of the bureaucracies in Peking and Moscow, would accept this.

This viewpoint seems to have been heavily represented in the US Congress, which conceded that nothing short of full-scale intervention could save Lon Nol, whose popular base scarcely extended beyond the Pentagon. It was obvious that the sheer barbarity of the bombing helped change the attitudes of

those in the liberation forces who had earlier been willing to accommodate themselves to imperialism. The suffering caused by the raids, and the inability of the liberation forces to adequately resist them, were leading Sihanouk to make bitter criticisms of the failure of China, the Soviet Union and North Vietnam to supply the Cambodians with even the most basic fighting equipment. (Most of the Khmer Rouge are fighting with American weapons, which were easily bought.) In a number of interviews Sihanouk accused the USSR of colluding with the US imperialists to bring about a political settlement in Cambodia and stifle revolutionary movements throughout the world. It was clear to many US congressmen that provoking Sihanouk to make such statements could only discredit the type of deal made with Moscow and Peking in the eyes of the liberation forces.

However, Sihanouk, who heads the government in exile (Royal Government of National Union), is no revolutionary. As he stated in a recent interview: "For me the principle enemy is American imperialism and Lon Nol's fascism: the secondary enemies are the communists, so I choose to stay with the secondary enemy in order to defeat the principal enemy."

His intransigence towards imperialism appears more motivated by opportunism than principle. At the moment he rejects all offers of negotiations with the Lon Nol regime as "post-dated cheques drawn on a failing bank" while six months ago he was actively cultivating his contacts to secure such negotiations.

As a former ruler of Cambodia Sihanouk has a certain following among the people which leaders of the Khmer Rouge lack. He is a political leader known to thousands of Cambodians and prided himself on his vigorous down-to-earth contact with the peasants. This

would indicate a figurehead role for him in a future government, a status which he has anticipated in some of his voluble, self-dramatising interviews: "The Red Khmers don't like me at all. I understand very well they keep me with them because this is useful to them; because of me they wouldn't have the peasants and one cannot make a revolution in Cambodia without the peasants."

In matters of internal policy Sihanouk was saved from traumatic upheavals by the fact that landlordism has never been strong in Cambodia, except in one province which has always been a Khmer Rouge stronghold. His foreign policy consisted of a political balancing act, of checks and slights delivered against both imperialism and the left. In 1963 he refused American aid, and maintained a stagnant, overwhelmingly agricultural economy. For reasons of their own, the imperialists allowed this state to persist and Sihanouk placated them by intermittently persecuting the Khmer Rouge. With the American armed intervention in Indo-China the pressures on Sihanouk increased dramatically. The CIA became a part of his life: in a book written in exile in Peking he described himself as being at war with it. Vietnam liberation forces had long used areas of eastern Cambodia for staging and regrouping and in 1969 the Americans began mounting B-52 raids against Cambodian territory, while professing to respect Cambodian neutrality. Sihanouk did not have anything to gain from imperialist victory and economic domination, and he was under pressure from the Vietnamese who occupied large, though sparsely populated, areas of his country.

But the Americans, ultimately, had different plans for Cambodia. Not even Sihanouk would allow them to invade his country without demanding reprisals from China and the USSR. So in March 1970 the CIA staged a coup while Sihanouk was on a state visit to Peking, and a puppet government was installed

which did not object when the US invaded Cambodia in May to "clean out" the sanctuaries.

That Sihanouk should be acceptable to the Khmer Rouge in any capacity is a commentary on the politics of the Cambodian left. Indeed, Sihanouk does not seem out of place among his colleagues in the Royal Government, his suspicions of the "communists" aside. In yet another utterly contradictory interview he professed that "We are more united than ever before. When the coup took place and resistance began, you could say that Sihanouk took a step to the left and Khieu Samphan (the Khmer Rouge commander who is Vice-Premier in Sihanouk's Government) took a step to the centre. The result is unity."

"Khieu Samphan told me not to call him and his colleagues communists. He is a Cambodian nationalist and anti-imperialist who fights for independence, neutrality, democracy and social revolution. You can say he is a socialist with the same basic ideology as the Swedish Prime Minister."

What the result of the bombing halt will be cannot be understood without taking into account such factors as the behind-the-scenes deals made over Cambodia between Nixon and Brezhnev. What was decided? How adaptable will the forces in the Khmer Rouge be in regard to a settlement like that imposed on the Vietnamese liberation forces? How will the military situation evolve in the immediate future? What role will Sihanouk play?

In the long term, however, it is clear that the nature of the leadership of the Cambodian liberation forces will be decisive in determining the future of the struggle. Nothing short of a complete break with Sihanouk and the politics he represents will be necessary if imperialism is to be defeated and even the most minimal solutions are to be found to the problems besetting the Cambodian people.

# Lip Factory Raided

BY SOL SALBY

outside the factory gates by mid-afternoon.

A police raid on the Lip factory has ended the prolonged period of workers control in the plant. The factory has been run for several months now by the workers after the management threatened the closure of the factory. (For the complete story see: French Workers Take Over Watch Factory by Caroline Lund on page 20 in this DA)

The police raid came at dawn on August 14. The workers were expelled by the police force which then took over complete control. 200 of the police, who outnumbered the defence guard by four to one surged inside while others cordoned off the factory. Soon after the raid thousands of workers and tens of thousands of people assembled in protest. Over 5000 people assembled

The union movement also responded immediately with Georges Seguy, secretary of the CGT calling it a provocation and a challenge, with Francois Mitterand leader of the Socialist Party being even more critical. Mitterand, who is expected to be the next presidential candidate in the next elections, charged that the raid showed the Gaullist Government's "scorn for the workers and for public opinion."

The popular support for the Lip workers which delayed the French government intervention is going to continue. Railway workers have already announced a one-hour stoppage to coincide with a mass rally and stoppages by other sections of the union movement are expected to follow.



Cambodian liberation forces

# Rising Bengali Movement in Assam

(Bengali) nationalism is on the rise in the Indian State of Assam. Cachar district, which is about 83 per cent Bengali, is seeking separation from the State and status as an Indian union territory.

(The movement for economic, social and cultural freedom for Cachar does not yet seek separation from India, although the movement is opposed by the Indian Government. Cachar, which has a population of about 1,800,000, borders on Bangladesh.)

(In the interview that follows, Paritos Pal Chowdhury describes the present national movement in Cachar. Chowdhury is a leading member of the Cachar Ganaparisad (People's Forum) Union Territory Demand Committee. The interview was obtained for Intercontinental Press by A. Haq.)

Question: Why do you call your organisation Cachar Ganaparisad Union Territory Demand Committee?

Answer: It is an organisation of the people. It is based on a programme and certain demands. The major demand is to make Cachar a union territory. As soon as this major demand is realised, this organisation will be called only Cachar Ganaparisad. The remaining part of the name will cease to have its validity, and so will be dropped.

Question: Is this a fight for the self-determination of the people of Cachar?

Answer: Yes, it is a fight for the right of self-determination of the people of Cachar. It is the genuine right of the people of Cachar.

Historically speaking, Cachar is not part of Assam. Geographically it is completely detached from the rest of Assam by the Surma Valley and by a mountainous region. This separation helped the people of Cachar to build up their own culture, that is, Bengali culture. About 83 per cent speak Bengali.

Thus, historically, geographically, culturally, and from the linguistic standpoint, Cachar has built up everything on its own and has nothing to do with Assam.

Economically it is exploited by the Assam Government. Every year 14 crore (one crore is 10 million) of rupees (about \$A 13 million) are collected by the Assam Government and hardly 12 crore of rupees are spent for Cachar. Since independence Cachar has been ruthlessly exploited by the Assam Government. And very little money has been spent (in Cachar) under the first four five-year plans of the Indian Government.

Now the Assam Government has decided to impose the Assamese language on the people here. They were keen to impose it this year, but because of pressure from the people they were forced to defer it for one year.

All these basic causes are reasons that the people of Cachar are now desperate to realise their rights. It is true, of course, that a union territory does not have the status of a State under the Indian constitution. But this is the first step towards achieving our future demands.

Question: We have seen in the past some movements to make Cachar an independent State within the Indian Union. Where do you differ from those movements?

Answer: Since 1948 many demands have been pressed upon the Indian Government to give Cachar an independent status (as a State). Unfortunately, those demands were only on paper. Long discussion, negotiation, placing of lists of demands and memoranda in the usual so-called democratic forms — these were the characteristics of those movements.

No major upsurge or upheaval has been organised before. Only in 1961 a tremendous upheaval took place in which eleven died, including one woman, in police firing. The crisis of leadership was deeply felt.

People's tolerance has now come to its last leg. They are prepared to build mass movements to advance their demands. On the question of an independent Cachar, people are determined to take part in all forms of struggle. Under no circumstances will they allow themselves to be suppressed and exploited by the Government.

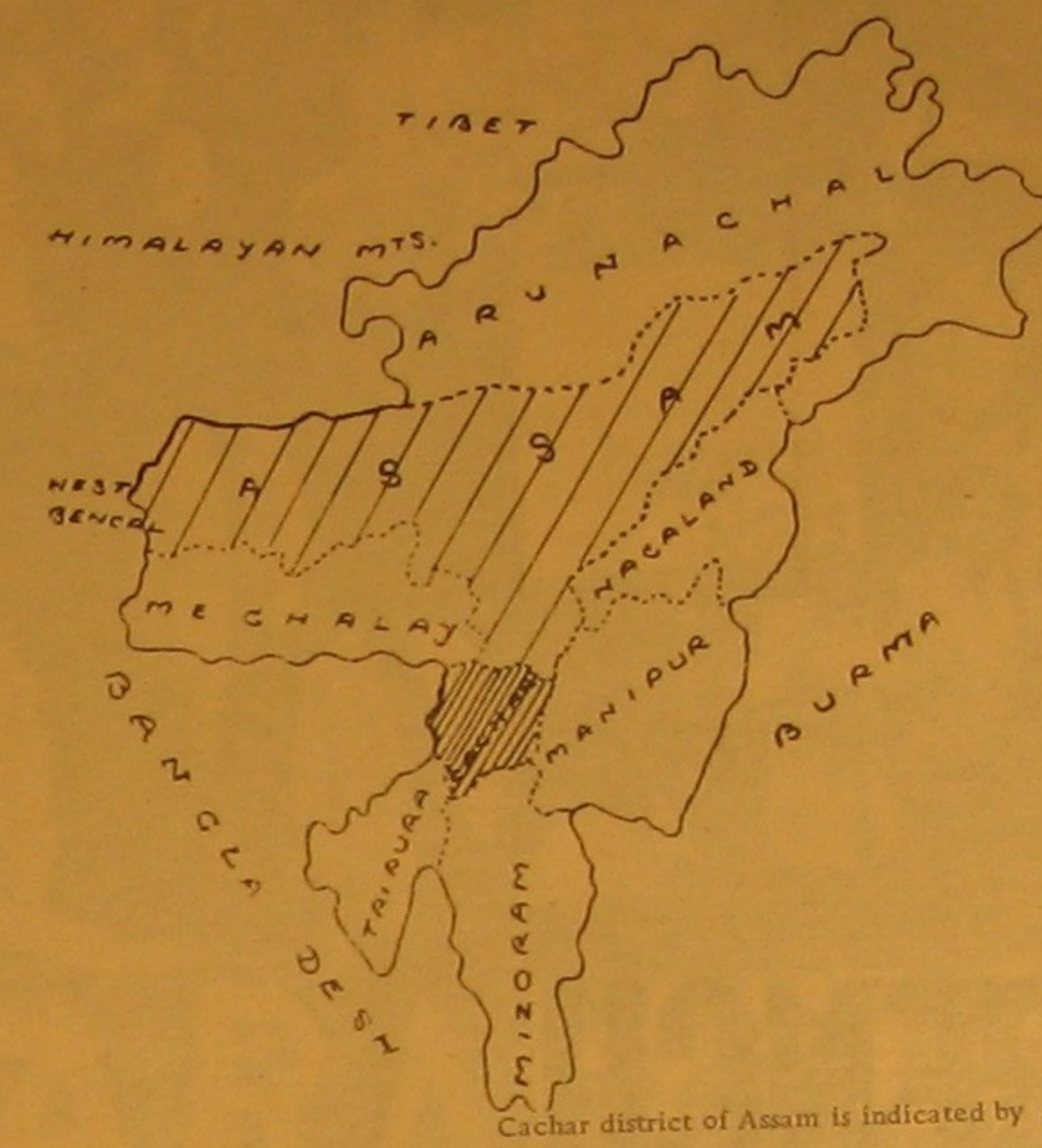
Question: Do you believe in a classless society?

Answer: I do believe in a classless society. I know that I am surrounded by class enemies and vested interest groups and people. I have to arrive at the classless society through struggle, this also I know.

I have observed the miserable plight of some revolutionary forces in India. On the basis of silly pretences they usually try to remain outside the main current of the struggle. Now, if the revolutionary forces in India help me, if I get active support from the revolutionaries of the world, I am sure we can set up a classless society in Cachar.

Question: To what extent does your movement differ from the call for a Greater Bengal or a United Red Bengal?

Answer: For obvious reasons, I am not going to give a detailed reply to this question now. But if the Government of India goes on trifling with the life of the Bengalis, then whether the Government wants it or not — even whether the Bengalis want it or not — history will surely lead forward to that goal, that is, United Red or Greater Bengal.



Cachar district of Assam is indicated by shading. Undoubtedly, Cachar is the weakest link in Assam's or India's chain. It has the resources to stand independently. People are now ready to go to any lengths. Obstinance and repression on the part of the Indian Government, I am stressing again, will give us the handle for giving shape to the slogan of United Red Bengal.

# Indian CP and Trotskyism

(The following article was written for DIRECT ACTION by M. Rashid of Kerala, India.)

Comrade K. Damodaran is a top theoretician of the Communist Party of India (pro-Moscow). He is more popularly known among communists as "Marx of Kerala" due to his theoretical activities. Being one of the four founding members of the Communist Party of Kerala, comrade Damodaran was in the forefront to abuse and slander Trotsky and the Trotskyist movement.

Anyhow, Khrushchev's revelations were an eye-opener to him. After the 20th Congress of the CPSU he waged a consistent fight against his Stalinist past. He was the only Indian communist leader who openly denounced the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia. At that time he was a member of the top hierarchy of the CPI and also in the Indian Parliament. The CPI central executive gave him fifteen days to rectify his position. He refused and so is now on the black list.

Recently, comrade Damodaran wrote an article in the theoretical journal (of which he was the editor) of the CPI urging a re-evaluation of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution and also Stalin's theory of socialism in one country. In the same article he stated that the two-stage programme of revolution of the CPI and other Stalinist parties is contrary to the teachings of the Communist Manifesto. The CPI leadership immediately removed him from the editorship.

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# FRENCH WORKERS TAKE OVER WATCH FACTORY



Lip workers meet to make decisions about the running of the factory.

BY CAROLINE LUND

The long banner covering the fence at the entrance to the Lip watch factory in this town in eastern France reads: "It can be done — We are producing and selling. (Signed) The Workers."

The 1320 workers at Lip, France's largest, oldest, and best-known watch company, took over the enterprise on June 19 when faced by a company announcement of massive lay-offs and refusal to pay the workers salaries. Since then the workers have organised to continue production on their own, selling the watches they produce to the public at 40 per cent discount.

Popular support for the Lip workers is immense and has spread throughout France. Hundreds of workers — in delegations from factories all over France and from other European countries as well — have travelled to Lip to express their solidarity with the strikers, to buy watches, and to deliver collections for the support fund. Dozens of factories across the country have voted to launch unlimited strikes if the Government or the bosses move against the Lip workers by force.

In Besancon itself, a city of 140,000 the workers have received support from almost every local institution, from the trade unions to the masonic lodges to the Roman Catholic archbishop. On June 15, the archbishop of Besancon was one of the speakers at a regional demonstration of 15,000 held to support the Lip strike — the largest demonstration in the city since its liberation from the Nazis in 1945.

To a visitor in Besancon, signs of support for the strikers are everywhere. One sees the red and white stickers on automobile windows: Support the Lip workers — No to lay-offs; No to dismantlement. Posters cover the walls, signed by the two unions at Lip, the CGT and the CFDT (Confederation Generale du Travail — General Confederation of Labor, and Confederation Francaise Democratique du Travail — French Democratic Confederation of Labor), the Lip Action Committee, the various far-left organisations. The main highways coming into the city are dotted with prominent red arrows pointing the way to Lip for the constant stream of factory delegations coming to visit the plant.

## Reactions of the Capitalists

The French capitalist class is well aware of the implications of this new form of strike, unprecedented in France. For example, the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry warned: "Lip is the most disturbing social conflict... because the continued operation of the factory, after a robbery, in essence, of the shareholders, calls into question the principles of authority, of property, of responsibility, of respect for contracts vis-a-vis suppliers and subcontractors, which are at the very base of our economic system and of our commercial law."

But despite their fears, the capitalist rulers are reluctant to move against the strikers because of the solid support they have received from the overwhelming majority of Lip workers and from the rest of the French working class. The basic issues generating the struggle at Lip — guaranteed employment for all and the sliding scale of wages — are issues touching all French workers.

The Lip Company is a subsidiary of Ebauches, S.A., a Swiss multinational corporation that also owns the Longines Company. Last April Ebauches announced plans for "restructuring" of the Lip enterprise in order to make it more profitable, resulting in lay-offs of 200 workers.

The workers responded with immediate protests. The CFDT and CGT unions at Lip initiated general assemblies of the workers to discuss what to do. Work stoppages and slow-downs were conducted. The workers covered the factory walls with leaflets and posters as part of an ongoing political discussion of how to assure employment for all. Objections from the foremen were overruled by the workers with the demand for "respect for freedom of expression."

## Workers Rally Broad Support

The Lip workers turned to the population of Besancon for support to their demands for no lay-offs and no dismantlement of any sections of the factory. Workers passed out leaflets at entrances to the

city, engaging in dialogues with motorists. One thousand of the 1300 Lip workers demonstrated on April 26 at the prefecture. On May 10 a rally of 5000 took place in Besancon in support of the workers' demands. On May 28 a delegation of 534 Lip workers travelled to Paris to demonstrate and appeal for support. Political discussions and meetings were taking place constantly in the factory on company time.

Since June 18 the struggle of the Lip workers has found an echo of solidarity across the border in Switzerland, where the problem of lay-offs in the watch industry affects thousands of workers. Many meetings have taken place in solidarity with the Lip struggle, and on June 23 there was a demonstration of 800 persons at the border town of Chaux-de-Fonds. Militants of the Ligue Marxist Revolutionnaire (LMR, Revolutionary Marxist League, Swiss supporters of the Fourth International) were at the centre of the organising activities that built these support actions.

A turning point in the Lip struggle came on June 12, when the administrators of the factory announced to the workers representatives that the company was applying for bankruptcy, and the workers would no longer receive their salaries and also would not receive their vacation pay (vacations for all the workers were to start on June 29). Faced with this ultimatum, the workers representatives decided to hold the managers in their offices in order to find out more about the company's plans against the workers.

## Company Schemes Exposed

Going through the managers' portfolios, the workers found documents laying out plans for lay-offs of nearly half the work force at Lip, by dismantling whole sections of the plant. In a press conference held at the factory, the workers denounced the schemes and lies of the company that were exposed in the secret papers.

One of the documents described the company's plans to put aside 2 million new francs (about \$A 350,000) for expenses from "social disturbances (foreseeable if this plan is put into effect)." Another revealed plans for a wage freeze, and the elimination of the sliding scale of wages and other benefits that the workers had won during the May 1968 general strike. Still another document detailed the methods of police surveillance used against trade-union militants at Lip.

In the middle of the night of June 12-13, several hundred mobile guards and CRS (Compagnies Republicanes de Securite-Republicain Security Corps) descended upon the factory to "free" the two managers. Several strikers were injured in the brutal attack, which was obviously designed to intimidate the workers.

In face of these provocations, the Lip personnel voted in general assembly the following day for an unlimited occupation of the factory "to safeguard our tools." Their demands were for 1) guaranteed jobs; 2) continued payment of wages; and 3) the staggering of vacations. The workers foresaw that if all of them were to leave for vacations as usual, they would most likely face a lockout when they returned.

As security, the workers took over a store of 65,000 watches worth \$A 2 million and hid them in Besancon. "These watches are being kept as our guaranty of employment," a spokesman for the workers told New York Times reporter Clyde Farnsworth. In a general assembly on June 18, the workers decided not to touch these watches, but to start up production again and sell the watches they produced to assure a living wage.

"They refuse to pay us our salaries? We're going to pay them ourselves," the workers declared. The decision was explained by union leaders as "self-defense, not self-mangement."

## Six Organising Commissions

One assembly line was set in motion, and the Lip workers organised themselves into six commissions to carry out a long-term struggle. A production commission was responsible for producing the watches. A reception commission was set up to welcome and take care of visitors to the plant. A popularisation commission set out to spread word about the Lip struggle and to appeal for solidarity from other workers. A sales commission and a management commission were set up to organise the

sale of watches and the bookkeeping. And finally, a security and maintenance commission was set up to organise a twenty-four-hour defense guard for the factory and cleaning of the premises.

In response, the company accused the workers of theft and threatened to prosecute anyone buying Lip watches for receiving stolen goods. The workers answered: "Nothing we are doing can be considered illegal. These watches are the fruit of our work."

In a public statement denouncing "robbery" and "unauthorised sales," the company refused any negotiations until a stop was put to "social agitation." The company attempted to justify its plans for massive lay-offs and dismantlement on the grounds of increased financial burdens due, among other things, to losses resulting from the political developments of May '68 as well as obligations imposed on society in the social arena under the pressure of the same events.

On July 3 the capitalists of the province of Doubs, where Besancon is situated, proclaimed indignantly that "the errors of management at Lip do not give the personnel authority to take the law into their own hands."

The Lip workers answered this charge in the July 11 issue of Lip Unite, the information bulletin published by the popularisation commission. The workers replied: "But the right to order lay-offs, which exists right now, gives the bosses the right to 'take the law' into their own hands." In fighting against dismantlement and lay-offs, through effective forms of action that are decided collectively and are appropriate to the situation, we are exercising our legitimate right of defense."

On June 27 the women workers at Lip (they are more than half the work force) took to the streets in a special demonstration together with their children to emphasise the meaning of the threat of unemployment for their families.

Two days later, the company felt constrained to retreat a step. It agreed to pay the workers their vacation pay and bonus, hoping the strikers would leave the plant and the struggle would be diffused. But the workers decided to give up part of their vacations and stagger them so that 600 workers would always be present to continue production and sale of watches.

## Company Liquidates

Meanwhile, after postponing a decision for one week after week, the Besancon Tribunal of Commerce finally ruled July 13 on the company's application for bankruptcy. It declared liquidation of the enterprise, appointed a public trustee charged with taking an inventory, and authorised continued operation of the plant until December 31, 1973. The capitalist journal Les Echos publicly attacked the tribunal judge for "running away from his responsibilities" in legitimising operation of the plant under workers control if only until December.

"In reality," wrote the weekly Politique Hebdo, "this decision seems to be an exact measure of the relationship of forces established around the exemplary struggle of Lip."

The Pompidou regime has also been forced to handle the Lip situation with kid gloves. Edgar Faure, president of the National Assembly, has made statements that the situation at Lip demonstrates that the workers are capable of "participation" in the running of a company.

French President Georges Pompidou stated on July 19: "It is in the interests of everyone, including the workers, to arrive at an agreement. To make a business run, like it or not, you need money and you need workers. This it is necessary that the two have an understanding."

The unions at Lip replied in a public statement, pointing to the responsibility of the Government "to make a rapid decision that will assure the potentialities of Lip to its entirety. It is imperative that there be no dismantlement of Lip, and that employment for all be guaranteed."

One union delegate, quoted in the July 20 issue of the Communist Party daily l'Humanite, noted that "the Government has to realise what the constant threat of unemployment means to a worker and his family."

One solution that the Government has put forward as a way of diffusing the explosive example set by the Lip workers



Workers and supporters in Besancon demonstrating against layoffs.

is a proposal that the workers take over the factory as shareholders in a co-operative. The workers have rejected this. A statement by the CFDT explains: "We are not going to fall into that trap... We would soon be stuck in the contradictions of the capitalist system and could easily be strangled in the economic arena."

## "We Don't Want to Become Capitalists"

Another statement by the unions states, "We are struggling against capitalism; we don't want to become capitalists."

On July 18 the workers delegates announced their refusal to fill an order for 30,000 watches from a Kuwait businessman, even though it would have meant some \$A 50,000 in revenues. "We are not watch merchants and our aim is not to deal with businessmen who would retail our watches at a profit," stated the workers representatives, quoted in the July 19 Le Monde.

The Lip section of the CFDT and the Action Committee (a volunteer body made up of both unionised and non-unionised militants in the factory) drew up a manifesto which was approved by the workers in general assembly. Addressed to "all workers," it outlines the perspectives of the struggle:

"(The Lip workers) have shown that the bosses are not indispensable and that the workers are capable of organising themselves, on their own, even in the economic sphere (production and exchange of goods). It is not only the management of Lip that has been challenged, but the whole employer class..."

"Obviously at Lip we are in a privileged branch of production: The watch is a finished product that is quite easily sold. The action carried out here is not transposable, across the board, to all enterprises. Nevertheless, the method we are using, adapted to local circumstances, can be utilised in hundreds of factories."

"It is up to you to think this over, to collectively take the initiatives necessary to enlarge the breach made in the 'system' that imprisons us..."

"Our struggle can be an important gain for all workers, if tomorrow other attempts are made in the same direction, if we collectively think out our methods of action to make them most effective."

## Union Holds Back Support

A first run of 150,000 copies of these manifestos are now being distributed

throughout France. At the last minute the CP-led CGT refused to add its name to the document. The CGT bureaucrats felt the statement went too far in generalising from the Lip workers' experience.

The CGT explained its position in a separate statement, belittling the importance of the methods used at Lip. "It is strange," says the CGT document, "that those in power and so-called revolutionary organisations join together in amazement that the workers of Lip prove the capacity of self-management... It is not a question of mindlessly copying forms of struggle which, while positive in a given situation, could prove to be not so good, and even detrimental, in other cases."

Despite its wishes, however, the CP is powerless to keep the example of Lip from inspiring workers throughout France. The continued involvement of the rank-and-file Lip workers, despite the many weeks of struggle, testifies to the depth of sentiment behind the workers' demands.

For example, one worker told a reporter from the revolutionary-socialist weekly Rouge about the long hours many workers put in for the struggle: "There are guys who work during the day and also take part in the night guard, in the weekend guard, etc. For example, last Saturday and Sunday I stayed about fifteen hours in the factory. That doesn't keep me from coming back today."

"And then, you don't stay only in the shops, there are discussions. You have to keep on top of things. You go to meetings; you go to see the guys from the Action Committee, etc."

"This is why I am ready to do work that I would refuse to do in normal times."

The struggle by the Lip workers for economic demands has taken on many aspects of a social movement. The workers have organised a whole programme of social events to help maintain the solidarity and morale of the strikers, including presentation of theatre performances, singers, and films. General assemblies are held daily, where reports from the commissions are heard and important decisions made.

A child-care centre has been set up for children of the workers, and volunteers from Besancon are asked to help staff it.

The factory has been opened up to all visitors who solidarise with the struggle, and every care is taken to welcome them and inform them about the situation. The reception area contains photographic displays showing the course of the fight, long bulletin boards containing messages and telegrams of solidarity from workers

all over the world, displays of press coverage, and a large board containing the latest financial situation of the factory and of the solidarity fund.

A refreshment area has been set up especially for visitors. The factory premises are kept cleaner than ever before. The production workers have found that they can produce in four hours under workers control what they did in nine hours under the boss.

What will be the outcome of the Lip struggle? According to Daniel Montibelli, a CFDT member in charge of press relations for the popularisation commission, the workers would consider it a victory, and would turn over the factory, if a new capitalist would sign a written agreement to their demands. No dismantlement, guaranteed jobs for all 1300 workers, and maintenance of all other gains — such as the sliding scale of wages — won in the past.

## Nationalisation Under Worker's Control

Asked what he thought about the demand for nationalisation of the factory under workers control as a way to legitimise the current situation, Montibelli felt that, of course, that would be best, but it was "only a hope, with not much chance of achievement." If Lip were nationalised under workers control, he said, "then all the workers of France would want the same thing."

The July 20 issue of Rouge, weekly newspaper put out by French Trotskyists, set forth the revolutionary-Marxist solution to the Lip "problem":

"In fact, there can be no good employer or good manager that will not raise the question of profits. Administrators can be changed and bankruptcy can be declared, but the financial problems of distribution and profitability remain. What's more, promises of guaranteed employment can always be made, papers can be signed; it makes no difference.

"The capitalists will not hesitate to violate their own legality when their interests are at stake. So? Will the workers have to bear the costs of profitability, of the deficit? Not at all.

"Under the existing conditions, why won't the Government take over the Lip business, with the workers keeping charge of the management and of working conditions? Nationalisation of Lip under workers control is the only avenue that would allow for guaranteeing both employment and the other gains of the struggle. And what's more, it is the only realistic thing to do."

# 400 Protest US Cambodia Involvement

BY STEVE PAINTER

On Friday August 10 around 400 people gathered in the Melbourne City Square to protest the continued United States intervention in the war in Cambodia. The rally was called around the theme that the United States end its intervention in Cambodia and that the Australian Government withdraw support including diplomatic recognition, from the Lon Nol dictatorship. Speakers at the rally included Margaret Holding from the ALP, Jean McLean, a leading figure in the Socialist Left of the ALP, John Lloyd from the congress for International Co-operation and Disarmament (CICD), Keith Langford from the Worker Student Alliance (WSA) and Steve Painter from the Socialist Workers League (SWL).

Support for the rally was indicated by the Minister for Overseas Trade and second industry Dr Jim Cairns. The minister called on Melbourne people to attend the demonstration and demanded the immediate cessation of the bombing.

Dr Cairns said Australia should never have recognised the Lon Nol regime in Cambodia and should acknowledge the exiled Prince Sihanouk as the head of State.

"The reason for the demonstration is to bring to notice the utter indefensibility of carrying on the war in Cambodia" he said.

The rally was called to draw attention to the fact that the war in Indo-China is continuing and that the United States intervention in that war has not ended. Speakers emphasised the fact that although the United States bombing of Cambodia was due to end on August 15, continued US intervention was still probable through the medium of Thai and South Vietnamese troops and equipment. It was also pointed out that US military supplies to the Thieu and Lon Nol regimes would probably play an important role in holding back the Indo-Chinese liberation forces after August 15.

The rally was followed by a march through the city with stops in several places to address late-night shoppers. Chants during the march included: US Out of Cambodia, US Out of Indo-China, and US Out Now. Unfortunately members of the Worker Student Alliance introduced a note of national chauvinism into the march with chants of Yankee Go Home and US Out of Australia.

The attendance at the demonstration was impressive considering that the action was only set 17 days earlier, on July 24, and that the Friends of Cambodia, the organization which called the action, was only set up on that date. The short notice meant that some groups were not able to do much work for the action. But the success of August 10 indicates that potential exists for larger actions around the issue.

The Maoist WSA showed that it has

## Parramatta By-election

BY SOL SALBY

The coming by-election in the Federal seat of Parramatta is going to provide the most serious test to the Labor Government since it assumed office. The by-election was caused by the retirement of the former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nigel Bowen.

While it has been commonly predicted in the capitalist press that the Liberals will retain the seat, the Labor leadership is hoping to capture it. A change in the seat will not affect the working of the Government as Labor already has a comfortable majority in the House of Representatives. But as a test of Labor's rule and the actions of the Government it will be watched with a great deal of

interest. learned nothing from recent events, both in Indo-China and in the Australian anti-war movement. It still wants to limit the scope of the anti-war movement by imposing upon it demands which are not designed to be comprehensible and to appear reasonable to large numbers of people. Instead the WSA insisted upon demands such as "an end to US economic, political and military domination of Australia", and called for support to Prince Sihanouk.

The complete support of the Maoists for Prince Norodom Sihanouk exemplifies their failure to comprehend this principle. To call upon the Australian Government to recognise the Sihanouk regime reflects a recognition of the real situation in Cambodia at the present time. Sihanouk apparently has the support of the majority of the people. However to march in the streets chanting "two, four, six, eight, Sihanouk must be Head of State", is to call for support for and confidence in Sihanouk, a feudal prince. No socialist participating in the anti-war movement could support such a demand and many non-socialist anti-war supporters would have grave doubts about supporting such a ruler.

In building the anti-war movement the important thing is to secure agreement around the central issues. The anti-war movement brings together people who may have serious disagreements on issues other than the fact that the brutal intervention by the United States and its allies in Indo-China should end. Imposing broader demands as the basis around which the coalition works can only exacerbate disagreements and serve to drive some elements out of the movement, thus limiting its potential.

If support is to be mobilised for the struggles of the peoples of Indo-China, then the aim is to formulate demands which will appeal to the maximum numbers of people while recognising that the United States has no right to be interfering in the internal affairs of the people of Indo-China and that the US should withdraw and allow the Indo-Chinese people to determine their own



Sihanouk... Maoist choice for "head of state"

## Two Socialists on Melbourne SRC

BY PETER CONRICK

In the recent general elections for the Student Representative Council at Melbourne University, the Socialist Youth Alliance ran three candidates, two of them being elected. The election was not fought along any particular issues but the majority of "moderate" candidates. Nonetheless, the elections received considerable interest this year as a focus of campus politics, despite the fact that the overall number of students voting had dropped from the previous year.

However, the presence of the two SYA SRC members, plus one or two left-leaning candidates who were successful will mean a qualitative change in the

interest.

In particular the by-election will be watched closely by the leadership of the three capitalist parties: the Liberal Party, the Country Party and the Democratic Labor Party. A Labor victory will be seen by them as a warning not to obstruct the implementation of any aspect of Labor's programme. A strong swing against Labor on the other hand will be seen by these parties as encouragement to force a double dissolution of both houses of Parliament by blocking important Labor legislation in the Senate.

Commentators have predicted a Liberal victory mainly on the trend against governments in past by-elections. On the other hand Labor should benefit from the 18-year-old vote and the changing

role of the SRC at Melbourne.

One of the main reasons for the lower turnout was the nature of the election campaign itself. On Melbourne there are a series of electoral regulations which forbid the use of printed material in campaigns - as a result, the number of students actually knowing about the elections diminished. Of course this regulation effectively stifles the discussion of political issues around the elections, and favors the non-political, "personalised" style of campaign utilised by the entrenched bureaucrats of campus politics. This year was no different and the majority

nature of Sydney's outer suburbs, like Parramatta which reflected a strong trend towards Labor in the last Federal elections.

An important factor which could influence the election is the youth vote. While the final figures are not yet available the electoral rolls show that only few of the newly enfranchised 18 year olds have enrolled. Labor's strongest support came from younger voters last December.

Despite any disillusionment, which may explain the lack of enthusiasm to enrol, it is important that Labor wins this by-election. No possible encouragement should be given to the capitalist parties. Only a vote for Labor can be seen as the complete rejection of the capitalist parties.

future. Around the demand that the Indo-Chinese people be allowed to run their own affairs free from imperialist interference, large numbers of people can be mobilised while introducing issues such as US domination of Australia can only limit the potential of the movement.

The WSA, supposedly a socialist organization, also raised the slogans Yankee Go Home and US Out of Australia. Such demands have no place in the anti-war movement and serve no purpose except perhaps to indicate the distance which the WSA has travelled along the road to collaboration with the Australian ruling class. Certainly no socialist who understands the role of bourgeois nationalism in dividing the working class on a world-wide scale would raise such demands. On top of that they introduce into the anti-war movement issues which can only divide it and which are not central to ending the war in Indo-China.

The aim of the anti-war movement is to achieve the withdrawal of the imperialist forces intervening in Indo-China in order to shape the future of that region to suit their own interests. Withdrawal of the United States and its allies will allow the Indo-Chinese people to run their own affairs. That is the position which can draw in large numbers of people to the anti-war movement - let the Indo-Chinese people decide for themselves. The WSA recognised the importance of the demand for withdrawal by making it the first point in the platform of the Friends of Cambodia, but they immediately counteracted that by adding a number of other demands including support for Sihanouk and an end to US "domination" of Australia. A sizeable anti-war movement can be rebuilt in Melbourne but it can only reach its maximum effectiveness if it is organised around the demand which strikes right at the imperialist intervention. That is the demand for complete and immediate withdrawal of all US troops, "advisers" and war materials from the area.

of successful candidates were of the apolitical, "moderate" variety.

The two successful SYA candidates were Lorraine Huddle and Peter Conrick. Huddle was elected unopposed as representative of the Architecture faculty. Conrick won a narrowly contested vacancy for Arts faculty representative by four votes.

In the elections for General Representative, a leftward swing was also evident in the victory of current Farrago editor, Simon Marginson. Although Marginson maintains a reputation as a radical, the formulation of his platform was more concerned with welfare issues (such as the price of books) with a token acknowledgement of gay liberation thrown in at the end. Unlike the SYA programmes (which drew clear precise demands such as the creation of a women's studies course, staffed and controlled by women) Marginson simply used the women's and gay liberation movements as trendy vote-catchers for the left.

Still, for the first time in almost three years, there is now a "left opposition" to the vacillating, fence-sitting policies of the Melbourne University SRC. Already there have been signs that this SRC will be more prepared to take a progressive stand on the mass movement and struggles of the oppressed. Apart from sponsoring a petition in defence of the outlawed Ligue Communiste (the French section of the Fourth International), the SRC also provided finance for the demonstration held in Melbourne on August 10 against the bombing of Cambodia.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## FORCED STERILISATION

To the Editor,

In DA (July 19) you mention the case of forced sterilisation concerning the Relf family.

Well, women are again being pressured but this time in England by doctors who will only do a nationalised abortion if it includes sterilisation. Sometimes, they openly make it a condition of the abortion.

Thousands of women have had to make a hasty decision on sterilisation in the anxious weeks that they also decide on abortion.

A leading medical magazine pointed out "Even when age is allowed for (sterilisation is more common among older women) the increased MORTALITY for abortion with sterilisation is striking."

On a purely medical side, a combination operation is considerably more dangerous.

Overall, more than a third of abortions in National Health Scheme hospitals include sterilisation. Single women are rarely sterilised. But, if the number of married women aborted is analysed, the proportion rises to a staggering high one in two. A quarter - approx. 3700 - are under 30 years old. Approximately the same number have two or less children.

While 46 per cent of all married women have an abortion with sterilisation, Liverpool and Birmingham (who don't like like abortions) sterilise nearly two-thirds of married women who have abortions.

One sterilisation unit at Birmingham sterilised about 800 women a year and admits that between 1 and 1.5 per cent women change their minds.

So, are all those abortions that supposedly cause sterilisation caused by backyard abortionists or by "good thinking" doctors, again punishing women for trying to do a good turn for their family and have control of their own body?

Mrs L. of Lakemba

## INCONSISTENT?

Dear Comrades,

The Socialist Youth Alliance and the women's liberation movement have always given full support to struggles for full sexual liberation. You support abortion on demand, freely available contraception, gay rights, pre-marital sex, etc, and you oppose pornography laws (such as the one earlier this year). You always come into conflict with

puritanism and bourgeois morality. I can't see how this squares with the article by Penny Jackson in DA entitled "Sexism defeated on Adelaide Campus." In this article, it tells how women's lib stood against the strippers. Why? I notice that by doing this they were lining up with the Christians (!) How can you go against laws restricting blue movies (DA 39 and many others), yet at the same time support the restriction of strippers. Only puritans can go against strippers. Of course you can say it is exploiting women, but then what was wrong when they said there would be both male and female strippers? I notice the article didn't say blue movies were opposed. Does this mean you didn't oppose them? If so, congratulations, but I can't see the difference between strippers and blue movies. You speak against the society for the total abolition of morals as "backward". But isn't that what we are for? Similarly with the Coburg High Quest. As a girl from Coburg High, I should know that the girls participating don't feel exploited, they just want to see who is the most beautiful. If girls want to go in quests in front of the public, and women want to strip in front of other people, why shouldn't they, and why shouldn't people watch them? How can the bourgeois not want people to watch pornography, but want us to watch strippers, at the same time.

This is the way I see it. Maybe I am leaving something out, and if so I would be grateful if someone there could inform me what it is. By the way, I don't think of this letter as an attack on revolutionary ideas: I think you have betrayed revolutionary ideas in your article.

Yours,  
A student from Coburg High

## D.A. REPLIES

DIRECT ACTION has always opposed all forms of political and cultural censorship because we do not think that there should be any laws which restrict peoples' access to information or choice of entertainment. However, while supporting the right of people to access to "pornography", for example, we recognise that most pornography expresses the sexism and anti-woman prejudices of our society.

That is why we support struggles such as those against strippers on Adelaide campus and the "Miss Coburg High Quest" which attempt to explain the function of such displays and parades in sexually objectifying and dehumanising women i.e., we support the struggle to change peoples' consciousness and ideas. Stripping and beauty contests have nothing to do with "sexual liberation" but merely reflect the distortion of sexuality and human relationships under capitalist society.

## DA GETS AROUND

Selling DIRECT ACTION on the streets is the most reliable and steady source of sales. But, the easiest sales can be made at workers' stop-work meetings and on the campuses.

With staggered holiday periods the stability of these sales is affected, so many students take subscriptions. We know of over a hundred subscriptions from the University of New South Wales alone but exact figures are hard to come by because many students subscribe by mail or buy their subscriptions down-town.

Nevertheless during university term sales on campus are very good. In two or three sessions during lunch time eighty to ninety copies can be sold by SYA members on campus.

In this way DIRECT ACTION gets sold regularly on eleven of Australia's universities. On the other four (James

Cook, Western Australia, Tasmania and Flinders University) we have quite a few subscribers.

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## DIRECT ACTION FORUMS

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Friday, August 31, 8.00 pm  
"THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION AND THE ARAB EAST" Sol Salby, Israeli-born socialist analyses the impact that the Palestinian revolution has had on the whole Arab East.

Friday, September 14, 8.00 pm  
"BEHIND THE CRISIS IN ARGENTINA" Mike Jones analyses the present crisis in Argentina and the development of the coming revolution there.

### Melb

at 140 QUEENSBERRY STREET, CARLTON.

Thursday, August 30, 8.00 pm  
"WORKERS CONTROL" Peter Conrick discusses various concepts of workers control and its revolutionary application.

Thursday, September 13, 8.00 pm  
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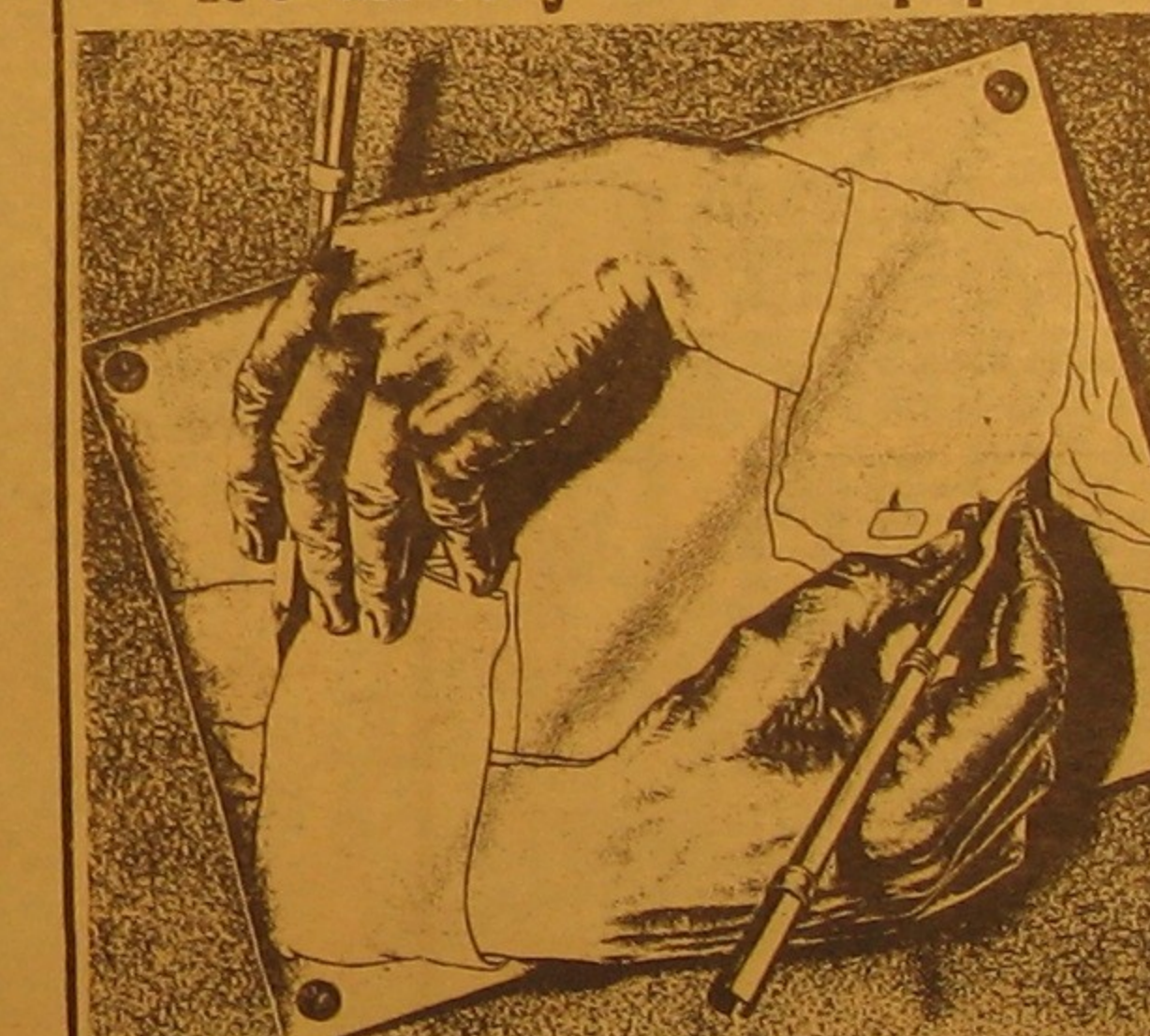
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## DIRECT ACTION

### What the Discussion at Ottawa Meant

# THE PM'S CONFERENCE

BY JIM McILROY

The Australian Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, continued to push forward the new themes of his Government's foreign policy at the Ottawa Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference which ended on August 11. His attacks on the British Prime Minister, Edward Heath, and Singapore Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, as "the last of the conservatives" were intended to dramatise his view of the changing nature of the Commonwealth, and of international relationships generally. Whitlam wanted, in Ottawa, as in Washington and elsewhere, to break from the cold war image of Australian foreign policy characteristic of the Liberals and adjust to the new realities of the break from British and US domination of the ex-British imperial section of the capitalist world.

That Whitlam could be criticised by Heath for bringing "party politics" into a Commonwealth conference for the first time ever shows the nature of these conferences traditionally — a fireside chat for political leaders for mutual co-operation in maintaining themselves. None of the leaders present headed governments capable of tackling the vast problems of the working populations or the ethnic minorities of their countries.

Lee replied to Whitlam's charge about his being the last of the conservatives, along with Ted Heath, by a hot denial: "I don't know who's left or right," he said. And later, he said: "I don't know whether to be flattered that I'm not put together with 'the generals in the bloc'," referring to the group of African military dictators. "The fact is that we have varying views on varying subjects. Being left or right, conservative or socialist, makes very little sense these days." It certainly makes no sense describing Commonwealth leaders as socialists. Lee's reputation as a 'socialist' is rather hard to credit — as a man who goals real socialists in Singapore, suppresses the Press, and is a rabid and unrepentant cold war warrior from way back.

The Commonwealth conference did however provide a reflection of the new complexities of the international situation during the beginning phase of the detente between Washington and the bureaucracies of Moscow and Peking. This front was made on August 11 by Robert Duffield, foreign editor of the Australian in discussing the Whitlam/Lee debate as representative of the continuing pro and anti detente forces in the capitalist world. He writes: "We are not as free as developing countries might think to help them because of control of large sections of our economy by multi-national corporations," the Prime Minister said. "Australia is not fully master in its own house." The Melbourne Age on August 14 reported: "On his speech to the conference on multi-national corporations, Mr Whitlam said Britain, through its

giant companies, was seeking to dominate Commonwealth countries.

"Corporation domination would replace the old dominations of sterling, imperial preferences and military and administrative arrangements."

Leading Tory and yachtsman Ted Heath immediately criticised this statement. He attacked what he called Australia's "new economic nationalism", and accused the Australian Labor Government of trying to create an international cartel of mineral producers.

Edward Heath made one valid point. He refuted Whitlam's argument that Australia had much in common with developing nations because it depended on primary products and mineral exports, by pointing out that this was not necessarily the key point in determining who was gaining from multi-national investment.

Heath pointed out that Australia, New Zealand and Canada had a higher per capita income than Britain's. The real standard of living and quality of life of a country depended on per capita income, not on gross national product.

The point is that Australia is a beneficiary of the international imperialist economy overall — not an oppressed nation, as Whitlam and others, would have us believe. To identify with the colonial countries in this way is politically useful for Whitlam, but hardly realistic. Australia is stuck with multi-national corporations, its economy feeds off overseas investment. The only way to break with this situation is to sever links with the imperialist system completely and establish a nationalised economy under workers control.



The logic of this step, of course is right outside Whitlam's way of thinking. This contradiction in the Labor leadership's policy must be brought out more and more as the problems of the world economy deepen

Whitlam's duel with the "two conservatives" - Lee and Heath has exposed two sides of the present world situation and the Australian Labor Government's response to it.

One, the debate over the new detente: Can it be more successful in turning back revolution in the colonial world when the cold war failed? A forlorn hope indeed. Two, the new rivalry between large and small capitalist powers: where do the interests of Australian capitalism lie?

The Labor Prime Minister's tirade against multi-national corporations is a response to the growing feeling of hostility by Australian working people to the predatory activities of big business - to inflation, to speed-ups, corporate greed, to deteriorating condi-

tions of life. Whitlam and his Government hope to be able to channel this frustration and harness it. But there is no guarantee this can be done successfully.

A struggle within the Labor Party and outside it must be waged to pose correct alternatives to reject nationalist side-roads, to throw up demands which challenge the status quo at its basis. The Socialist Left, in particular, must not succumb to the nationalist illusion, which only falls into a trap laid by the Whitlam leadership. Rather, socialists should analyse the changing nature of the US-Australia alliance, perceive its more complex character today, and seek to challenge any attempt to shift the economic problem of this country onto the working people of other countries.

"In their jibes at each other at the Commonwealth conference in Ottawa, both men were reacting not to each other but to two basic facts of international life today, which they both recognise: the era of superpower detente between America and Russia and America and China; and the hysterical hostility between Russia and China. Mr. Whitlam has appraised this situation and he sees it working to the advantage of Australia. The view I understand him to hold is that the US - Russia honeymoon launched by the recent summit between Mr. Nixon and Mr. Brezhnev has the spin-off of giving a Labor-led Australia more room for manoeuvre. . . . The era of detente has freed us from the sort of mandatory anti-communism which got us, willy-nilly, into Vietnam. John Foster Dulles is dead; long live Henry Kissinger."

Duffield goes on to suggest Whitlam's purpose in his intervention at the Commonwealth conference, particularly as far as developing an image with the colonial world is concerned. "Despite setbacks other than Harry Lee's sarcasm, he (Whitlam) has established particularly with the African members of the Commonwealth, the image of a new, progressive, semi-socialist Australia no longer tied to anyone's apron strings."

'Semi-socialist' is as far as it goes, certainly. But which half of the new policy is it? Gough Whitlam's main contribution to the solution of the problems of African liberation during the conference was to offer to contribute Australian police to help supervise a 'settlement' of the dispute in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) part of a multi-national scheme suggested by Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau.

The Melbourne Age reported on August 11: "Mr. Whitlam said such a 'presence' could help reassure whites in Rhodesia that they would not be subject to violence in the wake of a settlement. This could reduce their intransigence." In other words, Australian police are to be used to enforce a 'solution' on the black people of Zimbabwe, which will be 'acceptable' to the white colonial minority.

Where is the 'socialism' in this? A socialist solution is to assert the basic right to full self-determination for the oppressed black majority of Zimbabwe — irrespective of the tender feelings of the white settlers. No capitalist police force is going to 'supervise' that solution. Australian police would be used in a similar role to their present one in the UN - sponsored 'solution' in Cyprus — a solution which merely helps to enforce the status quo in that country.

The fact that Whitlam also denied that Australian troops would be used is a clear response to the strong feelings engendered in Australia against foreign military adventures after Vietnam. It is indicative of the emphasis on a so-called 'civilian', not 'military' defence which Whitlam is seeking to promote that police, not troops would be used, the function is quite similar.

Another reflection of the new international situation was the Whitlam/Heath confrontation at the conference over the role of multi-national corporations. Whitlam's strong speech condemning the role of the multi-nationals drew Heath's fire, as the direct representative of capitalist interests in Britain.

Whitlam said that, like Canada, Australia had the problem that its industrial output was controlled by multi-national corporations. There was a tendency to "blame or credit governments of major developed countries on trade and monetary matters" — but multi-national corporations are developing an economy of their own.



Lee, Heath, Whitlam and