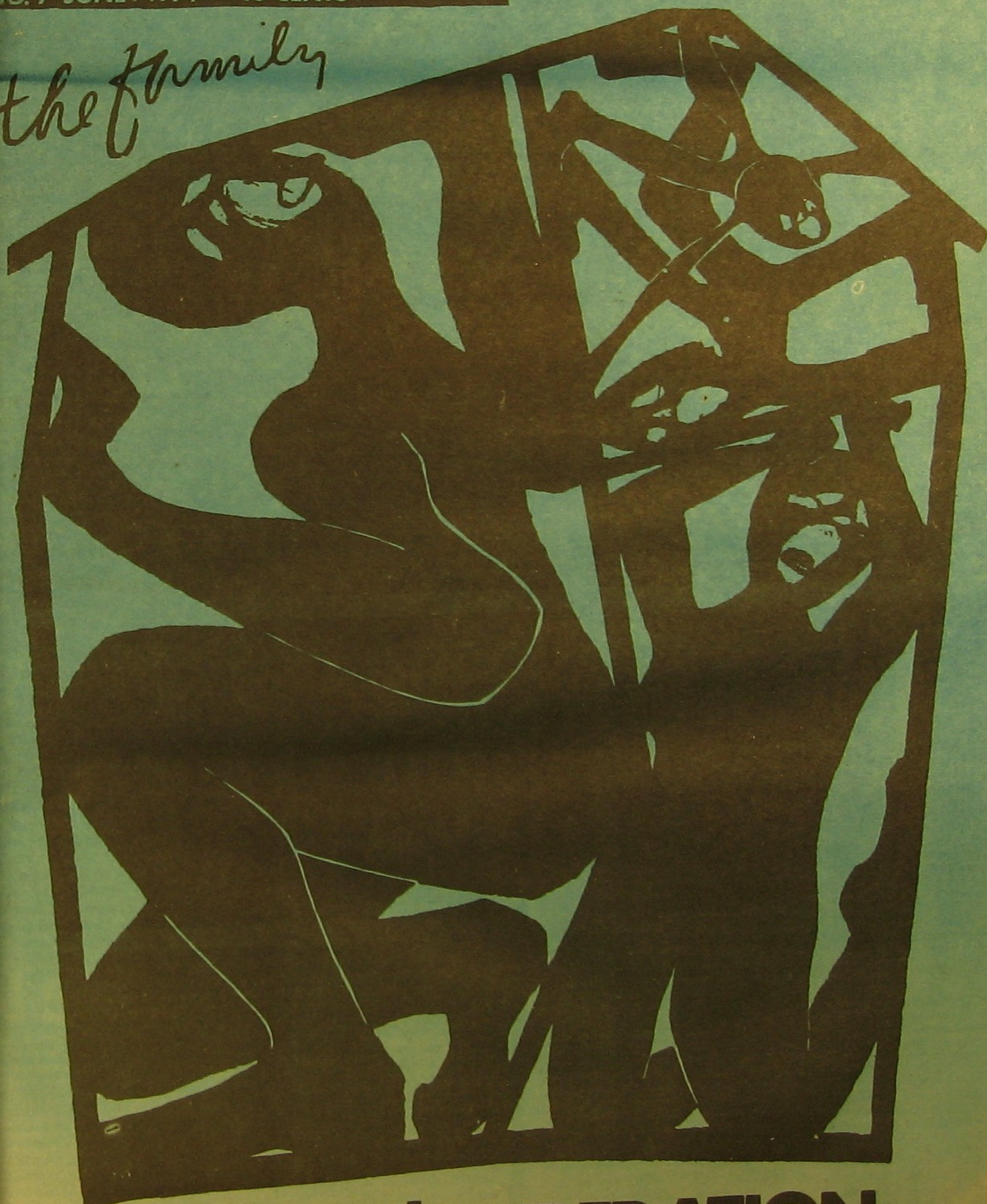


DIRECT ACTION

INTERVIEW WITH JOHN LENNON

PUBLISHED BY SOCIALIST YOUTH ALLIANCE
NO. 7 JUNE 1971 10 CENTS

the family



WOMEN'S LIBERATION

A SOCIALIST STRATEGY FOR WOMEN'S LIBERATION

We reprint below a slightly abridged version of a document presented to the Second National Conference of the Socialist Youth Alliance held in Melbourne last April 10-11. It was presented to the Conference by Nita Keig on behalf of the National Executive and adopted unanimously by the delegates.

In the last issue of *Direct Action* we reprinted the Antiwar and Labour Movement documents adopted by the Conference. In coming issues we will reproduce our other documents on the Youth Radicalisation and the role of S.Y.A. and one on the International Revolutionary movement.

Below are some greetings sent to the Conference by fraternal organisations overseas.



NEW ZEALAND Socialist Action League

Dear Comrades,
The Socialist Action League sends its warmest revolutionary greetings to the second national conference of the Socialist Youth Alliance. It is with great regret that we are unable to send a delegate to your conference.

The growth and development of the SYA, and particularly of your magazine *Direct Action*, has impressed us greatly. We wish you every success in building the revolutionary socialist youth organisation and combat party that will lead the revolution in Australia to victory.
Long live the Socialist Youth Alliance!
Long live the Fourth International!

Russell Johnson
National Secretary,
S.A.L.

U.S.A. Comrades, the Young Socialist Alliance

Alliance sends its warmest revolutionary greetings to the second national conference of the Socialist Youth Alliance being held in Melbourne, Australia April 10 and 11. We regret being not able personally to deliver our greetings.

The growth of the Socialist Youth Alliance, your ability to attract youth to your programme of revolutionary socialism, is an indication of the correctness of your program and of your leadership role in the struggles of Australian youth. We of the YSA stand with you in your common struggle to create a socialist world and a socialist Australia.
Long live the Socialist Youth Alliance!
Young Socialist Alliance

Executive Council,
Young Socialists/
Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes.

CANADA

Canadian revolutionary students hail your conference as sign of rising international youth radicalisation. Together we will win.

For women to free themselves they must organize together. The need for women to organize themselves independently of men is very important. They must raise their consciousness as a group and act as a group. Only women can have an intimate understanding of the many physical and psychological problems which they face, and having such a broad, united movement of women is the only way they can gain the confidence to fight and overcome these.

Because of the constant influx of new women into the movement there will always be a need for women to organize independently. The movement as a whole will never arrive at a state of being sufficiently confident to no longer need this. As revolutionary socialists we see the struggle for women's liberation as an integral part of the struggle for socialism. We see them as inseparable. Only socialism can provide the material basis for the liberation of women, as the oppression of women as a sex is deeply rooted in the institutions of class society. Therefore, the history and tradition of women's oppression is a very long one and one not easily overturned. The struggle for women's full freedom and equality must be one which carries well into the future, past the time when these institutions which oppress women are broken up and the material conditions for the liberation of women laid down.

Some women point to the reactionary attitude of the Soviet Union toward women as proof that what they identify as socialism is not the answer to the oppression of women. It must be explained what happened in the Soviet Union. After the Russian revolution, the Soviet state instituted measures to legalize abortions, liberalize marriage and divorce laws so that women would have equal rights with men. The material backwardness of the Soviet Union and the isolation of the revolution enabled a privileged bureaucracy to arise and consolidate power over the Soviet state. This Stalinist bureaucracy reversed the gains made by women in the early days of the revolution as part of its strategy for staying in power. The state did not have the resources to immediately free women from the oppression of the family, but rather than admit this and proceed to develop these resources as fast as possible, Stalin restored the family as a sacred social unit and a "progressive" force, using the authoritarian rule necessary to uphold the Stalinist bureaucracy. The example of what occurred in the Soviet Union further points to the necessity for a continuing struggle.

In the meantime, our task as revolutionary socialists within the movement should be to press for a massive independent movement, around demands which we consider to be transitional, which will challenge the government and further build the movement, and to raise the level of consciousness of women as to the origins of their oppression and the nature of the enemy which they must fight. The dynamics of the movement are such that women cannot but help see the contradictions between the existing society and the form of society which could fulfill their needs. However, this process must be hastened and the many possible diversions circumented where possible.

Man-hating is probably the chief diversion in the movement. Although it is a natural response of women when they first become aware of their oppression, the identity of the enemy must not be confused. However, we must endeavour to raise this consciousness to a higher level of understanding so that they become aware of the need to fight the real enemy - class society. Men, at the same time must be encouraged to familiarize themselves with the problems facing women and to curb chauvinistic tendencies in their own behaviour. Men can be a vital ally in the struggle and must be won over to the cause, not made antagonistic to it and kept ignorant. They are also victims of their conditioning and suffer, although differently, from the same distortion of human relationships as women, under capitalism.

Other tendencies on the left frequently make criticisms of the women's liberation movement, saying that it is not a revolutionary movement because it does not take up the struggle against imperialism, that it poses middle class or reformist demands and that it divides the working class. They argue, in fact, that women should get behind their men in time of strike action etc or work solely within unions. They say that there is no place for women to organize independently as women, because women are too divided to unite i.e. that the needs and demands of middle class women have no relevance to working class women.

This is not true. Although middle class women would obviously often have more loyalties to their class than to their sex, this is frequently not the case. It is possible for sex lines to cut across class lines, as all women are victims of oppression as a sex. Although the needs of working class women would obviously

be more urgent, in they do not have the money to pay for abortions, childcare etc at the exorbitant prices at which they are available in this society, demands for such things are also relevant to middle class women, who must also be a part of the movement. (The movement up to date has mainly been initiated and supported by middle class women, following the pattern of the youth radicalization, but this composition is changing as the movement grows.) As for the denial that women have the right to organize independently - the necessity for this has already been explained. Women must organize themselves into their own movement if they are to wage a successful struggle against their oppression and to raise the consciousness of the rest of society about it.

When it comes to the question of fighting imperialism in the women's movement, the same arguments apply as to those against bringing, for example anti-apartheid slogans into the aims of the Movement. To try to make a movement a multi-issue movement is, of necessity, to limit its size and capacity to be effective in achieving specific demands. If women are brought to an anti-capitalist position through the struggle for their liberation, then they will have also been brought to an anti-imperialist position. Any movement which strikes at capitalism is a movement which unites the overall revolutionary movement and strengthens, and raises the consciousness of the working class.

Another tendency within the movement is that which attempts to channel women's demands into parliamentary struggles and leave the movement open for co-optation by bourgeois politicians. These forces are usually against mass street demonstrations which take struggles out of the realm of government control. Although we agree that parliamentary and election campaigns can be useful in furthering the aims of the movement, and all opportunities should be taken in order to do this, we must fight to preserve the independence of the movement and not allow the demands to be modified until they are worthless as weapons in the struggle.

A tendency which has some influence within the movement is that which rejects the need for mass action and thinks that it is enough to build complexes of small "consciousness-raising" groups to discuss the problems of women. Such people believe that individual solutions can be found when people have raised their consciousness to a sufficiently high level. These petty-bourgeois elements tend to intellectualize the movement and sidetrack it into ineffective channels. Mass actions, they say, can't hope to get across to people the multiplicity of ways in which women are oppressed. This attitude is basically an elitist attitude, geared to keeping the movement small. We should be seeking to spread the movement to all women, and the quickest, most effective way of reaching new layers of women is via mass action. We should be trying to build the biggest, broadest movement possible, as mass actions can mobilize large numbers of women against the system. This form of action, that of bringing large numbers of people into the street around specific demands and putting direct pressure on the government, is a strategy already proven correct in the anti-war movement, where the powers of the government have been substantially limited. It also plays an important role in unifying the movement, emphasising the solidarity of women and spreading its aims to wider circles of women.

Such forms of action are in no way to be seen as being in contradiction with small-group organizing. Both areas of work are essential to the growth and success of the movement. The chief function of the small consciousness-raising group is to educate, to help women to gain confidence in their own abilities as speakers, writers etc. and to raise their consciousness about their oppression. Being able to formulate and articulate one's ideas is an important part of this process. Another practical and important function of the small group is to print and distribute educational literature to interested people, especially women. These groups can also play an important role by organizing public forums and debates around the question. These serve to educate others (particularly men who are usually excluded from women's liberation meetings), to discuss differences within the movement and to help break down prejudices resulting from misunderstanding, distorted media publicity etc. Small groups can also wage small-scale campaigns around discrimination issues.

However, the capacities of individual groups are limited when it comes to organizing for mass action. For this, a broad coalition of all women's grouping is needed. Such a coalition may include not only Women's Liberation groups from local areas, universities etc., but groups who campaign around specific issues of concern to women, e.g. abortion law reform groups, as well as women not attached to any organization or group.

In order to achieve unity within such a broad spectrum of women it is necessary to formulate basic, central demands around which everyone can agree. These must be carefully chosen. Firstly, they must be actual demands and not merely slogans. Concrete demands have a much greater impact and bear greater political pressure than vague sloganizing. Secondly, they must be popular and relevant to women's needs such as those of abortion on demand, 24 hour childcare centres, equal pay and equal opportunity and so forth. Thirdly, they should be the sorts of demands around which most groups can agree, regardless of political differences.

A coalition built on this basis must be non-exclusive. No woman should be excluded on grounds of class, politics or membership of an organization considered to be "male-dominated." Apart from the fact that all organizations of mixed membership are male-dominated (and therefore 99% of women come under this category), this attitude is, in fact, a negation of the whole concept of women's liberation. Women should be encouraged to take a more active part in other fields of work. To condemn a woman for participating in other organizations is to suggest that she is incapable of doing so.

The broad coalition must have a mechanism for democratic decision-making and for delegating responsibility for organizational tasks. Many women oppose the application of a chairwoman, procedures as electing a chairwoman, having an agenda and taking votes. As any who have attended meetings with no organization will be aware, the meetings are usually dominated by two or three more articulate individuals whose consensus is usually found to be the consensus of the meeting. This does not guarantee everyone the greatest

giving them confidence in the realisation that their problems are shared by large numbers of other women. It is, in itself, a form of consciousness-raising.

There is enormous scope for women to organize themselves in universities, schools, factories and offices - in fact in all places where women come together in large numbers. Women can be introduced to the concept of women's liberation and made aware of the ways in which they are oppressed by pointing out, in each case, the areas in which they are discriminated against, e.g. education, wages, double work load, fields of work closed to women. Housewives, though often harder to reach, can also be involved. The boring, repetitive nature of their work, their loneliness and economic dependence, and limitations imposed on them by lack of childcare facilities, often make them the most ardent supporters.

At universities, where women are frequently the most conscious of their second-class role, campaigns can be waged around university-financed child-care facilities, a curriculum of women's studies, and an end to all forms of sex-discrimination on campus. High school students can also make up a large section of the movement. The problems concerned with coping with sexual needs and a more adult social life while living at home and attending schools where they are treated as children, cause a great deal of conflict. Girls are frequently expelled from schools because they are pregnant, for example. It is already apparent that high schools are another important area of the youth radicalization.

The forms that the women's liberation movement can take are many, from the consciousness-raising group to the public forum to the coalition organizing large street demonstrations. All these have their place. Clearly, however, if we are to have any effect in achieving the demands of women we must ensure that our underlying strategy is one which aims at involving the largest number of women in conscious action to end their oppression.

The Socialist Youth Alliance in Australia has, so far been the only revolutionary organization to recognize the right and need for an independent, mass political movement of women, and to put forward a comprehensive, cogent analysis of the origins of women's oppression in our society. We also provide a clear strategy of action for the liberation of women.

The women's liberation movement has, in many ways modelled itself on the anti-war and student movements. Its newness has meant that there have been no officially recognized, established leaderships and organizations to be bypassed, and this, in turn, has meant that the forms of organization and action have been independent and radical. But, being like the student movement, it reflects the same weaknesses. In Australia, to date, it has been a largely middle-class movement, initiated mainly by people who are members, or had passed through left-wing organizations. The movement has spread in university circles, and has a basically anti-capitalist consciousness, but, like such student organizations as SDS, it lacks a perspective

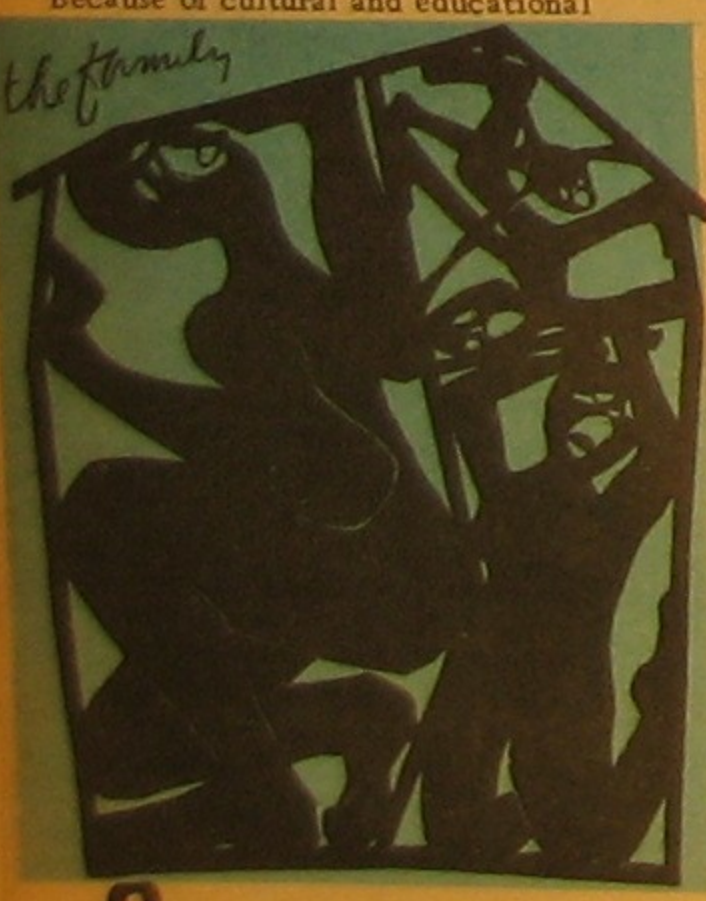
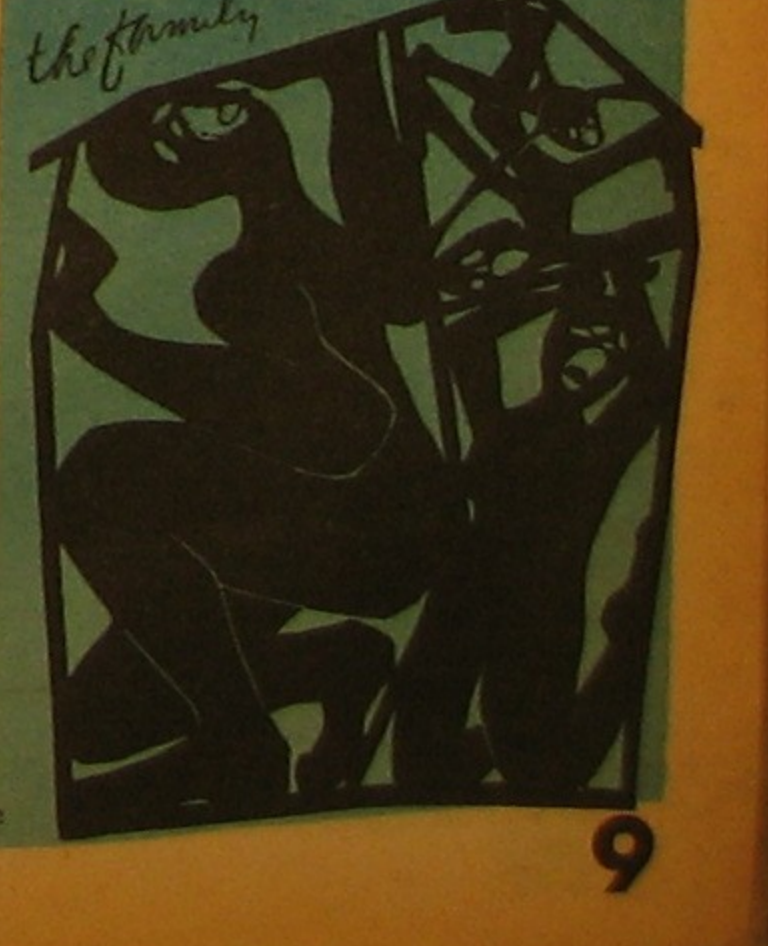
and a strategy for overthrowing capitalism. Our task, as an organization which has this perspective, is to educate and try to take this consciousness on to its logical conclusions.

From our experiences in the anti-war movement we can expect to have to combat the forces within the movement which attempt to divert it into less effective forms of struggle. For example the setting up of community-run childcare centres can be useful stop-gap measures, but we should make women realize that these are not sufficient. Apart from the fact that individuals can't hope to organize enough of these services, they only attack one aspect of women's problems. Such activity should not be counterposed to mass political action of an independent nature.

We must press for building broad representative coalitions to organize united actions, and to formulate the central demands of the movement. We must fight for democracy within the movement and for the right of all who support the aims to participate in these organizing bodies. We must also press for the demands of the movement to be of the type which can mobilize the maximum number of women, and also be capable of challenging the basic institutions of our society. Our members must be active in initiating new women's liberation groups on campuses, in schools and wherever the potential for such groups exists. We should try, within these groups to press for a comprehensive program of activities. Where groups can combine consciousness-raising and education with the existence of committees to plan joint actions with other groups, they will be the most successful.

The movement for women's liberation has brought many women into the movement who have never been active in politics before. Such women will, in the course of the struggle, have their consciousness raised as they realize that capitalism cannot grant all the demands of women. They will begin to see the inter-connection between the struggle of women and the struggles of other oppressed groupings. We must assist this process by continually pointing out the contradictions of this society and the means by which women can free themselves.

It is a movement which will be instrumental in bringing down capitalism. However, the struggle will not end with the socialist revolution. It must be waged now as well as during the transitional period which will follow the revolution, until the time when women have gained their full freedom and equality, and can progress with man, from whom they have, for so long been alienated, to the construction of socialism.



MAY DAY 1971: AUSTRALIAN TROTSKYISM ADVANCES

DAVE HOLMES

This May Day was the first for the newly formed (August, 1970) Socialist Youth Alliance. Melbourne and Sydney saw sizeable SYA contingents in the May Day marches: in Melbourne upwards of one hundred people marched beneath their banners and in Sydney about seventy. For such a young group this was a remarkable achievement.

The revolutionary socialist character of the SYA contingents was shown in their discipline and spirit and in the slogans borne by their banners. In Melbourne, the banners carried slogans such as: "SMASH IMPERIALISM: CREATE 2, 3, MANY VIETNAMS", "SOLIDARITY WITH THE VIETNAMESE REVOLUTION", "WITHDRAW ALL TROOPS FROM INDO-CHINA NOW", "NO PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE WITH US IMPERIALISM", "WORKERS' CONTROL" and "BOLSHEVISM NOT STALINISM". In Sydney, SYA commemorated the centennial of the Paris Commune: "REMEMBER THE COMMUNE, FORWARD TO THE WORLD OCTOBER".

In Melbourne the SYA contingent contained a separate SYA women's group with its own banners calling for the liberation of women and posing concrete demands: "FREE 24 HOUR CHILD CARE" "FREE ABORTION ON DEMAND" and so on.

Above all else, the SYA contingents were contingents of young Trotskyists. In Melbourne the flag of the Fourth International led the SYA group, and at the Yarra Bank rally a comrade climbed a goal post and held the flag over the gathering (see photo). In Sydney, SYA carried a banner bearing Leon Trotsky's exhortation and last words: "GO FORWARD, BUILD THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL".

It is in this character that much of the significance of the SYA May Day participation lies. How long has it been since organised Trotskyist contingents have participated in Australian May Day marches? How long has it been since the flag of revolutionary socialism, of the Fourth International, has flown on such a day?

Australian Trotskyism (i.e., revolutionary socialism) has suffered many vicissitudes since the break with Stalinism and the formation of the (now defunct) Workers' Party in the 30's. But it is a tradition whose relevance has not diminished with the years.

The emergence and rapid national development of SYA shows that Trotskyism is the only viable revolutionary alternative for the best of the radicalizing youth who reject the dead ends of both social democratic reformism and Stalinism (whether in its Soviet or Maoist variety). What are the perspectives of Trotskyism? Perhaps, as SYA stated in its May Day pamphlet in Melbourne, it is time to recall briefly what we are.

Leon Trotsky's analysis of 1938 is still valid today: "The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership". Time and time again, the masses have taken the revolutionary road, only to have been balked by the perfidy and betrayal of their own leaderships. The construction of mass vanguard parties is an absolute necessity for the victorious realisation of the enormous revolutionary potential

that has appeared today. Furthermore, in the epoch of imperialism, when the world has been turned into a single whole the need for a global anti-capitalist strategy is essential. This demands an International - an International which is more than just an aggregation of national parties, but a democratically centralised world party like the Third International during Lenin's lifetime.

Today, that party is the Trotskyist Fourth International. The Socialist Youth Alliance is in political sympathy with it. Now, the Socialist Youth Alliance is just that - a revolutionary socialist youth organisation. It is not a party. A party is distinguished from a youth organisation by the nature of its intervention in the class struggle: by a program, by the quality of its cadres. A youth organisation, among other things, is a bridge to a party for radicalizing youth.

There is not yet, in Australia, a revolutionary socialist party capable of leading the masses to socialism. The key task of the present period is, still, to build such a party.

At the Consulate some rocks were thrown and the cops used this as an excuse to attack the march. Mounted cops charged down the colonnades and one girl was trampled and taken to hospital. Well, the details are familiar and are not the most important aspect. What are the political lessons of the events?

It is not a time of 'developing fascism'. Thus, the episodic violence of the cops is not the main problem. The main task is to build the mass movement and its component parts. Capitalism is trying desperately to halt this radicalization, but it is losing ground all the time.

Melbourne's May Day was marked by an unfortunate sectarianism on the part of the Maoists. In part, this facilitated the police assault. The Maoists stacked a May Day Committee meeting (23/4) and gained the bulk of the chair and speakers' positions. This was a contributing factor to the reduced worker composition of May Day, which, in turn made the cops' task easier. As a result of this behaviour, no industrial militant spoke from the May Day platform. Also, and most of the left was responsible for this, there were no speakers from the women's movement. This absence demonstrates a regrettable weak spot in the consciousness of the Melbourne left - the revolutionaries must revolutionize themselves before they can hope to revolutionize society.

The basis of the above comments is our belief that this is a period of widening, deepening and intensifying radicalization.

COPS ATTACK MAY DAY RALLY

In Melbourne, May Day began with a peaceful march (estimated by the bourgeois press at 5000 strong) from the trades hall to the Yarra Bank. This peaceful character was not to last however. The rally was effectively wrecked by a police assault.

edge the cops began to attack the crowd.

They batonned and punched people, and mounted cops used their horses to trample and crush demonstrators. One SYAer heard a mounted cop say, just before they charged the crowd, "Alright, let's get the bastards!" Finally they arrested about eight people. The bourgeois press, of course, portrayed all this as a vicious, unwarranted attack on . . . the police.

The very presence of the police at a May Day rally, the day when the international working class demonstrates for the socialist revolution, contributes a severe provocation. Especially provocative was the presence of a notoriously well-known security cop on the periphery of the rally. Some of the demonstrators forced him to leave the field. Then, at the field's

The rally, soon after, dispersed and most of us marched through the city to the Philippines Consulate to demonstrate in solidarity with the Filipino workers and students, eight of whom were killed by the thugs of the pro-imperialist regime.



Melbourne



Sydney



Melbourne

HIGH SCHOOL STORY

Periodically, sections of the bourgeois mass media choose, for reasons of their own, to draw attention to educational problems such as overcrowding, the existence of sub-standard school buildings, or the presence in schools of unqualified teachers. Occasionally also, clashes between staff who want to maintain 'reasonable' (i.e. their) standards of dress and behaviour and students who want to wear their hair long or to follow other current fashions, make the news. These manifestations of unrest in the schools provide spectacular 'news' for the mass media to exploit, but because the deeper problems of education do not make such spectacular reading, viewing or listening they are ignored. Almost any reasonably perceptive person who has been at all connected with or interested in secondary schools in working class suburbs of Melbourne knows that inadequate buildings, unqualified teachers and the clash of youth culture against the values of the establishment are only the scum on the surface of the cesspool of neglect, misunderstanding and wilful repression in which present day educational authorities are wallowing.

Recently, a school which is not intolerably overcrowded, which is housed in comparatively new buildings, which is staffed mainly by qualified teachers and which has grounds small enough to be dwarfed by the nearby Northland car park but large enough to include a football oval and other playing fields, received brief mentions in the mass media because of the fact that about 500 of its students staged a half day strike. The school is Preston East Technical School and the strike was sparked by an ultimatum from the principal to a number of students to have their hair cut or be suspended.

The strike was almost completely ignored except by people immediately connected with the school because it appeared to be a comparatively minor outburst over hair, an issue whose publicity value has long ago been exhausted. It becomes clear, however, on speaking to students at the school that without the existence of a number of other very serious grievances, the ultimatum over hair would not have provoked a reaction serious enough to enable the successful organisation of strike action.

Even before the hair issue arose, relations between students and staff at the school had deteriorated to a point where it would have been only a minor exaggeration to say that a state of undeclared war existed. This state of affairs still exists. Teachers at the school live in constant fear that their classes will become uncontrollable and not infrequently this fear has been realised.

Teachers at Preston East, with few exceptions, usually treat students very poorly. Corporal punishment is a daily occurrence for some students, teachers frequently lose their self-control and yell at classes or at individuals. In some teachers' classes, students who wish to go to the toilet must accept "two of the best" before being allowed to go; this ensures that only those who genuinely want to go to the toilet will attempt to do so. In other classes, absolute silence is demanded of the students and students are absolutely forbidden to leave their desks. An atmosphere of fear pervades the school, the teachers not understanding the students and attempting to control them by use of violence and threats of violence.

The teachers, being products of the existing education system, are mainly drawn from the middle classes. Because of this they tend to blame the situation at Preston East on the working class origins of the students. A senior teacher at the school has said, "This is a low school and a low area" and it is not difficult to discover other teachers with similar attitudes. The teachers attempt to impose their values upon the students, they attempt to "clean up" their language and a frequently-heard comment is "don't do that, you're not at home now." When the students reject these attempts to "reform" them, the teachers tend to take the attitude that they won't be at Preston East for long, they will soon be promoted and able to move to a "better" school. The northern suburbs are not popular with teachers, therefore, the Education Department tends to send teachers with little seniority and therefore little experience to the area. Because most teachers look to the day when they will be promoted away from the school, very few are willing to jeopardise their chances of promotion by criticising the harshly repressive attitudes of the senior staff.

The situation at Preston East is duplicated, usually in less severe form, at almost every school in Melbourne's working class areas. Teachers who attempt to introduce values alien to the environment provoke rebellion. Imposition of artificial standards of measurement (such as success or failure in exams) produce a variety of emotions mainly connected with shame and resentment among the "failures". The Victorian education system is failing to provide for the needs and interests of its working class students, it finds that the values which it considers "right" are rejected but continues to attempt to impose these values on the students. The use of violence can produce submission but it will never win acceptance for ideas or values that a growing number of youth consider false and hypocritical.

LABORERS

COMEDY

TEL AVIV (ZINS): The Institute for Economic and Social Research of the "Vaad Hapoel," an arm of Israel's Histadrut Labor Movement, analysed the composition by professions and trades of those who participated in the most recent General Conference of the workers' movement. The analysis covered 885 out of some 1,000 delegates; 64.6 per cent of those who attended the convention designated themselves as "Directors" or "Officials"; 15 per cent were members of the free professions; 9.3 per cent were farmers. Only 5.3 per cent of the entire delegation were employees - i.e. workers and artisans.

The majority of delegates - approximately 60 per cent - were born in Europe. A little over 12 per cent were natives of Asia; 8.7 per cent natives of Africa and 18.5 per cent were native born.

The most interesting and revealing statistic, however, was the one showing that only 5.3 per cent of the delegates to this "Labor" Conference of the Histadrut were actually members of the labour force, i.e. employed by others.

The May Day march from the Yarra Bank to the Philippines Consulate was not notable for its humorous side, ending as it did in one of Melbourne's traditional cop-fighting debacles. However, it did produce one humorous incident.

Soon after the march left the Yarra Bank, some of the Melbourne S.Y.A. comrades began to sing the *Internationale* (the version which contains a reference to the Fourth International). Comrade Albert Langer, near the front of the march, heard the singing and filtered back through the march to join in. He walked alongside the S.Y.A. comrades happily singing the *Internationale*, much to the dismay of his own comrades whose reactions varied from chanting "Albert's a Trot!" to frantic cries of "Albert!" However Albert sang on, oblivious to the consternation which he was causing among his comrades.

Finally the singers reached the line, "And the Fourth International unites the human race". At that stage a red faced Albert was seen to melt into the crowd mumbling about "gross overestimations".

OPEN LETTER TO THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Over the last year I have been questioned on the attitude of other left tendencies to Zionism. Many questioners were interested in particular, in the position of the CPA. Its ambivalent attitude has always been difficult to explain. Recent developments within the Communist Party, including the admission of Zionists to the Party and the advertising of Zionist functions in 'Tribune' on equal par with revolutionary meetings, have disturbed those of us concerned with the question sufficiently to warrant the publication of this letter.

Most people will be quite surprised to know that Zionists are welcomed into the CPA ranks; a well-known member of the National Committee of the Party was quite surprised when informed of the fact! Apparently it was explained to one recent recruit that now that the Australian party is taking an independent road to socialism, the situation is different - all those who are now prepared to work for the party are welcome. Although revolutionary Marxists will obviously disagree with this superficial view, as it completely negates the role of a program and the practice of democratic centralism, (two points the Communist Party still claims to hold), I will confine my remarks to the question of Zionism.

Zionism is, of course, a political ideology which is incompatible with the principles of Marxism, both in its theory and its practice. Its theory is based upon an analysis which suggests that anti-semitism is inevitable, that racial discrimination against the Jews will always exist, regardless of economic, social and political forces operating within a society. The contradiction with Marxist analysis, which views discrimination as directly flowing from those causes the Zionists consider irrelevant, is obvious. The long and protracted debate which the leaders of the Russian Revolution, including both Lenin and Trotsky, had with the Russian Zionists should be familiar to all those who follow one or both of them.

In practice, Zionism led to the foundation of the state of Israel and the physical expulsion of the Palestinian people. Israeli communists do not have freedom of speech and at the moment they form a considerable proportion of the THREE THOUSAND prisoners under active detention without a trial and without charges. For an incomplete list smuggled from Israel see ISRACA (March 1970) and 'Tribune' on many occasions. The amount of material available in 'Tribune' itself suggests that there is no need for me to substantiate the case against the practice of Zionism.

Under these circumstances, having fully pledged Zionist members compromises the CPA's position. It is further compromised when a leading journalist on 'Tribune' has to resort to the letters column in order to express the simple position that anti-Zionism does not equal anti-Semitism. Even if purely coincidental, my Arab friends have pointed out the lack of any mention of the Middle-East in 'Tribune' in recent months. Also, the lack of reference in the CPA contingent on May Day to the Arab revolution is a further indication of its position.

I would be most relieved if I found out that the Zionists joined the party by deceitful means and that no-one knew their



political views. Unfortunately this is extremely unlikely as one of those who joined made his views plain and never hides the fact that he is working for the 'socialist-Zionist cause'!

The most likely explanation of the CPA's behaviour lies in acceptance of the concept of 'Radical Zionism'. This concept of radical or 'left-wing' Zionism is not a new one. From its inception, the Zionist movement has always had a left-wing element. Ber Borochov, the father of the 'Hebrew Labour' doctrine was a member of the same soviet as Lenin. Traditionally Jews have always predominated in the revolutionary movement and the labour movement. There are several reasons for this including occupation and oppression as a nation. Zionism was used deliberately by British imperialism (Balfour Declaration) to try and induce

Jewish workers and intellectuals away from socialism.

The Zionist movement itself found its own reasons to possess a left-wing. Being a national movement which can encompass people who subjectively feel themselves to be anything from 'left-wing' to 'right-wing'. They need this in order to influence world opinion. Thus right-wing Zionists are sent as emissaries to the US and Cuba and dark-skinned Jews to Africa.

Radical Zionists are therefore being used not only as a means of propaganda for the left but also as a weapon against it. In all countries where there is a sizeable Jewish community, the Zionists try to intervene and recruit as well as spread its propaganda. Recently, the Israeli government even called on Israeli students abroad to join what they called New Left organizations



as these organizations of the newly radicalizing youth have been opposing Israeli policy. The purpose of this government sponsored recruitment to the left was also disclosed i.e., to counter the anti-Israeli trend in these organizations. (ISRAC quote)

While in the early days Zionism was used against the Bolshevik revolution, the early origins of the tendencies of Zionism sympathetic to socialism were not rooted in any conscious decision of the Zionist leadership. It was a spontaneous reaction to the conditions prevailing in the Jewish community in Russia toward the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century.

The severe oppression of the Jews coupled with the fact that most of them were workers and artisans, and the rising in-

Sol Salby, the author of the following Open Letter, is a member of the National Committee of SYA. He was born in Israel and lived there for 16 years. Sol has travelled extensively and addressed meetings in Australia and New Zealand on the subjects of Zionism and The Arab Revolution. A special bill before the Israeli Parliament threatens to take away his Israeli nationality together with all other citizens abroad who defame the name of the State.

fluence of socialist consciousness in Russia at the time, caused by a long struggle to develop between the various tendencies. The most successful one was the Bund-Jewish Socialist Party which stood for cultural nationalism and socialism. With the Russian Revolution, the Bund's Pro-Menshevik position gave rise to their demise. After the rise of Stalin, the Bund Zionists became much more prominent.

Their leaders invented the 'Theory of Stages' which gives the order of priorities for left-wing Zionists, which are:

- The achievement of a Jewish state based on a majority of Jewish population in the 'spiritual' homeland, Palestine (involving the replacement of Arab workers with Jewish workers on a completely nationalist basis).
- Class struggle within that state, between the Jewish working class and the Jewish capitalists, to achieve socialism.

This is an attack on internationalist principles particularly solidarity with the Arab revolution.

It has since proven itself to be a particularly useful weapon in the hands of the Zionist leadership. Despite the Marxist analysis, left-wing Zionists, those who have joined the CPA, believe that Zionism is a national liberation movement akin to the Vietnamese National Liberation Front or the Black Panther movement. Israeli's pro-imperialist stance is well known, but let me give you an example; "The six-day war gave some solid economic gains to Israel. The victory brought an extra \$300 million of overseas capital investment, mainly from the United States, so that the 1967 inflow of capital reached a record \$780 million". Times, business news, Mar 27, 1969.

Radical Zionists may carry the real flag but their first allegiance is to Zionism. They have no place in any Marxist organization. Socialism cannot be founded for reactionary nationalism.

Forward to the Arab revolution!
Down with Zionist imperialism and chauvinism!

Yours fraternally,
Sol Salby;
(National Committee)

Pamphlets Available

ADD 10c EACH FOR POSTAGE AND ORDER FROM NATIONAL OFFICE.

- Problems of Women's Liberation. Evelyn Reed. 40c
- In Defence of the Women's Movement. R. Miller, Mary-Alice Waters, Evelyn Reed. 15c
- The Politics of Women's Liberation Today. Mary-Alice Waters. 15c
- Burning Issues of the Middle East. Peter Buch. 20c
- The Truth about Israel and Zionism. N. Winstock and J. Rothschild. 15c
- The Marxist Theory of the State. Ernest Mandel. 20c
- The Worker Under Neo-Capitalism. Ernest Mandel. 20c
- The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International. Leon Trotsky. 25c
- An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory. E. Mandel. 40c
- The Revolutionary Student Movement. E. Mandel. 25c
- Stalinism or Bolshevism. L. Trotsky. 20c
- Fascism. What it is and how to fight it. L. Trotsky. 20c
- I Strike My Life. L. Trotsky. 15c
- Leon Trotsky the Man and his Action. Ernest Germain. 15c

JOIN SYA

If you oppose the Vietnam war and conscription - if you want a socialist Australia - if you support the struggle for socialist democracy in Eastern Europe, Russia and China, the struggle for women's liberation and the struggle for national liberation throughout the world - then JOIN THE SYA.

- I would like to join SYA
- I would like more information on SYA
- I donate \$..... to the SYA Fund Drive
- I enclose \$..... subscription to "Direct Action" (\$1 for 6 issues)

Name

Address

Postcode

Phone

Send to: PO Box 581, Sydney South, 2000, or to the branch in your State.

REGISTER MAIL OR CONFIRM BY PHONE

CONTACT SOCIALIST YOUTH ALLIANCE

- NATIONAL OFFICE: SYA - PO BOX 581, SYDNEY SOUTH, 2000
- SYDNEY: SYA - 3 UTHUR ST, SURRY HILLS Ph 2112748
- MELBOURNE: SYA 140 QUEENSBERRY ST CARLTON 3053 Ph. 347 3507
- ADELAIDE: SYA 287 RUNDLE ST ADELAIDE Ph. 234539
- CANBERRA: SYA c/- PO BOX 9 MAWSON NORTH ACT 2607 Ph. 486717(tan) 863085 (Louise)
- PERTH: SYA c/- BOX S1495, GPO PERTH 6000
- HOBART: SYA c/- BOX 1255N GPO HOBART 7000 Ph. 252563
- MORWELL: SYA c/- Ken Dawson, 3/54 ELGIN ST, MORWELL 3840
- WARRAGUL: SYA c/- BOX 269, WARRAGUL 3820.
- Armidale: SYA c/- Jan Butland, 98 Mossman St. Armidale

The Red Mole

Revolutionary internationalist Marxist fortnightly, edited by Tariq Ali. News, discussion and analysis for the revolutionary left; full coverage of the international anti-imperialist struggle and the struggle of the working class and radical youth in Britain.

For a subscription to The Red Mole, fill in the form below:

Please send me THE RED MOLE for the next 3/6/12 months. I enclose \$..... (cash or money order only please).

Name

Address

.....

.....

.....

THE RED MOLE, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1, England.

SUBS: 1 year: \$11.00 (airmail)

\$6.60 (ordinary)

6 months: \$6.50 (airmail)

\$3.30 (ordinary)

3 months: \$2.25 (airmail)

\$1.65 (ordinary)