


DIRECT ACTION

NO. 15, MARCH 1 1972 10 CENTS

A SOCIALIST NEWSPAPER



The Revolutionary Dynamics of Women's Liberation

Hawke sells out S.E.C. strikers



HAWKE SELLS OUT S.E.C. LATROBE VALLEY STRIKERS

by Jim McIlroy

Striking Latrobe Valley State Electricity Commission workers have been sold out once again by Hawke and their union leaders. Many militants at the Yallourn mass meeting on February 15 began to walk out even before the vote was taken, angry and bitter at the obvious and inevitable result. The meeting of about 3000 men heard Hawke and a string of other union leaders produce all the tired bureaucratic rhetoric they could muster to recommend an end to the 2 weeks old power strike for 4 weeks annual leave. Hawke, Nolan of the THC, Innes of the Electrical Trades Union and Halpenney, Communist Party of Australia secretary of the Metal Workers Union, at the moment of crisis all pulled together, hard astern. Halpenney's action in supporting the return to work contrasts rather sharply with the position adopted in the CPA's "Tribune" Special supplement of February 9, 1972 "SEC workers Must Win" which states "It is the job of top bodies in the trade union movement to rally all workers behind the SEC men's claim. The aim should be to win the dispute rather than 'settle' it to the detriment of power workers..."

The SEC workers, whatever is decided "on top", are determined that they will not be sacrificed. Did the CPA change its mind on this in less than a week, or is this only "left-cover" bluster? Practice contradicts theory once again.

The Socialist Workers League distributed a leaflet (reprinted below) stressing the role of Hawke as a mediator for the employers, and the need to strengthen the strike by building solidarity amongst other workers, explaining the divisive tactics of the government. The leaflet distributed to all workers present was well received, and the "Sun" report of the meeting (16/2/72) clearly implied that its effect had union officials worried about which way the men would move. (More than 150 Direct Actions were sold also at the meeting and afterwards in pubs, and men were still reading and discussing the leaflet there.) Another leaflet was distributed by a local militant, Bert Taylor, which was in agreement with the S.W.L. position. It was headed "Don't let S.E.C. workers be sold out", and asked "Has Bob Hawke joined the ranks of McMahon, Bolte and the employers?" demanding:

1. No return to work.
2. No court action
3. Direct negotiations with the SEC

In discussion before the meeting, Taylor had predicted that if a group of militant shop stewards were to stand up and present a clear set of proposals for a continuation of the strike and the calling of solidarity strikes and mass demonstrations in Melbourne and elsewhere the support amongst the rank and file would have been enormous. As it happened this failed to occur. Hawke succeeded in persuading almost all the shop stewards in an earlier closed meeting to support the return to work. Thus no recognised alternative leadership was available to put forward radical proposals to the men. The rank and file were left

without opposition to Hawke with all the prestige and authority of his office, backed by all their union officials, and so a return to work seemed inevitable. But Hawke's reception was clearly lukewarm, and the solid militancy which had characterised the whole struggle was not far beneath the surface. Even the "Age" noted this: "The first signs of untamed militancy appeared with a rousing cheer for one striker who warned that the next time it will not be the workers who are worrying about the safety of the system. That will be the job of the Government and the SEC." "We ought to stay out until we get what we want and pull the fuses," said another. The cheering and clapping was the loudest yet.

The feeling was that if one good speaker were to argue for staying out, the vote would be close. But nobody came forth and the spurt of militancy died down. Then the vote came and about 400 men voted to stay out - clearly a minority. But the feeling was that the men would strike again if the Arbitration Commission did not give them what they wanted.

Once again the question of a militant organised leadership was posed in a situation where a vital workers struggle was in the balance.

The importance of building a revolutionary party capable of intervening directly in a leadership position in mass struggles is clearly underlined by this experience.

BACKGROUND TO THE DISPUTE

The militancy of Latrobe Valley workers is grounded in a number of short and long term factors.

Firstly the SEC workers' extra week's leave claim has persisted for 9 years now, ever since the general 3 weeks leave was achieved. However, the claim was not pressed strongly until the last couple of years. This new urgency is due to new conditions emerging in the Latrobe Valley and new long term threats to the livelihoods of workers and their families. The main fear now is of redundancies. There is a general trend towards reducing the workforce in the Valley, with automation being introduced (such as in the new plant at Hazelwood,) and a marked reduction in the rate of industrial development in the Valley. Many workers were lured down to Yallourn and Morwell under false pretences, when the grand vision was advanced of a new Ruhr Valley - a vast new industrial centre. Now government and employer development priorities have altered and the Latrobe Valley is in a period of economic decline. Meanwhile many workers have got themselves entangled in hire purchase of houses etc. The building industry is in complete decay, and every week plane loads of workers are forced to fly off to Bougainville or elsewhere for jobs away from their families in poor conditions

and for low wages. Cost of living in the Valley is very high, and the problem of pollution has reached an intolerable level (see D.A. No. 13). Bert Taylor is adamant that a high proportion of people in the Valley have asthma or some other respiratory complaint because of breathing cement dust and other smog particles all the time.

The overall situation has been growing worse but now it has taken a disastrous turn with the onset of the general economic crisis in Australia (part of the current world capitalist crisis.) This has brought to a head the situation in the Latrobe Valley, as it is doing elsewhere.

The demand for 4 weeks annual leave is one response to the threat of redundancies. This demand must be linked with others to form a coherent strategy against redundancies and unemployment involving not just one sector but the whole working class. As explained by Diane Lettlin in D.A. No. 14 demands in such a strategy should include:

1. No sackings or redundancies through productivity deals.
2. For a shorter working week with no loss of pay.
3. For a minimum wage adjusted according to price rises for all workers whether employed or not.
4. Bans on overtime and work to rule.

The present situation in the Latrobe Valley also raises the question of workers control. Workers themselves should be able to decide the developmental priorities which will have a determining effect on their working and living conditions.

Militancy amongst Latrobe Valley workers continues to grow, despite the temporary setback. The basis is laid for a bitter and protracted struggle in this important area with its high level of consciousness. The struggle is now a political one, as much as an economic one.

ROLE OF BOLTE AND McMAHON

Bolte and McMahon have played a very calculated and vicious role in this dispute, giving the workers of this country a good foretaste of the future. Liberal governments, as they have made absolutely plain, are out to reduce workers' living standards, smash workers' militancy and facilitate high unemployment - in short to regenerate the capitalist system in a period of crisis by putting the full load onto the backs of the working class. Capitalist profits are continually pushed, (e.g. the recent BHP price rise and the restoration of the business investment allowance) while wages and conditions are mercilessly held down. The blatant hypocrisy of such actions by a government committed to "fighting inflation" is clearly the consequence of the arrogance and cynicism of a corrupt and decaying ruling class.

The Bolte government refused to allow direct negotiations between the SEC and the workers in this dispute and both State and Federal governments have continued to vigorously oppose the leave claim at every level. The McMahon regime reached a new low in venality when it refused to grant unemployment benefits to members of the unions involved in the Latrobe strike, even to out of work men in NSW and Queensland.

A major aim of Bolte was to create resentment by imposing unnecessary power restrictions, and thus isolate the SEC strikers. Another aim was to open the way for widespread stand downs in industry to follow the recent sackings of 1000s of workers.

This massive unemployment situation exposes clearly a central contradiction of decaying capitalism - that economic crises are crises of overproduction, not underproduction. A system which is in grave trouble because it produces too many goods in some sectors while it creates and maintains mass poverty in others is surely well overdue for overthrow. The productivity growth potential which automation offers should be the source of a reduction in exploitation through shorter work hours and higher wages, but instead, under capitalism it is a threat to workers, because capitalism lives and grows only on profits. In the current world crisis and employers' offensive, conservative governments cannot accept arguments for guaranteed minimum wages whether for a full week's work or not, because profits still depend fundamentally on the theft of workers' labour-time. Only a socialist system moving to eliminate all exchange value-commodity production based on labour time - can solve the economic and political crises which must beset a dying capitalism. Only then can a rational system of distribution based on use-values and social priorities in a society of abundance be established.

HAWKE'S 'SOLUTION'

Hawke's argument in his speech to the workers at Yallourn included the following points:

1. "That the dispute should go to arbitration." Even he was not prepared to predict more than a 50-50 chance of success; and in fact he must have known that it was a lot less than that. To argue in favour of going to arbitration was under the conditions a clear sell-out on the workers demands. To recommend this course at any time during the current employers' offensive is a sell-out.
2. "That a 'unique conspiracy of governments and employers was involved' What was unique about it? It is misleading workers as to the nature of the capitalist system to speak in such terms. It neglects the true nature of a capitalist ruling-class whose different sectors constantly reinforce and cooperate with each other whenever its class interest in opposition to the working class is involved. It



misleads workers as to the true nature of the capitalist state which must act to preserve capitalist economic interests. To talk of conspiracy is reformist ideology.

3. "That electing an ALP government would provide a solution to the workers' problems." Workers should throw out the McMahon regime and elect a Labour government, but this must not be counterposed to struggle in other spheres in the industrial sphere and in other extra-parliamentary mass movements. An ALP government with the present leadership would be no solution to the workers' troubles (e.g. the Cameron proposals for curbing industrial militancy.) Workers have discovered this painful truth before (e.g. with Scullin and Chifley). But an ALP government could be different if the workers forced it to the left and an alternative socialist leadership emerged. The ALP in or out of power must never divorce itself from socialist principles. The Socialist Left

offers a base for the development of a socialist leadership and the pressing forward of socialist principles in the form of a transitional programme.

4. "The government wanted the strike to go on because of its divisive effects and the opportunity it offered to attack other workers conditions." This would be true if the rest of the working class didn't come strongly behind the SEC strikers, realising it to be their struggle also. If Hawke, the ACTU and union leaders had worked hard to develop solidarity in other sections, and called support strikes and mass demonstrations instead of diverting the struggle, there would have been an excellent chance of a clear victory, and the development of a higher level of proletarian consciousness and political awareness throughout the working class. But this is not what Hawke wants; he is a reformist and wants only to preserve and consolidate the system.

The vote to return to work at Yallourn

CONCLUSION

The SEC strike is linked with the recent Atlantean and waterside workers disputes as the early battles of a long campaign. The issue of redundancies directly or indirectly, has been common to all these disputes, as has a rising militancy in the face of the attacks of the bosses. It is vital that these struggles be won in the long run because defeat of these militant sections will open up the way for a general campaign against all sections of the working class. Heartening signs are apparent however in the case of the Bank officers' dispute i.e. the spreading of militant action into hitherto untouched white collar areas. A notable feature of both the SEC and Victorian ABOA mass

meetings was the strong contingent of young workers in a militant frame of mind. The youth radicalisation which first appeared amongst student layers now extends into all sections of the working class, manual and non-manual. This radicalisation has begun to prepare young workers for the industrial struggles ahead and give them a greater political understanding of the questions involved. So we can expect to see a new militancy which is not just economic but begins to pose the question of power.

This radicalisation of young workers throughout the world coincides in the present international crisis of capitalism, with the radicalisation of the whole working class in the face of attacks from the capitalists. Herein lies the great potential of this period for a real development in the proletarian movement towards socialism, given a leadership which can correctly point the way forward.

No compromises! This strike must be won

(The following is the text of a leaflet published by the Socialist Workers League and distributed at the Yallourn strike meeting)

SEC workers are engaged in a struggle which is vital both to their own interests and to the interests of all Australian workers. It is a test of strength between the workers and the Bolte and McMahon governments, and a confrontation with the whole system of arbitration in this country.

A world wide economic crisis is spreading through all the capitalist countries at the present time, and this is having its reflection in a general threat to the living conditions of Australian workers. The Australian capitalist class through its governing representatives is trying to foist the burden of the crisis onto the backs of workers and their families. This must be vigorously opposed.

The SEC strike is a test case for the success or failure of the employers' offensive against the living standards of Australians. The rulers of this country hope that the rise in unemployment will take the militancy out of workers in every sector of the economy. SEC workers have a very just case: an extra weeks leave has always been accepted as a fair claim given the extraordinary conditions SEC workers have to accept.

SEC workers rightly feel very strongly about this claim: they have been fobbed off for nine years now. Last year they were persuaded by Hawke to postpone action until the Arbitration Commission national leave case was over, and that in case of failure they would be solidly supported by the trade union movement. In the present situation, the THC has backed the workers position so far because they sense their militancy. However pressure will come from the government and the bosses themselves via right-wing union leaders for compromises which will amount to a further setback for SEC workers and a defeat for all workers.

At this time the government and the employers intend to refuse any concessions: they must be forced to give in. Bolte is merciless in carrying out his role of opposing any improvement for workers, and to expect arbitration to achieve this would be quite futile. The role of the arbitration system has always been to delay and to block workers claims while presenting an air of "legality" and "impartiality." In reality the arbitration system serves the employers. The demand for direct dealings with the bosses is a very important one at this time, both for SEC and all other workers. The refusal of four weeks leave is an attempt to lower living standards as well as to facilitate layoffs and redundancies. (Total employment has fallen 6% in the Latrobe Valley since 1968).

The government and the SEC bureaucracy have imposed power restrictions quite arbitrarily and unnecessarily, merely as an attempt to isolate SEC workers and other workers. It is vital to persuade workers in all other sectors of industry that their interests are identical with the SEC strikers - that employers attacks will hit them too, and soon, and that they must strongly support the SEC strike as a test case - a test of the solidarity of the working-class against the employers' offensive.

The role of Hawke is in quite the opposite direction to this. He is directly selling out on this issue. At the moment of the workers greatest militancy and determination he predicts to the press that the strike will end soon; then he scuttles off to secret talks with Commissioner Kirby. What was discussed and what arguments were used? The workers have a right to know. Hawke talks about the effect of the strike on other workers, when he should be doing his utmost to rally support from all workers for the SEC men. Hawke has

been clearly exposed as a middle man for the employers, whose role is to defuse workers struggles instead of supporting them.

Hawke as a "left-winger" is only a myth. The Bonke's scheme and other such proposals are designed to integrate workers into capitalism, not to make them aware of their class interests in opposition to it. His attitude includes the idea of keeping things "quiet" in order to elect a Labor government. This is a false perspective. Workers, of course, must work towards getting a Labor government into office, but a Labor government with liberal policies which continues to run capitalist society in the interests of the bosses is no use to the workers. Any future Labor government must remain true to Labor principles either after getting into office or as a means to getting into office. On top of this, Parliament is not the only or even the main centre of power in this society; it remains in the hands of the capitalist class exercised through all their institutions of control.

Workers must oppose the power of the capitalists with their own strength. That strength is developed and exercised through their major weapon - organisation - and the fact that basically it is the workers who produce all the goods and keep the society going. In the long run they have the capacity to run society on a rational and just basis.

Workers must begin to demand the right to exercise control over their living and working conditions. The Latrobe Valley is plagued with bad housing conditions, high cost of living, insecurity of employment, pollution and so on. Workers in the Valley should be involved directly in determining questions of the future development of the area as a step

towards full exercise of control over their own lives.

This strike does directly involve all workers. Employers everywhere are taking the opportunity to stand down thousands of workers on the pretext of power restrictions: in many cases they will refuse to reemploy them. All workers must demand: no more stand-downs, and where this has already occurred, all those stood down on the pretext of power restrictions to be reemployed.

What can SEC workers do to help develop solidarity with their struggle amongst other workers?

1. Pressure the unions to launch a massive propaganda campaign to counter press attacks and create an understanding of the issues involved amongst other workers.
2. Send out teams of SEC workers to talk directly to co-workers in Melbourne and elsewhere to develop class solidarity with the strikers.

With such united action, an important victory can be won for the whole of the Australian working-class - and a massive blow struck at the employers and their government representatives.

DEMANDS:

1. FULL SUPPORT TO THE SEC WORKERS FROM THE WHOLE WORKING-CLASS.
2. FOR A VICTORIOUS STRUGGLE, NOT ANOTHER NINE YEARS OF COMPROMISE.
3. NO SECRET DEALS WITH THE BOSSES OR THEIR ARBITRATORS.
4. NO REDUNDANCIES - FOR FOUR WEEKS ANNUAL LEAVE AND A SHORTER WORKING WEEK.
5. LATROBE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT TO BE DETERMINED BY LATROBE VALLEY WORKERS.

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Published by Col Maynard,
3 Uther St., Surry Hills, 2010
Ph (02) 2112748
Responsibility for election comment taken by the above.
Printed by Messenger Print, 912 Anzac Pde., Maroubra Junction.
All correspondence to Direct Action, P.O. Box 581, Sydney South. 2000.
Subscriptions \$1 for 6 issues. (See form on back cover.)

No. 15, March 1, 1972

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Labor to power?

by Bill Davis

For some years now, Labor Leader Whitlam and his shadow cabinet, containing a number of notable "Lefts" such as Cairns, Uren, Cameron and Murphy, have been bombarding the electorate, and vested interests in particular, with an avalanche of propaganda. Addressing business forums and writing in "learned journals", the purpose of this campaign has been designed to attract the support of the so-called Swinging Voter, the Man in the Middle.

Who this mythical but all-desirable figure is, has never been made clear. If we are to believe the type of Labor propaganda floating around, he is either an inventor who does not want to be defrauded by fake mining companies, or a doctor who does not like bad debts from his patients, or a businessman who does not like strikes but wants tariff protection to keep his prices high, or a highly paid bureaucrat who wants to build his own little empire in order to fiddle with other peoples' lives, or apparently anyone who is not a worker.

With the Liberal-Country Party Coalition seemingly impregnable, the effect of all this propaganda after 1967 was small. Prosperity and Tales of the Red Terror were enough to whip any waverers back into line behind the Government, and hence capitalism did not require Whitlam's services.

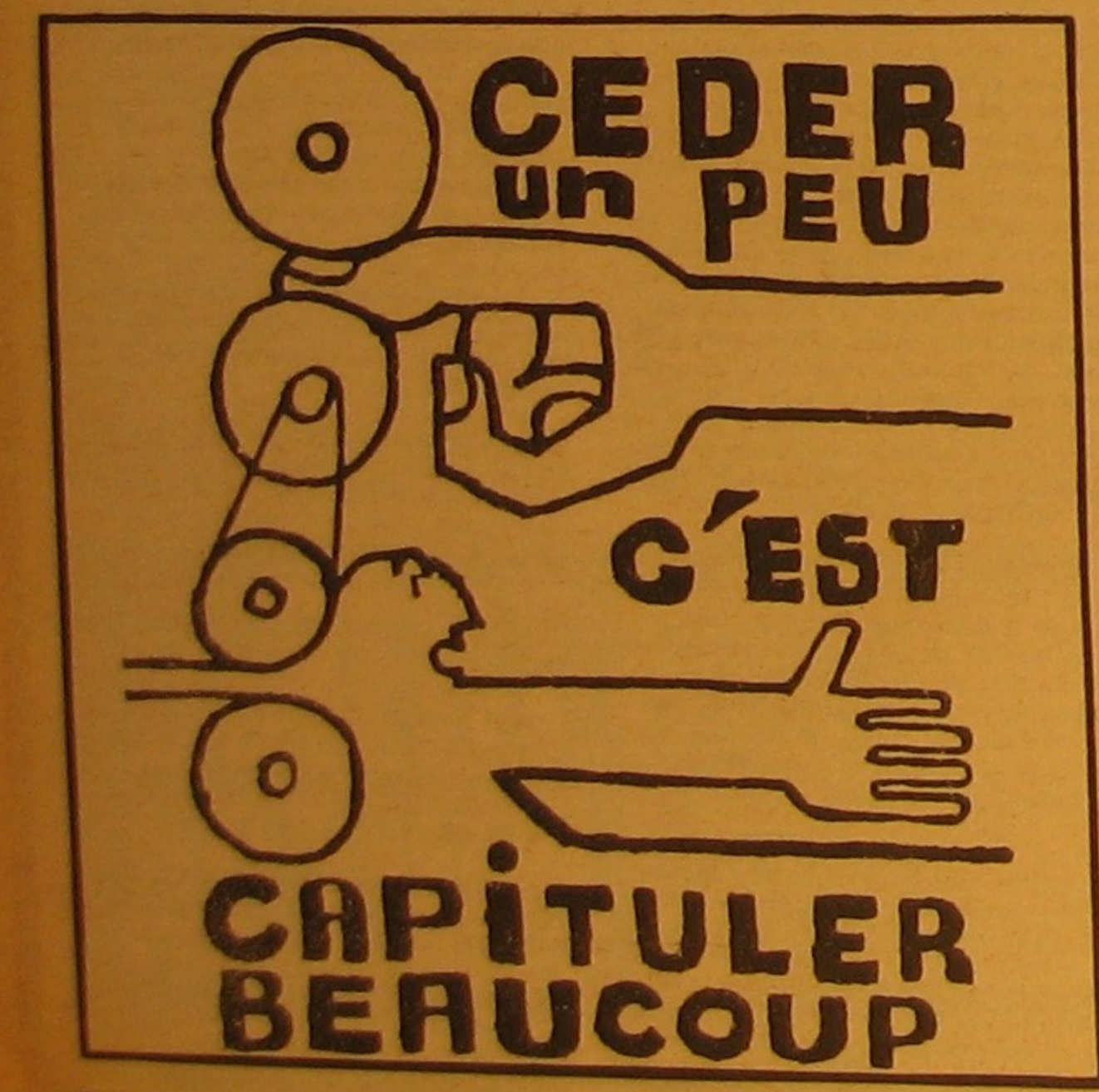
However the current economic difficulties facing the Australian ruling class - the refusal of the unnatural twins of stagnation and price inflation to disappear - have raised the very real prospect of an ALP victory at the Federal Elections scheduled for later this year.

Obviously impressed with the ALP's "serious and responsible" attitude towards smashing the Australian working class with the iniquitous Cameron proposals of fines on individual workers, the bourgeoisie has opened its own internal discussion to weigh up the consequences of an ALP election victory. Socialists and others concerned about the concentration of economic and political power in the hands of a tiny group of capitalists will be "surprised" to learn that these capitalists fear nothing from the ALP.

Public services wage flow on...

by a Melbourne correspondent

Over the last three years, public servants in the State and Commonwealth bureaucracies have become accustomed to virtual annual salary increases of



4 To yield a little...is to capitulate a lot

Writing recently in the business daily, "Financial Review", political correspondent Maximilian Walsh, went to great pains to allay the fears of his readers that an ALP government may be directed against their interests. He even went so far as to rubbish anticipated right-wing propaganda that the ALP is "socialist, pro-communist, and unpatriotic." The nationalisation plank is "just an embarrassing anachronism" he assures them, and "the truth about the situation is that the two major parties share more common ground than they are prepared to admit... By the labels we apply to political movements in the rest of the world, both the Labor Party and the Liberal Party are conservative bodies."

In reality, the only things that Walsh expects to see from a Labor government that would in any way differentiate it from the McMahon lot, would firstly be a natural desire for self-preservation, achieved by amending the Electoral Act to eliminate the DLP, and secondly the creation of a vast network of administrative super agencies, bureaus and commissions to run the capitalist system more efficiently. Naturally, each of these agencies will be staffed with whiz-kids far better able to run your lives for you while you sit doped-out over a work bench or in front of the T.V. set.

Taking this point further in a recent article, Maximilian Walsh expects that the present Liberal practice of pensioning off Public Service dead-wood into cushy seats on various industry boards (run by the vested interests they are supposed to control) will be ended by Labor, with the consequent filling of the occasional position on this Board or that, by bright young Labor things. The effect of this, says Walsh soothingly, will be no more than to hurt the feelings of those replaced. No substantial policy changes are anticipated, and under the new Whitlamism, businessmen are relieved to learn that the dirty, spoils system of the 1941-65 NSW Labor Government will not reappear.

Anticipating a dirty election campaign as Liberal politicians fight for their own personal survival, the "Financial Review" in its editorial on 28th January, slammed Immigration Minister Forbes' injection of the race issue into the campaign. The editorial assures readers that contrary to the "Whitlamesque facade of liberalism, ... it is exceedingly doubtful whether any

Labor Government could in practice pursue an immigration policy markedly different from the present one." Calling for a cooling of the debate on immigration and "in the national interest" it not to be an election issue, the "Financial Review" is thereby breaking one more arrowhead that the reactionaries can fire at Labor.

Why, we are entitled to ask, is the "Financial Review", mouthpiece of Big Business, selling the ALP to its capitalist readers? Why is big-time Left-winger Tom Uren given a regular column in the "Daily Telegraph", owned by that rabid Red-baiter, Frank Packer, who was successfully sued for libel by the same Uren only a couple of years ago?

If the "Financial Review" is right, and life under Labor will be no different than now, and the two parties are like two peas in a pod, why should that paper and the "Telegraph" be going to such lengths to sell the ALP to their readers? Why not stay with the Liberals if it makes no difference? We would be a little naive to think that such rapacious capitalists as Fairfax and Packer were motivated only by a desire to give nice chaps like Gough and Tom, Lionel and Jim, a turn at being Ministers.

Quite obviously, the capitalists are deeply worried. The O'Shea affair, the metal trades flow-on fight, the Victorian power dispute, the Atlantean bus dispute, the PMG linesmen's strike, etc., all point to a picture of mounting industrial rebellion. With the Australian economy gripped by uncontrollable inflation, yet paradoxically in its deepest recession since 1961, the only way out is for a rationally organised, more efficient economy, based on higher levels of technology and lower unit cost of production.

Such a utopian capitalist society would allow long-term planning since such current variables as wage rates would be adjusted according to increases in productivity. However the introduction of labour replacing machinery involves heavy "social dislocation", which is known simply as unemployment to those who experience it, and it inevitably results in strong industrial protest action. It is therefore important to the capitalist class that the Australian economy be reorganised with the minimum of trouble.

But the Liberals cannot do this as workers instinctively recognise them as their class enemies and distrust their every move. Labor through its control over the bureaucrats in the Trades Hall chamber houses, showed it can act "responsibly"

as it did in breaking strikes during World War II and later the 1949 coal strike. The Waterside Workers Federation recently gave an indication that on a single industry basis, a productivity deal involving the introduction of a semi-automatic process viz. containerisation, resulting in thousands of redundancies, can be negotiated between the boss and the union bureaucrats. With Cameron's proposals for industrial fines and with Whitlam billing Hawke as the Greatest strike settler (breaker?) in history, the scene is set for a massive shift by the capitalists to dump the McMahon government and "swing to Labor" because "it's Time."

History never repeats itself, it only comes back as nightmares to terrify the fools who do not learn its lessons. The experiences of the British working class with Harold Wilson, that other Labor manipulator of technological jiggery-pook, should serve as fair warning to Australians. We should expect little at all from a Whitlam government but we should expect absolutely nothing in the way of a concentrated attack on those citadels of power which reduce life for us to a mockery of meaningless routine and squalor. To expect anything more of any Labor government is to live in a dream world, because the parliamentary system does not work that way.

What then should be the strategy of socialists in this election year? Although little distinguishes Whitlam and his technocratic elite from McMahon and Co., except perhaps their greater pomposity and ponderousness, the ALP in the eyes of the mass of the Australian working class, still represents them and their interests. The ALP remains a party based on the working class, and we should support it in opposition to the anti-working class parties by urging a vote for it.

It is important that the working class live through the experience of a Labour Government and see all its cherished hopes evaporate before the fanatical zeal of the Catholic Actionists on the one hand, and the class collaborationists, with their ministerial titles, cars, planes and white-tie dinners, on the other. Only then will the advanced sections of the working class learn to put their trust in themselves alone and not in some polished Labor faker; only then will they realise that socialism, the only way to share the earth's wealth fairly must come through the united actions of the workers themselves and not through the wind-bags of the Parliamentary Labor Party.

The pattern for these increases began in May 1969 when the Municipal Officers' Association, strengthened by its coverage of important blue collar workers in the industry, won an 11% increase from the Victorian State Electricity Commission, operative from June 1968. This new standard quickly flowed to Victorian semi-government authorities and in order to ensure recruitment standards were maintained, the Victorian Public Service Board on 18th May 1969, granted clerical officers increases ranging from 13% at the bottom of the scale, to 9-10% for all other officers.

In this way, the relationship between the Commonwealth Public Service and the Victorian Public Service was seriously disturbed, and so the C.P.S. Board restored the situation on 17.7.69 with a 10-11% increase.

Over the next 15 months, this general increase worked its way through the clerical divisions of the various State government, semi-government and local government bodies, and out into the private world of banking, insurance, etc.

By September 1970, when the more useless right-wing unions, such as the Municipal Employees union, were finally making an effort to gain the increase for their members, industrial action broke out again in the Latrobe Valley, as SEC workers fought to flow a 9% increase, just granted to technical personnel, to all grades.

This successful action resulted in the 9% being awarded on 21.9.70 to the SEC workers, flowing immediately to the Victorian semi-government bodies, so that on 1.11.70 the Victorian Public

Service Board was forced to again grant its clerical officers a 9-11% increase. The Commonwealth union, the Administrative and Clerical Officers Association (ACOA) quickly won 9.5 - 12.7% from the CPSB in December 1970 and the new increase began spreading all over the country.

With the expectation that such a quick salary adjustment would be the last for some time, due to the persistent rumblings of a "wage-freeze" to combat inflation, union bureaucrats settled back for two years of peace and quiet.

However, their tranquillity was shattered in October 1971 when the SEC, with vivid memories of the previous salary fight, agreed to an MOA claim for 9% for all salaried staff, to restore parity with their fellow MOA members who had just won a large increase from the Brisbane City Council, Australia's most generous employer. The quick agreement by the Commission surprised even the Municipal Officers, as everyone then realised that the clerical "gravy-train," as it is known in the trade, was off and running again.

Flowing the increase on from there has been more difficult this time and has caused considerable industrial turmoil as various conservative governments and courts fought to prevent other workers receiving it. In the period immediately after the SEC decision, which was also accorded to by the Victorian Gas and Fuel Corporation, the MOA sought to flow the 9% to its members in four other major instrumentalities, the Melbourne Harbour Trust, the Tramways Board, the Country Roads Board and the Board of Works. These instrumentalities refused to pay the increases and consequently MOA

members struck on three occasions early in December to support their demand for equality with the SEC.

On December 31, Mr Justice Aird in the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, awarded them 6% from 1.1.72 and the other 3% from 1.10.72. In giving the decision he observed that there was indeed a fixed nexus in the work and salaries of all the instrumentalities but he accepted the arguments of the Victorian Government that the States' economy could not stand the full 9%. Aird then proceeded to criticise the Government's apparent double standard in supporting the SEC increase but opposing the other instrumentalities doing the same.

The confused role played by the Bolte government in this affair reached new heights on 10th January when the VPSB, obviously with government approval, decided to flow the 9% to all clerical officers in the Victorian Public Service. In response to such obvious discrimination, the MOA slapped on an overtime ban and threatened strike action unless the government paid the full 9% to its members in the four instrumentalities concerned. (See Direct Action No. 14)

With government prompting, the instrumentalities agreed and on 19th January, they and the MOA appeared before Aird seeking a cohesant award. Aird, obviously offended by Bolte's double-cross, refused, saying that the economic situation was no different from what it had been on 31st December, when he awarded the 6% and 3% time payment formula.

Immediately after the hearing, the instrumentalities announced they would pay the full 9% anyway, their representatives stating that the decision was made with full government approval. Bolte was not available for comment. The stage was thus set for the 9% to flow to all clerical officers, numbering some 200,000 throughout Australia.

The real key to flowing the 9% lay with two Commonwealth unions, the ACOA and the Union of Postal Clerks and Telegraphists. The UPCT immediately began a work to regulations campaign to support their claim and refused to handle telephone accounts and telegram services.

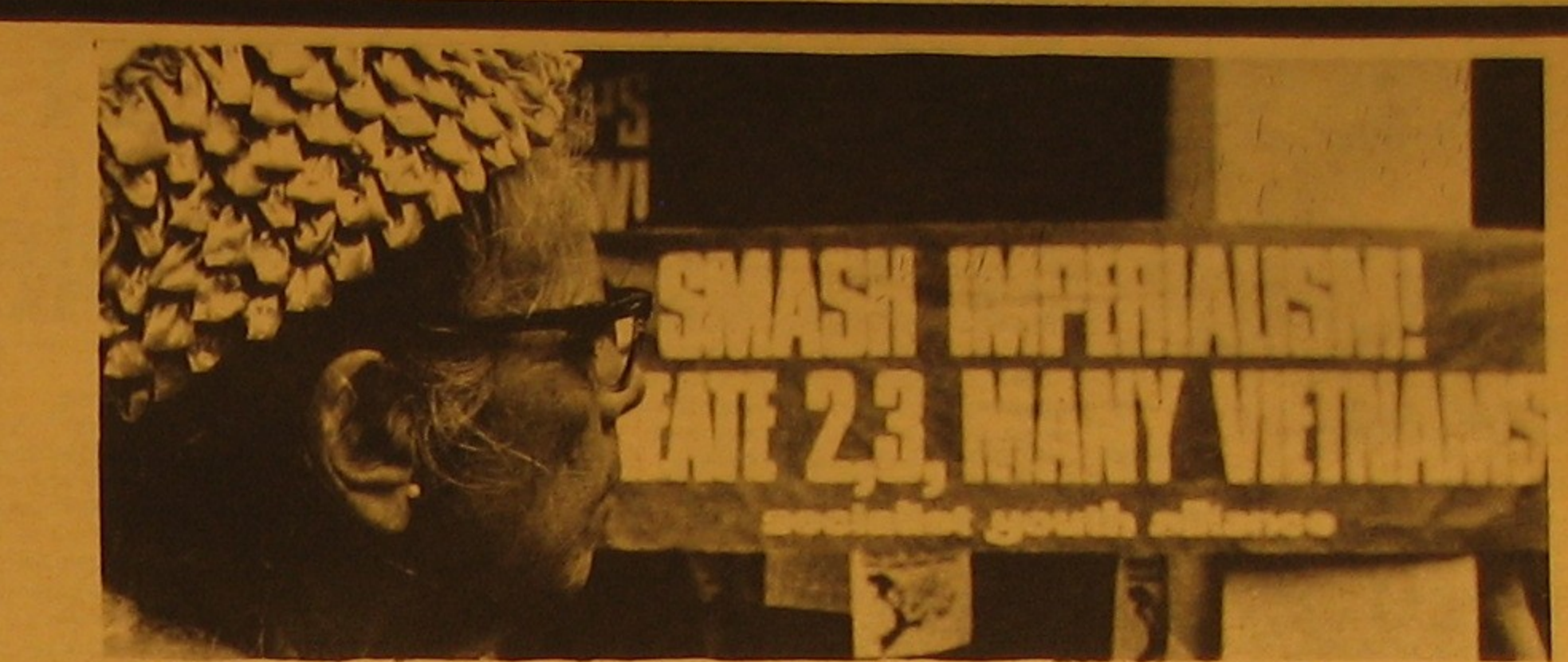
However, the ACOA is reluctant to take industrial action as its membership has been thoroughly confused and demoralised by the McMahon Government's propaganda that a 9% flow-on would wreck the economy. With a strong NCC-Federated Clerks Union-backed faction to contend with, the ACOA is unlikely to take the action needed to get the increase before the next financial year.

When it is understood that the leaderships of the various State and Commonwealth clerical unions are riddled with Liberal and DLP sympathisers, their inactivity in the face of a deteriorating salary standard, caused by a 10% cost of living rise over the last twelve months, becomes obvious. On 7th February, the reactionary "Daily Telegraph" reported that the DLP monthly "Focus" had called for a 4.5% ceiling on wage and salary increases this year. And on 14th February, McMahon at the Premiers Conference announced that it was the Liberal Government's policy to "quarantine" the 9% to Victoria and prevent other clerical officers receiving it.

The loyalty of these right-wing fifth columns in the white-collar unions is clearly to their political masters and not to their fellow workers. These people generally occupy the middle strata of the large bureaucracies, where industrial leadership and opinion-making derives from.

The present leaders are predominantly middle-aged and poorly educated, obsessively status conscious and fear-ridden, and either practising Catholics or Masons. Until they are removed, white collar unions will continue to resort to behind the scenes political deals with Liberal Governments to "fix-it," exposing their basic impotency whenever those Governments refuse to talk turkey.

This depressing situation will change. The new wave of youth radicalisation, coming at a time when higher and higher educational qualifications are required for increasingly more routine jobs, will be the catalyst to galvanise the rank and file of the white-collar unions into action, and smash the old, craven attitude of servant before master, sweeping it away forever.



Which way for the moratorium?

by Peter Conrick

After the failure of the December 1971 moratorium action, it is vital that the anti-war movement is re-established as a mass force to expose Australia's continued complicity in the war and focus attention on the U.S. in its aim of achieving victory in Indochina.

The Vietnam Moratorium Campaign received a setback at its February 13 meeting with the rejection of mass action proposals. The meeting voted in favour of supporting a hasty compromise motion, which includes the possibility of a many issued Moratorium grouped around various causes, ranging from education to social services and conservation.

The structure of the compromise resolution was based upon three main documents - those submitted by the Worker/Student Alliance, two proposals by Roger Wilson and Jean McLean and a series of motions from the Diamond Valley Moratorium group. The acceptance of this resolution will make the task of reconstructing the anti-war movement much more difficult and points to the need of revitalising mass opposition to the Indo-China war through alternative channels independent of the VMC.

The fact that every speaker at the meeting agreed that the war still goes on emphasises the responsibility that the VMC must take to again rally thousands of Australians around opposition to the war and to show the Australian bourgeoisie that their imperialist ambitions in S.E. Asia will not be tolerated.

It must not be forgotten that of the six main aims of the Moratorium, only one has been partially met - "We demand the immediate, unconditional and unilateral withdrawal of Australian military forces from Indo-China irrespective of US policy." There has been a conditional and partial withdrawal of "Australian military forces" - the bulk of the ground troops have been withdrawn, but military advisers, Australian military equipment, money and political support remains.

The arguments put forward by speakers for the mass action proposals emphasised that while the nature of the war has altered (with increased air and naval bombardment, war by computer, etc.) the strength of allied commitment has not basically changed, Nixon's latest bombing raids point to the determination of the US to win the war by other means, while still maintaining a residual force of some 50,000 troops. The Indo-Chinese people still experience the full terror of the imperialist war machine.

-End Australian Complicity: Australia's military role in Vietnam and Indo-China has never been significant by US standards of commitment. Full political support has always bolstered economic and military aid. Australia's main contribution to the war thus still remains - that of political complicity. It was pointed out that while this role is maintained, while there remain advisers and materials in Indo-China, our task is to rally in solidarity with the fighting people of Vietnam.

-The War Goes On... And Nixon's in Peking: The possibility of another Geneva sell-out has never left the minds of the Vietnamese people. Despite promised aid from China again this year, the Vietnamese realise that the chances of a settlement of the war between China and the US are strong.

The Vietnamese Workers' Party Daily 'Nhan Dan' commenting on Nixon's visit to Peking wrote that the Vietnamese people are determined to fight until complete victory, till the US aggressors have to reconcile themselves to defeat and that "Nixon's policy also consists of trying to achieve compromises with the big powers in an attempt to make smaller countries bow to their arrangements." In the light of this statement it is difficult to see how the Worker/Student Alliance does not agree that Nixon's visit to Peking is likely to have any bearing on the future of the Moratorium. However only when all troops and materials are out of Indo-China will there be justice for the Indo-Chinese people - not at any conference table and not when Nixon sets a date.

-The Multi-Moratorium: The idea of the many issued moratorium was submitted by both the WSA and the Diamond Valley Group. Significantly many people expressed doubts about the validity of the multi-Moratorium, yet still voted for the compromise resolution.

The WSA proposals in fact negate the whole idea of mass action - they lack both strategy and firm demands. The multi-Moratorium would suggest that we forget the people of Indo-China in favour of an alliance with anyone who has a grudge against the government. Their aim is a multi-issue popular front rather than an effective single issue united action committee. Groups as diverse as pensioners and teachers are expected to gather around the wings of the multi-moratorium.

In a sense the multi-moratorium is an easy way out... both organisationally and politically it attempts to by-pass the hard work required to draw people out under the banner of the anti-war movement. A closer look at the aims of the multi-Moratorium however will show that with the theme of opposition to US and Japanese domination of Australia it will be virtually impossible to co-ordinate social services, conservation and education groups in any meaningful way.

The multi-Moratorium, like the December 3rd, action represents a compromise with the terms of the Indo-China war. While it is necessary to smash conscription, it is quite obvious that the war could continue without the aid of conscripts. Conscription is not a prerequisite for the carrying out of Australia's imperialist ambitions. It is more than likely that the Australian Army's strategy for further counter-revolutionary wars will not include conscripts.

As long as the anti-war movement has not won its central aim of withdrawing all American and Allied forces from Indo-China immediately, there should be no talk of multi-issue coalitions. Our task has not finished and while the war continues we should be ready to organise action around the demand of immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all US and allied troops and equipment from Indo-China now.

-No Alliances With the National Bourgeoisie: An important outcome of this meeting was the demonstration of the willingness of the WSA to forge an alliance with Australia's national bourgeoisie. The theme of opposing US and Japanese domination of Australia is anticipated to unite such unique political forces as "the objectively anti-imperialist" John Gorton and Sir Garfield Barwick. Alliances with the national bourgeoisie in the past have been singularly disastrous. The Stalinist policy of co-operation and

compromise with indigenous capitalism has left a bloody trail from Spain to Indonesia and it seems that our local Maoists will have us follow the same course. An alliance with one's own bourgeoisie against foreign capital will not abolish capitalism at home nor even help achieve social or political reform. The fight is against our own bourgeoisie as much as against the bourgeoisie of the United States. In this context the anti-war movement not only marches in solidarity against imperialist wars in Indo-China, it also poses limitations on the imperialist designs of the Australian ruling class in S.E. Asia. The multi-Moratorium, by inviting participation from all quarters, destroys the impact and unity of the single issue coalition by replacing it with a multitude of disconnected slogans.

-Confrontation Tactics: The real aims of WSA were perfectly exposed by Albert Langer's attempt to get the meeting to support the demolition of the US Consulate. This adventurist tactic, with emphasis on violent confrontation was strongly opposed. Yet it shows the WSA has learnt nothing about the unwillingness of the mass of Australians to support such activities of sporadic violence. The VMC should not seek to become another July 4th, which will have only a minor influence in bringing large numbers of people out onto the streets. The proposed centre of the WSA's action is an ample reflection of their theoretical misconceptions: the US Consulate. Rather than aiming to get people into Melbourne Streets demonstrating directly around anti-war slogans, WSA proposes an inevitable and fruitless confrontation that will even divert attention from the issues of the multi-Moratorium!

-For A Massive Street Demonstration: International demonstrations will be held all over the world on April 22 to express solidarity with the Vietnamese Revolution and to oppose the war in Indo-China. It is vital that as part of a worldwide expression against the war we participate in this action. The demonstration should be centred around the city area in the form of a march in order to maximise numbers and to direct its appeal at the masses who have yet to be made aware of the fact that the war goes on and the need to continue the struggle.

-The Role of the CPA: A decisive factor in the compromise resolution was the support of the Communist Party of Australia. Significantly this move was not wholeheartedly endorsed by all Communist Party members at the meeting. While the CPA leadership was quite prepared to sit back and watch this disgraceful betrayal, CPA rank and file members from the Footscray and St. Kilda branches increased the numbers in support of the proposals for the reconstruction of the Moratorium on a mass basis.

The doubts held by CPA rank and file about their leadership are not unfounded. Their doubts were a clear indication of the uselessness of the compromise resolution and its more enthusiastic supporters.

Until the anti-war movement accepts the fact that our demands have not been met, that Australian and American manpower and materials continue the oppression and misery, then it is futile to speak of multi-issue coalitions. The struggle of the Vietnamese people for their liberation is still part of our struggle.

Mass Mobilization in Ireland Challenges British Rule

by Gerry Foley

"British out, North and South!" a crowd estimated by the police at more than 50,000 chanted in front of the British embassy in Dublin February 2. The march, organized by the trade unions, "took more than an hour to go through the centre of Dublin," the *New York Times* reported. Before the eyes of the intimidated police, the crowd burned the British embassy to the ground.

In Cork, the second largest city in the formally independent part of Ireland, 10,000 people demonstrated on January 31. They burned a British flag. Protests against the British massacre of civil rights marchers in Derry January 30 were organized in cities and towns throughout Ireland, in a popular upsurge unequalled since the "monster rallies" of Daniel O'Connell in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The explosion was touched off by the cold-blooded, ruthless attack of British paratroopers on the peaceful march in Derry, an attack obviously designed to terrorize the Irish people.

"There hadn't been one petrol bomb thrown at them (the paratroopers)," the Italian journalist Fulvio Grimaldi reported in the February 1 issue of the *Irish Times*. "They jumped out, and, with unbelievable murderous fury, shot into the fleeing crowd."

"I have travelled in many countries. I have seen many civil wars and revolutions and wars. I have never seen such a cold-blooded murder, organized, disciplined murder, planned murder."

Grimaldi told of incidents of calculated savagery, the news of which was already spreading around the small country: "I saw a man and his son crossing the street, trying to get to safety, with their hands on their heads. They were shot dead. The man got shot dead. The son, I think, was dying."

"I saw a young fellow who had been wounded, crouching against the wall. He was shouting 'don't shoot, don't shoot.' A paratrooper approached and shot him from about one yard. I saw a young boy of 15 protecting his girl friend against the wall and then proceeding to try and rescue her by going out with a handkerchief and with the other hand on his hat. A paratrooper approached, shot him from about one yard into the stomach, and shot the girl into the arm."

More people have been killed, and

perhaps even more brutally, in the various anti-Catholic pogroms over the last fifty years than were shot down in Derry. These atrocities, however, never evoked such a strong nationwide response.

The cold-blooded murderousness of the imperialist troops seemed to have touched a special cord in the Irish people - reminding them of their country's humiliating subservience to British economic and military power, reminding them of the frustration of their national hopes.

In the London parliament, Bernadette Devlin, representing her Northern Irish Constituency of Mid-Tyrone, told the British MPs that she and the other speakers at the January 30 rally in Derry had been forced "to crawl . . . on our hands and knees in our own city."

"The Government, by its activities on Sunday, may well have lit a fire in Ireland, the flames of which may not die out until the last vestige of British rule has gone from that country."

"It is not our first bloody Sunday at the hands of the British Army. We will be in Newry. . . . and we will be marching. We have been imprisoned and interned, and finally we have been slaughtered by the British Army. But we have yet to be defeated."

In the crisis touched off by the Derry massacre, the British ruling class dropped its pseudocivilized mask. When the neofascist, bible-pounding demagogue Ian Paisley defended the paratroopers in Westminster February 1, the *New York Times* of the following day reported: "He drew Tory cheers."

The imitators of the British bourgeoisie, the American ruling class, again emulated their idols on the other side of the Atlantic. In its editorial February 1, the most authoritative capitalist paper in the US, the *New York Times*, tried to put the blame for the massacres on the unarmed protesters:

"Yet, even the brief clips of the Catholic demonstration shown on American television prove beyond doubt that the provocation for the troops was deliberate and great. The demonstration itself was a self-advertised exercise in civil disobedience; a calculated violation of the ban on all parades ordered two weeks ago by the Stormont Government."

A week later, on February 5, the pompous editors of the *Times* were forced to negotiate with hundreds of

angry Irish-American demonstrators, pleading with the protestors to stop blocking their printing plant and let them deliver their advertisement-swollen Sunday edition.

The extent and fury of the popular upsurge seems to have forced the British authorities onto the defensive almost from the beginning. On January 31, with a still fresh memory of seeing young boys and even children gunned down before her eyes, Bernadette Devlin made an emotional physical attack on the British Home Minister, Reginald Maudling. In the solemn precincts of the British House of Commons, "she launched herself, a tiny furious figure, on the rotund mass of the Home Secretary," as the February 1 *Irish Times* described it.

The big press seized on this incident to portray Devlin as a fanatic, always prefacing her name with descriptions such as "the fiery civil rights advocate," or the "Ulster firebrand." Few U.S. papers reported her reply when a Conservative MP attacked her for a breach of Maudling's "privilege." Referring to the defenceless people gunned down in Derry on Maudling's orders, she said: "At least I didn't shoot him in the back."

Despite the hue and cry over Devlin's "ferociousness," however, the Speaker of the "most honorable House of Commons" did not dare take any sanctions against the courageous representative of the oppressed people of Northern Ireland.

The murder in Derry produced the opposite effect from the one the British authorities wanted. Instead of frightening the people off the streets, it brought the masses back into action on a scale unprecedented since the explosion that followed the introduction of the concentration camp system on August 9.

"While snipers kept troops at bay, mobs surged through Roman Catholic districts of Belfast, sealing off streets with hastily erected barricades and burning vehicles," the *Washington Post* reported February 1. The *Post* did not explain however, why "snipers" had been unable before to hold the troops "at bay." Prior to the Derry massacre, most neighborhoods in Belfast had been pretty thoroughly cowed by a massive military occupation, despite frequent bombings and the occasional shooting of a soldier.

It is not likely either that large crowds would have been on the streets while gun battles were in progress. Almost certainly, it was the political force of the aroused population and

world public opinion that kept the troops "at bay."

The huge masses that mobilized to protest the denial of their national and civil rights seem to have turned almost automatically to economic forms of struggle. Throughout Northern Ireland, nationalist workers refused to go to their jobs. Nationalist-run shops closed. Dock workers refused to unload British ships. A de facto general strike spread through the country on the Monday after the massacre. Attacks mounted on British-owned business and property.

In face of this mobilisation, the British government retreated further. After a campaign of thinly veiled threats of another massacre, the British army allowed a mass civil-rights march to take place February 6 in the border town of Newry. The nationalist people seem now to have proved that no force can drive them from the streets and beat them back into passivity.

Out of a campaign of mass action for basic democratic rights has grown a revolutionary challenge to the entire capitalist-imperialist system in Ireland. It was expressed in the chant of tens of thousands of demonstrators in Dublin February 1, calling for driving out of British interests and power from all Ireland.

This development, however, was not anticipated by the revolutionary organizations in Ireland. Every socialist group has held a more or less "work-erist" perspective, separating the national and democratic struggle from the "properly" socialist one, which was supposed to arise from economic or "class" issues.

In fact, the struggle for democracy and national freedom has proved to be inseparable from the fight for socialism. The struggle for democratic rights can only be carried forward with a socialist perspective and within the context of advancing the theme of workers power.

Thousands of workers have mobilized to protest British control of their country and to fight against it by their own methods. What could be more natural, more reasonable, than for the workers of British-owned corporations to seize the establishments where they spend most of their waking hours and run them democratically, in the service of the nation.

From one end of Europe to the other, from Jyväskylä in Finland to the Clyde-side, workers are tending more and more to resist the brutality and inhumanity of capitalism by seizing their factories and trying to run them for the benefit of the people.

What could be more natural, more normal, when the entire Irish nation is rising up in a patriotic fervour, to demand the nationalisation first of British property and then of the property of traitors and collaborators? Why wait for parliament to vote to nationalise these factories? The workers themselves can do it much more expeditiously and effectively. There is no automatic reason why it should seem more radical to the workers to defy the established authorities in their place of work than to march to the centre of the city and burn an embassy.

The masses themselves have shown the way forward. For the first time, perhaps, in Irish history, they are taking control of their own destinies, bringing their whole enormous power to bear against the oppressive system. The primary credit for this belongs to the Official republican movement, which learned a vital lesson from the failure of their last guerrilla campaign - that only the masses can free Ireland, fighting for their own demands and by their own methods.

Like the other Irish socialist groups, the Official IRA has been hampered by a

workerist outlook. But it has at least understood the importance of mobilising the masses on the basis of the broadest democratic demands, and thus has been able to play a decisive role in bringing about the present upsurge in Ireland.

The Official IRA cannot lead the struggle to victory, however, unless it overcomes its workerism. As long as it regards the unity of Catholic and Protestant workers on economic issues as the essential prerequisite for a struggle for socialism, it will be condemned to a hesitating centrism in the face of events, an indecisiveness that can only drive its young revolutionary members into ultra-leftism and desperate adventures. And this ultraleft reflex could in turn derail the mass struggle.

Can the Official IRA tell the nationalist people of the North again, as they have in the previous crises, that they cannot win full freedom, that all they can do is put more pressure on the British government to grant bourgeois democratic reforms and then wait indefinitely for the republicans to achieve Catholic-Protestant unity on a "class" basis?

The capitalist-imperialist system that dominates Ireland is a historically evolved, political, economic and cultural whole. The current struggle has arisen out of the most acute contradictions of this system and strikes at its heart. The Official republican leadership has understood how to set this struggle in motion; this is a historic achievement. It remains to be seen if they can lead this fight to victory.

As well as dividing the struggle for democracy abstractly from the struggle for socialism, the Official republican movement has also tended to see the relation between armed force and mass struggle in a somewhat abstract way - with the "army of the people", the IRA, supporting the masses by guerrilla actions.

These weaknesses apparently led to the politically disastrous assassinations of Unionist politicians in the recent period and the threat of "avenging Derry" by shooting thirteen British soldiers. Nothing could have played into the hands of the British authorities more than this.

The people themselves wanted a different kind of revenge, destruction of the system that debases and humiliates them - not the death of thirteen insignificant

individuals wearing the British uniform. For example, when one Derry man was asked if he was bitter at the soldiers, the February 2 "*Irish Times*" quoted him as saying: "I'm bitter at the boy who gave the orders to do the shooting".

The murders in Derry were not an isolated atrocity. In fact, they raised the whole tragedy of the Irish people, especially as relatives of the slain marchers had to try to contact families often scattered over three continents to inform them of their loss.

Would the outrage have been so deep or widespread if there actually had been snipers at the January 30 march, or if a large number of soldiers had been shot in the period leading up to it? What would the response of the Irish people have been if the responsibility for the bloodshed had not been clearly on the British? You only have to think of the hypocritical campaigns the Irish and international press whipped up over the killings of three Scottish soldiers in a Belfast suburb several months ago.

When he learned that the authorities had ordered a massacre, Lance Corporal Peter McMullan deserted from the paratroopers and fled to the Twenty-six Counties, denouncing the shooting in Derry as deliberate murder. Would he have done this if one of his buddies had been picked off by a sniper on a routine patrol?

Isolated assassinations cannot defend the nationalist people. By keeping the full responsibility for violence on the British authorities, conditions have been created that may make it virtually impossible for the British or Irish authorities to prevent the nationalist people from arming en masse to defend themselves. Hundreds of thousands of Irish people have demonstrated throughout the Twenty-six Counties. Tens of thousands burned the British Embassy with the police cowering at a safe distance. Who can stop the nationalist people of the South from going to the aid of their brothers and sisters in the North? Can even the British troops do it, with a wave of revolution rising around the world against the repressive system in Northern Ireland?

Because of the mass character of the civil rights struggle, the Irish people are no longer isolated. The whole world has been inspired by the courageous struggle of the nationalist people for their democratic rights. No doubt remains that their fight is part of the world struggle for the emancipation of mankind.



Melbourne Irish Protest, Feb. 4

IRISH DEMONSTRATIONS

To protest the slaying of 13 civilians by British troops demonstrations were held in Sydney and Melbourne. On February 4 a rally was held in Melbourne's city square attended by 200 people. After burning a British flag the crowd marched to the British High Commissioner's office where a further flag was burnt and Irish Republican songs were sung.

In Sydney on Sunday February 16 a crowd of 3,000 marched through the city in silent protest at the "Bloody Sunday" massacre. The protest was organised by the Irish National Association. On Friday February 11 a smaller crowd of some 200 picketed the British High Commissioner's office then marched to B.O.A.C. offices chanting "British Troops - Out Now!"

ST PATRICK'S DAY PROTESTS

MARCH 18
 Melbourne: Assemble corner Latrobe & Queen Streets, 1.30p.m. March to Treasury Gardens
 Adelaide: Assemble Victoria Square 10a.m.
 PROTEST BRITISH RULE IN IRELAND PROTEST THE SPECIAL POWERS ACT



A CHALLENGE TO REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH

STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE OF THE SOCIALIST YOUTH ALLIANCE

The SYA National Conference to be held in Melbourne at Easter comes at a time when the opportunities facing a whole generation of young revolutionaries in Australia are greater than they have ever been.

elaborated by Lenin and Trotsky, enable young revolutionaries to understand the dynamic of developing revolutionary forces, and enable them to consciously initiate, participate in and lead mass struggles to higher levels of political consciousness.

The revival of radicalism in the 1960s, which successfully broke through the restraining wall of the Cold War anti-communist ideology, will continue to accelerate in the coming years. This is not merely a statement of revolutionary optimism, it is a prediction based on a rational analysis of the history of the last ten years. The central contradiction faced by the rulers of this country can only become more acute: the inability of world imperialism to beat back the advance of the world revolution without sacrificing social peace at home and intensifying the class struggle.

But theory by itself is meaningless. An organisation is necessary to put Marxism into practice. If you are serious about organising against capitalism you cannot function as an isolated individual, or even in merely local or regional groups. We need an organisation built on a national scale, and one that is part of an international movement, to organise the fight against a capitalist class that is itself organised on a national and international scale.

The radicalisation of the 1960's has taken place, in the main, among the youth. A new generation of revolutionary militants, of which the S.Y.A. is an integral part, has emerged, and it has proven to be a dynamic, enthusiastic, and determined force on the Australian political scene.

Such an organisation of revolutionary youth must be an organisation built for action; as such it must be based on fundamental agreement with the program of Marxism, and a willingness of its members to act on that program. This is not to say that the organisation must be monolithic, without internal differences and democratic discussion of those differences. A healthy and vital political life inside such a revolutionary youth organisation is the only guarantee of a continued revolutionary course. The S.Y.A. is such an organisation.

Increasing numbers of our generation are coming to understand that it is capitalism itself - not its spokesmen such as McMahon - that is at the root of the problems in this society. They have come to understand that the war in Vietnam and the oppression of women and black people in this country are not mere 'mistakes' that, once pointed out and clearly labeled, can be corrected, but that they are conscious policies and inevitable results of capitalism as a system.

The S.Y.A. Conference will be open to all young people interested in organising the fight for socialism. It will make plans for the future of the socialist wing of the youth radicalisation. It will discuss what course revolutionary socialists should follow within the labour movement, within the women's liberation movement, within the struggle of black people, on the campuses and in the high schools. And it will discuss how to build the revolutionary socialist youth organisation that will co-ordinate these struggles - the S.Y.A.

At the same time, many young radicals have become disenchanted with the 'new left', realizing that it has failed to act effectively, provide leadership, or elaborate a new theory that could replace Marxism.

If you recognise the need for a revolutionary transformation of capitalist society, and want to help organise the struggle to replace it with socialism, you should be in Melbourne March 31st - April 2nd.

The process that began among the young radicals in the 1960's and will continue in the 1970's is one of coming to grips with and understanding the need for a revolutionary change in this society, and the task of building an organisation that can provide leadership for youth in the fight for that revolutionary change.

Attend the Socialist Youth Alliance National Conference!

In this context, the role of the conscious vanguard - the revolutionary socialist youth organisation - is crucial. This is what the Socialist Youth Alliance is all about, and the S.Y.A. National Conference will be an opportunity for you to join with other revolutionary-minded young people in making plans for struggles in the year to come.



The most advanced section of the young radicals needs to understand and learn to apply the tools of Marxist theory. The ideas of Marx and Engels, further

If you oppose the Vietnam war and conscription, if you want a socialist Australia, if you support the struggle for women's liberation, the struggle for socialist democracy in Eastern Europe, China and USSR and the struggle for national liberation throughout the world - join the SOCIALIST YOUTH ALLIANCE.

I would like to attend the Socialist Youth Alliance 3rd National Conference I would like to join SYA. I would like more information on SYA. I enclose \$ subscription to DIRECT ACTION. (\$1 for 6 issues.)

NAME
 ADDRESS
 POSTCODE PHONE
 Post to SYA, PO Box 581 Sydney 2000 or to the branch in your state.



Dublin workers demonstrate outside British embassy Feb 1. On following day, a crowd of 50,000 burned building to ground. Scale of mass protests following massacre by British troops in Derry January 30 was largest in recent Irish history.

by George Novack

The current ferment in radical circles around the issue of women's liberation betokens a new and higher phase of a social struggle which has periodically erupted in the West for 200 years. The demand for female equality is democratic in character. It asserts the legitimate right of one-half the human race to be placed on a par in all respects - legal, social, economic, educational - with the dominant male half.

This kind of demand is at odds with the patriarchal, feudal conception of woman's place in society, which was tersely formulated by John Milton, who fought for the right of divorce and had an enlightened attitude toward women for his time, in "Paradise Lost":

"Man was made for God and woman was made for man."

The general struggle for political democracy and civil rights against the hierarchical institutions, customs and standards of the pre-capitalist past dates back to the 16th century. It began with the 80-year war to free the Netherlands from Spanish shackles, continued through the two English revolutions of the following century and the American and French revolutions of the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and terminated in the American civil war.

As these mobilizations for democratic objectives unfolded, the ruling powers were compelled to take cognizance of the most insistent needs of the masses. The big bourgeoisie, which was the principal beneficiary of these upheavals, was disposed to short-change the claims of the plebeians. But the exigencies of overcoming their feudal foes, consolidating their supremacy, and maintaining social and political stability prevented them from totally denying the demands from the lower orders and enabled the latter to make considerable advances over feudal times in their freedoms.

"The Rights of the People"

The appeal made by the bourgeois radicals to "the rights of the people" against the privileges and prerogatives of the old regime had tremendous dynamism. This abstract slogan, which inspired the democratic forces, became a seedbed for the sprouting of specific demands articulating the urgent needs of diverse contingents of the oppressed. These passed from the peasants, wage workers, slaves and subject nationalities to the religiously persecuted, racially discriminated, pariahs and paupers, the aged, the sick and disabled, criminals and prisoners, the insane, and the young. As the democratic movement and its ideals spread through bourgeois society, each of these down-trodden groups found defenders and evangelists who strove to secure redress of their grievances and betterment of their situations.

The first cries for women's liberation resounded in this historical setting. Whenever the rest of society was shaken up and set into motion during the bourgeois era, what was then termed "the distaff side" of the population was sooner or later stirred up, and calls for reform in their subordinate status came from militant women as well as sympathetic males.

It is noteworthy that, in contrast to protests by isolated individuals, sustained movements for women's rights emerged rather late in the upswing of bourgeois society. This tardiness was in itself an index to the extent of the oppression and subservience from which women suffered. They were slow to rouse themselves, organize, and act in a concerted and self-confident manner.

The Levellers

Although the women of Holland and Great Britain played active and prominent parts in many of the most dramatic revolutions, they were kept in the rear and assumed minimal roles in political affairs. Their place was still in the home, not in public life. The Levellers, for example, who were the most vigorous exponents of democracy in the British civil war and whose leaders displayed high regard for the capacities of their women adherents, did not request

any share in government for them, any more than they proposed to extend the franchise to "servants", as the wage workers were then designated.

The American colonists could not have settled and cultivated the land without the skills and strength of the pioneer women, nor could they have waged their seven-year war of independence successfully without the efforts and sacrifices of their wives, sisters and mothers. In 1777, at the start of armed conflict, Abigail Adams, wife of John Adams, wrote to her husband: "In the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you should remember the ladies and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands. Remember, all men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation."

French Revolution

On the other side of the Atlantic, the materialist philosopher Condorcet, under prodding from his wife, was one of the first, and very few, male heralds of the French revolution to propose giving women certain political rights. In 1790 he declared that "either no member of the human race has true rights or all have the same." But his attitude was exceptional among the spokesmen of the time.

The 8,000 working-class women who marched on Versailles in October 1789 were instrumental in breaking the royal power, and the women of Paris played a decisive role in all the great days which accelerated the revolution. Yet that epoch-making charter of bourgeois democracy, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, adopted in 1789, did not provide any special civil rights for the women of France.

Four years after this declaration was proclaimed, Olympe de Gouges, the daughter of a butcher who was one of the first champions of her sex to write on politics, published a Declaration of the Rights of Women. It contained these memorable lines: "Women are born free and equal to men in their rights. . . . Women have the right to go to the scaffold; they should also have the right to ascend the tribune. . . . Women arise!"

However, many leaders of the first women's organizations were gullotined and imprisoned and the Convention voted to dissolve and prohibit all the women's clubs that had sprung up under the impetus of the revolution. Whereas divorce was authorized in 1792, the Napoleonic Code of 1804 placed the wife under strict subordination to the husband.

England

Despite figures like Mary Wollstonecraft, the author of "Frankenstein" and a radical critic of many spheres of social life, who issued one of the earliest challenges to male supremacy in her "Vindication of the Rights of Woman," published in 1792, public agitation for women's rights in the English-speaking countries does not go back much further than 150 years ago. Interest in the question rose in England soon after the passage of the Reform Bill of 1832, which somewhat liberalized the franchise.

Industrialization

So long as the rural family with its cottage industry remained intact, the plight of women attracted little public attention. This changed when large-scale industry pulled increasing numbers of women and small children into the mills and shops, where they were pitilessly ground down. Their severance from the home and entry into social production singled out the sex for the first time as a force apart from the family. Thanks to the propaganda of the proletarian Chartists as well as middle-class reformers and writers, the problem of working women, came to the fore between 1832 and 1850.

During this same period, the feminist movement in the United States was stimulated by the visit of 1820 of the Scottish reformer Frances Wright. She contended against conventional prejudices on the proper position of women and calls for an end to their social degradation. The struggle for women's equality before the civil war became closely associated with the other reform crusades of the time, and especially with antislavery

The Revolutionary Dynamics of Women's Liberation



Charlotte Despard, socialist and pacifist chairwoman of the Women's Freedom League, speaking in Trafalgar Square.



Emmeline Pankhurst is arrested outside Buckingham Palace. At her trial she said: "I look upon myself as a prisoner of war"



Emmeline Pankhurst is arrested outside Buckingham Palace. At her trial she said: "I look upon myself as a prisoner of war"

agitation. The matter of the priorities to be accorded the two issues generated dissension among Abolitionists.

The first Women's Rights Convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848, the year that saw the publication of the "Communist Manifesto". It adopted a Declaration of Sentiments, patterned after the Declaration of Independence, which was somewhat ecclesiastical and middle class in flavour. But the document deserves extensive quotation for its forceful indictment of the "long train of abuses" inflicted upon American women and the determination expressed by the most defiant defenders of their cause over a century ago:

Declaration of Sentiments

"The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of men toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

"He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to elective franchise.

"He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no part.

"He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men - both natives and foreigners.

"Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.

"He has made her, if married, in the eyes of the law, civilly dead.

"He has made her morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming to all intents and purposes, her master - the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement.

"Now, in view of this entire dishonourable and oppressive system of laws, we deem it our duty to demand that all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States.

"In entering upon the great work before us we anticipate no small amount of

women - the law in all cases going upon a false supposition of the supremacy of men, and giving all power into his hands.

"After depriving her of all rights as a married woman, if single, and the owner of property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it.

"He has monopolised nearly all the profitable employments, and from those that he has permitted to follow her receives but a scanty remuneration. He closes against her all the avenues of wealth and distinction which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.

"He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education, all colleges being closed against her.

"He allows her in church, as well as in state, but a subordinate position, claiming Apostolic authority for her exclusion from the ministry, and, with some exceptions, from any public participation in the affairs of the church.

"He has created a false public sentiment, by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude men from society are not only tolerated, but deemed of little account in man.

"He has usurped the prerogative of Jehovah himself, claiming it as his right to appoint for her a sphere of action, when that belongs to her conscience and to her own choice.

"He has endeavoured, in every way that he could, to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.

"Now, in view of this entire dishonourable and oppressive system of laws, we deem it our duty to demand that all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States.

"In entering upon the great work before us we anticipate no small amount of

ception, misrepresentation, and ridicule, but we shall use every instrumentalities within our power to effect our object. We shall employ agents, circulate tracts, petition the State and National Legislatures, and endeavor to enlist the pulpit and press on our behalf. We hope this Convention will be followed by a series of Conventions embracing every part of the country."

Freed Slaves but Not Women

This initial nationwide campaign won some minor reforms for women before it had to be suspended at the outbreak of the civil war. The agitation for women's civil rights was rekindled by the palpable inequity of the Fourteenth Amendment of 1866, which granted voting rights to the freed slaves but not to women. The Northern men of money in charge of the Republican Party justified this discrimination because they could make use of black votes to beat the Democratic Party in the South but saw no political purpose in giving the franchise to the other sex.

It took over one hundred years of persistent endeavor by small bands of suffragists to break down the barriers, state by state, and finally force through the Nineteenth Amendment which, in 1920, legalized women's right to vote in national elections.

Civil Rights

The gain in civil rights made by women in the most favored of capitalist nations indicate that the overcoming of the grosser disabilities inherited from patriarchal feudalism was one of the most difficult jobs encountered by the bourgeois movement of democratization. The obdurate resistance to their removal testifies both to their deep roots in class society and to the conservatism of the upper classes, even in the most progressive periods of bourgeois development. They fear any tendencies which threaten to weaken the social supports of private property and profiteering upon which their system rests.

Male prejudice, family custom, religious beliefs and all the other baggage of the patriarchal past would not have deterred the capitalist class from equalizing the situation of American women much faster and further than they have done had it been in their interests to do so. But the exploiters have failed to promote

the emancipation of women beyond its present limits for the same reasons that Afro-Americans have been held down and held back. More freedom for women would have been too costly and cut into the profit-making which is the be-all and end-all of the capitalist system.

Male predominance and female subordination is a permanent fixture in bourgeois society because this relation of inequality is an integral component of the mechanism of capitalist exploitation. Women are oppressed both within society as a whole and within the family. The fountainhead of that double degradation is their economic dependence upon the male wage-earner who is the initial recipient and disburser of the household income. If she does not have an outside job, the woman as daughter, sister, wife, mother and home-body relies for her ration upon the husband, father, and brother, who are in turn dependent upon the employer who buys their labour power.

Cheap Labor Power

In the second place, capitalists require not only cheap but constantly renewed supplies of labour power, which must primarily come from the younger generation. Women have the prime responsibility for raising children. Their unpaid or poorly compensated labours in the family household serve to lower the costs of reproducing and renewing the labour force.

These costs would be much higher if the capitalist regime had to take over the multiple services provided gratis or at minimal expenditure by the family set-up and the domestic drudgery of married women. The socialization of such services would have to be paid for by taxation, which would in part fall upon the capitalists. This shift would increase the cost of the most vital factor of production, the work force which creates value, and reduce whatever advantage accrues to the national capitalist class in that respect.

Third, where women work in large numbers in industry, trade, offices, schools and the professions, discrimination against them is directly profitable to the employers. Degradation and domesticity keep them in the category

of lower-paid labour. The capitalists always benefit from maintaining national, racial and sexual differentials in income and status among the work force. The working class as a whole would be a far more homogeneous and formidable antagonist if all discriminations and divisions within it were eliminated.

Fourth, women are a detachment of the reserve army of labour required by the capitalists during periods of labour shortage. This supply can be impounded or tapped according to the fluctuating rate of the accumulation of capital. During wartime, women can be mustered out of the household and drawn into the productive processes, as was done during the first and second world wars. Then, with the end of hostilities, they can be sent back to the family hearth, there to be kept in storage until capital needs to recall them again. The family home is a depot where surplus labour is deposited and kept in mothballs at least expense to the profiteers.

Prime Targets

Fifth, females of all ages are the prime target of the advertising bucksters who must induce them, by fair means or foul, to purchase all kinds of commodities, useful and useless, from gadgets to cosmetics. In this con-game even the appliances which are supposed to relieve and lighten household toil become devices for fastening the family to the credit companies.

Social as well as economic reasons lead the possessing classes to shore up the cult of the family. The ordinary urban family with the male at its head acts as a stabilizing and conserving agency in an otherwise unsettled world. It is a corral where the domestic servant works for the master in the kitchen, nursery and dining room. Though the family nest may often provide the sole sanctuary from the buffeting and harassments of a cruel outside environment, it fosters immersion in purely private concerns, narrowness of outlook and exclusiveness among its members. Here attempts are made to tame, discipline and conservatize adolescents. All sorts of backwardness, from religion to racism, are nurtured within its walls.

These ever-present factors are more potent than long-standing prejudice in preventing the capitalist regime from giving women the freedom they desire.

The rulers can under duress bestow upon women the same formal juridical, political and constitutional rights that men possess: the right to own and dispose of property, the right to vote and hold office, and the right to divorce, although these rights may be curtailed in practice. They can even be pressed to legalize birth control and abortion.

Bourgeois Reforms

But just as the bourgeois revolution transformed the Southern chattel slaves into impoverished landless freedmen and then returned them to new forms of bondage, so bourgeois reforms have allowed women to escape from being a complete chattel of the male master and become a "free individual" in the bourgeois sense. What they have not done is to release women from the grip of the men and give them equality in the decisive spheres of social life.

The exploitative structure of their system sets limits on the scope of the freedoms the monopolists can grant to any segment of the oppressed. Just as the American capitalists have failed to give equality to the blacks a hundred years after the Emancipation Proclamation, so they have not truly emancipated women. They cannot make good on their promises of "liberty for all" because they lack the material incentives and class impulses to do so.

Socialist Revolution

It will take a thoroughgoing reorganization of the entire social setup from the economic foundations up to and including family relations before women can eradicate the causes of their inferior status and the evils flowing from it. In order to accomplish that, a socialist revolution, which will transfer state power and the ownership of the means of production from the monopolists to the majority of the people, must be carried through.

These are the lessons to be learned from the disappointing results of the democratic epoch in improving the position of the female sex and from examining the actual role of women, and especially working-class women, in the functioning of American capitalism today.

Permanent Revolution

These conclusions likewise correspond with the tenets of the permanent revolution, which were projected by Marx and Engels in 1850 and elaborated by Leon Trotsky in the light of 20th century conditions. This theory affirms that, whereas the bourgeoisie could be a progressive and at times a revolutionizing force during the expansion of capitalism, this class has become more and more conservative and counter-revolutionary in the period of its decline and death agony.

Trotsky originally applied this proposition to the political role of the bourgeoisie in backward regions like Russia and the colonial world, which had not experienced a bourgeois-democratic revolution. As a Marxist he took for granted the elementary premise of the socialist movement that the imperialist plutocracy of the industrial metropolises was utterly reactionary and had to be overthrown.

However, the historical-sociological generalization he made holds good not only for retarded countries which had not been democratized but also for those advanced capitalism whose bourgeois revolutions defaulted in consummating their democratic assignments, as all of them did in one or another respect. Though our war of independence and civil war had many revolutionary accomplishments to their credit, they failed to make blacks equal with whites and women with men.

What has happened in the century since 1865 has served to aggravate both problems. Consequently, these unresolved tasks of the democratic era have been transmitted for solution to the next stages of revolutionary advancement in this country, which is centered around the struggle for socialism. The American revolution now in the making, is called upon by the course of our national development to do two sets of jobs at one and the same time. It must tackle the unfinished business left over from the preceding revolutions, such as equality for blacks and women, together with the tasks connected with the construction of socialism. This simultaneous combination of missions belonging to successive stages of historical progress is characteristic of the age of permanent revolution we are living through.

Marxist Interpretation

Some participants in the women's liberation ranks approach the intolerable predicament of their sex in a highly personalized and unpolitical way. They seek relief and release through some sort of psychological readjustment, anti-male attitudes, or by gathering together in small utopian communes. These reactions are understandable in the first flush of revulsion against family domination and male chauvinism and in the desire to cast off the yoke of servitude without delay.

Indignation against injustice is a mighty motive force in the individual and in society. But bitter hatred for what is detestable has to be enlightened and guided by scientific understanding in order to become politically useful and socially effective. Rational inquiry into the underlying causes of the age-long oppression of women is indispensable for the working out of the best ways and means of attacking and abolishing it.

The Marxist explanation for the subjugation of women is based upon recognition of the fact that private ownership of the means of production, plus the right of property inheritance, was the prime condition for woman's downfall. This began at the dawn of class society and has provided the foundation and framework of her servitude throughout civilization. It persists to-day in the most developed countries because property and power are monopolized by the capitalist rulers.

What conclusions are to be drawn from these fundamental truths? First,

Socialism and Women's Liberation

by Diane Neilsen

On March 8, 1908, women garment workers marched through New York City's Lower East Side protesting sweatshop conditions and demanding the vote. At a Congress of Socialist Women meeting in 1910 in Copenhagen, socialist women from the United States, inspired by recent battles, initiated a proposal that March 8 be designated an international women's holiday. Clara Zetkin, the militant socialist leader from Germany, urged that the proposal be adopted - which it was.

Two of the most significant March 8 celebrations occurred in the next few years. On that day in 1914 Clara Zetkin organised thousands of women to protest Germany's pell mell course towards the first world war and Rosa Luxemburg's arrest and conviction for speeches opposing the coming imperialist war.

On March 8, 1917, striking women textile workers from the Vyborg district in Petrograd held an International Womens Day demonstration centred around demands for bread, opposition to the Czarist autocracy and opposition to the war which sparked the Russian Revolution.

Since that time International Womens Day has been observed by militant women as a tribute to the role women have played in the struggle for social change. Today, International Womens Day assumes greater significance than it has had for the past fifty odd years. A new wave of feminist agitation has come to the surface, challenging the status of women as an oppressed sex. By calling for a demonstration of women on March 11, Australian women are both rediscovering the history of feminism on an international scale and also serving notice that the present radicalisation of women intends to leave its mark on the pages of history.

The development of this March Action Campaign has not been without opposition within the Womens Liberation movement with some women disputing the usefulness of demonstrations in the struggle for our liberation. The spectrum of this opposition ranges from those women who want to contain the Womens Liberation movement within the respected and established channels for gaining reforms (petitions to parliament, etc.) to those women who see the function of the movement as being primarily one of 'consciousness raising' and fear that mobilisations such as the March Action Campaign will lead the womens movement in the direction of the 'male left'.

In the first case, these views are a denial of the history of feminism. Women have been jailed for demanding such basic rights as the right to vote. For women, even the mildest of demands have been won by struggle, not granted from the 'rationality' or 'benevolence' of the capitalist system.

In the second case, and these ideas have more currency in the movement than those of the 'reformers' - what is ignored is the experience of our own movement in its brief history. For many of us, discovering our own oppression and the extent to which it is shared by other women has been of itself an exhilarating experience. Women have become so accustomed to privatising fears, insecurities and worries that often we can go through life feeling only shame that we don't measure up to the models set up for us in the eyes of this society and through the purveyors of its ideology, the bourgeois press, the education system and so on. We have learnt to view other women as our competitors in the struggle to attract men, to hold a man and to keep a family together. In the consciousness raising groups, many of these barriers that keep women apart are being broken down. For women who have been through this experience, the solution seems simple. Sisterhood is powerful.

If we can see that, then it should be easy to convince other women and then things would change. It is a question of changing consciousness.

But there comes a point in these groups, and it develops rapidly, when it becomes evident that the problems, no matter how well they may be understood, are not being solved. The consciousness raising group begs more questions than it answers.

Suppose we are to reach vast numbers of women in this way, will that then free us from the institutions which perpetuate our oppression? Is it sufficient simply to change people's consciousness to change these institutions? Or will we still be paid less than men, unable to work when we have children because of the lack of child care facilities, unable to determine whether we want to have children? Will we still be tied to kitchen stoves, washing machines etc.? If so, how are we to change this? Where does male supremacy come from? Why does it exist? Whose interests does it serve? And so the questions mount. What are the answers to such basic questions?

Women have not always been second class citizens, they have not always been considered inferior to men and excluded from any central productive role in society. Prior to the dawn of recorded history, women and men functioned as social equals. Women were the main producers and actually developed or invented the basic skills that placed humanity on the road to civilisation - agriculture, tanning, weaving, pottery, architecture and much else.

Women were relegated to an inferior social position only with the rise of class society - society in which the means of production - land, cattle, means of transportation (and later slaves and machines) - passed from the communal ownership and control into the hands of individ-

ual men. This transition from communal ownership to private property eroded the collective strength of women and saw the rise of the patriarchal family. Women were relegated to domestic servitude and second-class status in society not because it served the needs of men in general, but because it served the needs of those men who also owned property. The preceding family system had traced descent through the mother. The patriarchal family, tracing descent through the father, became the main mechanism for the transmission of property. The sexual restrictions placed on women were designed to ensure the paternity of heirs. The family also served to replace the system of communal responsibility for those who could not produce - the children, aged and sick.

The downfall of women can be traced directly to the rise of class society, the division of society into those owning the means of production and those able to exist only by the sale of their labour power. The rise of the patriarchal family marked the first institutionalisation of this new second class status of women.

There have been variations in the structure and functions of the family since its introduction through the stages of slavery, feudalism and capitalism. To understand the particular condition of women in the family under capitalism the key turning point has been the industrial revolution.

Before that time, production was of a small scale nature and much of what was consumed in the family was in fact produced by the family. Industrialisation displaced small scale production with mass production, thereby undermining the productive role which the family had hitherto played.

Prior to the industrial revolution, women, with the exception of women of the ruling classes, had almost no life beyond the confines of the family. They were not allowed to travel, to speak in public, engage in politics, have an education, mix in society in any meaningful way. The industrial revolution changed all this by creating the possibility of relieving women of many of the economic functions of production for the family and by giving them an independent productive role outside the family. For the first time in thousands of years women were engaging in work for the benefit of people outside the narrow confines of the nuclear family. Brutal and exploitative as much of this work was, it led to a more and more obvious contradiction between the restrictions put on women in public activities and the need for them to participate in industry.

The development of capitalism since that time has only served to heighten the contradictions which surround the position of women in society - Women are today the fastest growing sector of the workforce. For the majority of working class women today, the category of housewife is that of a temporary stage in her life when society provides no option but for her to stay at home caring for young children. As workers, women are oppressed not only as members of an oppressed class but also by the inequality of their position vis a vis male workers. At the same time, they are oppressed further by their enslavement to household duties and the care of children - a responsibility that is in no way diminished because they are working outside the home as

to evolve a philosophy of their place in society and of their basic rights. For a quarter of a century the two movements, to free the slave and liberate the woman, nourished and strengthened one another." (A century of Struggle, p. 159.)

The feminist crusade of the late 19th and early 20th centuries was mainly a branch of that middle-class progressivism which tried to effect democratic reforms in the structure of American capitalism.

The socialist struggle against wage slavery is today's parallel to the abolitionist struggle against chattel slavery - and the current strivings for women's liberation bear a comparable relation to it. Marxists must be in the forefront of this movement, which is a component of the most progressive tendencies of our time, and vigorously participate in it with their program and ideas. Many of the most effective fighters for women's liberation will get their organizational training and political education within that revolutionary movement.

The rebirth of interest in "the woman question" indicates that the vanguard of "the second sex" is beginning to swing into action along with the students and other youth. They will be joined in turn and time by rearoused contingents of militant workers.

To be sure, these elements are still marching separately and at their own pace. The strategic task is to have them strike at the main enemy together. The unified struggle of all these forces against capitalist domination is the key to bringing about "a new birth of freedom" for both women and workers through a socialist world.

well. The introduction of women on such a large scale to the work force has in no way diminished the strength and oppressive nature of the family and the discrimination of women within the family and society in general as a sex. Nor could it be otherwise under capitalism. Just as the family is indispensable to class society, so the oppression of women is indispensable to the maintenance of the family system. The overriding conclusion is clear. Only with the abolition of class society will the oppression of women be abolished.

In this era of capitalism only the working class is in a position to lead such a revolutionary change. Not owning the means of production, the working class has no interest in preserving the system of private property.

This analysis does not in any way discount the importance of women struggling against male chauvinism. It is true that all women, even those in the ruling class, do suffer to some degree from male chauvinism. And for this reason, it is often necessary for women from all classes to unite around injustices and inequalities which affect the female sex as a whole. Amongst such movements, the demand for the legalisation of abortion has been one of the most powerful in the past few years.

However, the securing of even such urgent reforms as these will not eradicate the basic cause of womens oppression, which is the class nature of society.

It is this analysis which links the struggle for womens liberation with the struggle for socialism. It must be remembered that when we refer to a socialist revolution we are talking about a revolution led by the working class whose ultimate goal is a classless society.

A socialist revolution which will immediately abolish the necessity for private property and substitute collective ownership is the only form of social change which will eradicate the material basis for womens oppression, the rise of private property.

Certainly, it is true that the oppression of women will not magically disappear on the morning of the revolution. The myth of female inequality is far too deeply ingrained to be wiped out like that.

So this does not mean the postponement of the fight for womens liberation until 'after the revolution'. Nor does it mean that women will stop struggling after the revolution. It does mean that we fight here and now for every reform, for every concession that we can wring out of the capitalist system. It means that we recognise that in this period when the disintegration of capitalism is in full swing even minor reforms will be won only by the most determined action. It means that we support the struggles of women against all inequalities, whether they be inequalities imposed on us as a sex or as a part of the working class.

But we must recognize that for women to achieve full liberation along with the rest of humankind they must fight along with the working class as a whole and other oppressed layers of society to overthrow capitalism and replace it with a new form of human society where the exploitation of women and men and their alienation from each other can be eliminated.

Notes on a new film

"Women's Film" (Newsreel - U.S.A.)

An extremely well produced film from America showing the development of consciousness in women.

The film opens to the rhythm of "I Can't Get No Satisfaction" with short flashes of the everyday frustrations of women in capitalist society, darting from housework, to face painting, to romance.

Through numerous interviews with women - housewives, office workers, black women, the film challenges several aspects of the female role in society.

1. The institution of marriage, the concept of undying love by each partner for the other, and the illusion of "one big happy family."
2. The role of men and women within capitalist society - concepts of what is masculine (physical appearance) and what is feminine (petite, submissive).
3. The role of women as housewives and consumers, and the economic need for more and more women to be earning a wage, the working wife thus holding down two jobs for less than the price of one.
4. The position of black women in capitalist society. A number of black women are interviewed. They tell of, and the film shows, how the black woman is oppressed as a housewife, a worker, and as a black.

The really good thing about this film for women is its presentation; one identifies and feels solidarity with the circumstances and development of the women on film. The development proceeds from an initial awakening to oppression as women, then on to organise as women. There are various forms of expressing this discontent, e.g. street theatre, demonstrations.

What could be said to be lacking in the film, is a consistently applied revolutionary analysis. Evidence of this is seen when a switch-board operator is complaining of all the bosses being male and an assumption could be made that female bosses would be better. But the ruling class nature of the boss is the predominantly bad aspect, not their sex. Another example is seen when the wives join their husbands at the strike picket line assuming a supportive role only. Here the need for women to become unionised and militant themselves should be stressed.

This film is recommended particularly for its recruitment value and morale-boosting aspects. However there are some inadequacies and inconsistencies comparable to those existing in the Womens Liberation Movement as a whole.

Details about hire of the film can be obtained from 24 Alfred Street, Annandale, Sydney.

MARCH ACTION CAMPAIGN



How to Contact the March Action Campaign SYDNEY

Meetings are held every second Monday night at the Boilermakers Hall, 232 Castlereagh Street, Sydney, at 7.30pm. Next meeting is on 7th February.

Write to Womens March Action Camp, PO Box K 652, Haymarket 2000 or phone Virginia 6992039 Joyce 4122479 Ros 324901 Judy 9297163

Assemble Town Hall 10.00 am.

March To Hyde Park.

ADELAIDE

Meetings are held every Tuesday night at 287 Rundle Street Adelaide 7.30pm. Phone Barbara 234539 Liz 673960

MELBOURNE

Write to Womens March Action Camp, 290 Rathdowne Street, Carlton. or phone Jeany 3473507

Assemble City Square 10.00 am.

BRISBANE

Contact Ruth or Debra 97 Musgrave Rd Red Hill

The Revolutionary Dynamics of Women's Liberation (continued)

that women cannot find freedom and independence or develop their capacities as a sex or as individuals within the confines of the most liberal capitalism. A liberal bourgeois attitude toward women involves no more than lengthening the chain which remains riveted to the stake of private property and the evils of the family, marital and sexual customs derived from it.

It also signifies that women cannot liberate themselves unless the socio-economic basis of male and capitalist supremacy is destroyed. A democratic workers' regime and the collective ownership of the means of production are required for any fundamental and beneficent transformation of the relations between men and women, husbands and wives, parents and children.

It further signifies that the exploited of both sexes must make common cause in getting rid of the capitalist class structure behind their deprivations.

Finally, it signifies that there can be no socialist movement and no socialism without the participation of women on an equal footing with men in all spheres of activity, and without conscious counteraction against the habits of male chauvinism.

Total Liberation

If the demand for woman's equality is democratic, the call for her total liberation can only be socialist. The

relations between capitalism and the struggle for democracy have undergone a dialectical reversal in the 20th century. During its confrontations with the feudalists, the progressive big and little bourgeoisie promoted democratic rights and institutions. Now, as imperialistic capitalism holds sway, the monopolists and militarists have become the deadliest enemies of democracy. They deny the elementary right of self-determination to other nationalities abroad and at home. They no longer safeguard and extend the previously acquired rights of the people but imperil and chip away at them. Any large-scale effort to broaden democratic liberties must be directed against the repressive rule of the rich.

Under present conditions, the struggle for the expansion of freedom on any front and for any sector of the population cannot be separated from the anti-capitalist movement of the workers, black and white. Only a socialist revolution can create the conditions for eliminating social inequalities of all types. Not least among these are the subjugation of women and the antagonisms between the sexes fostered by the alienations of a competitive capitalist environment.

Abominable Treatment

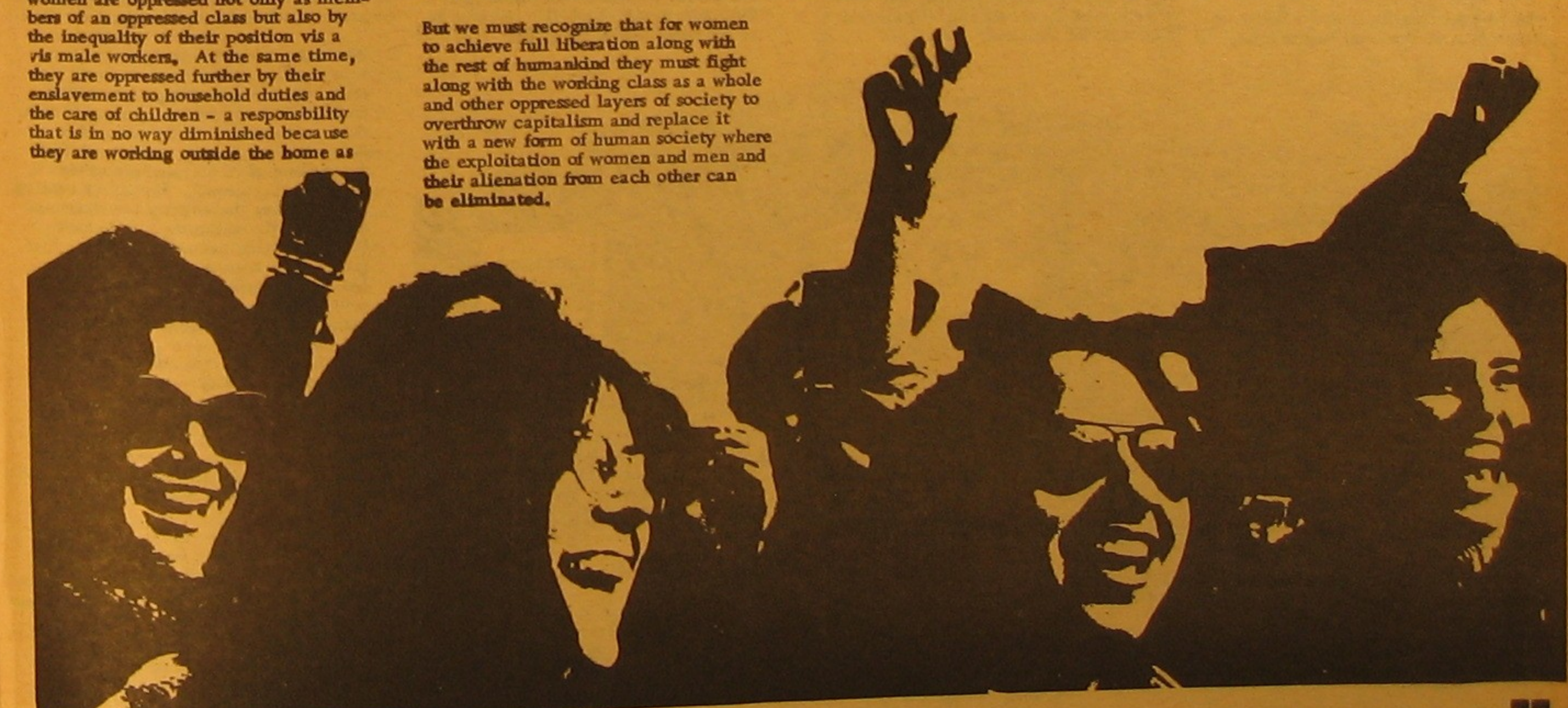
The emergence of a new stage in the fight for women's liberation confronts revolutionary Marxists with a challenge and a responsibility. From its birth, the socialist movement has been acute-

ly sensitive to the abominable treatment of the female sex in class society and has sought to find out its causes and combat its effects. Such utopian thinkers of the early 19th century as Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Owen were brilliant pioneers in this field. The scientific socialists who came after them have exposed the fraud of formal bourgeois equality between the sexes as well as between the contending classes. They have worked to reduce and remove the disabilities endured by women and, above all, to point and lead the way to their full emancipation.

Women have been one of the major forces in all the socialist revolutions of our time. The Russian Revolution and its sequels in Yugoslavia, China, Vietnam and Cuba have, whatever their deficiencies, introduced tremendous improvements in the lives of the terribly trampled upon women of these countries, raised their dignity and opened new vistas of opportunity and achievement to them.

Women Abolitionists

All the earlier efforts to enlarge women's rights in our own country have been connected with broader movements of social protest. The pre-civil war agitation was part of the upsurge against slavery. "It was in the abolition movement that women first learned to organize, to hold public meetings, to conduct petition campaigns," writes Eleanor Flexner. "As abolitionists they first won the right to speak in public, and began



REPORT ON THE ANTI-RACIST CONFERENCE

by Malcolm Price

The Conference on Racism, held in Brisbane from January 28th to February 2nd this year, was important in that being organised by a group of students, predominantly white, it was an attempt to revitalise the movement against racism.

Last year, during the nation-wide campaign on the Springbok tours, a 10 day strike was achieved at Queensland University against racism and political repression. The Tory coalition government in Queensland declared a State of Emergency to ensure that the tour went off smoothly.

Apart from a 24-hour stoppage called by the Trades & Labor Council in the first days of the State of Emergency, the action by the working class necessary to achieve a defeat of the emergency powers did not occur. Individual unions, such as the Building Workers' Industrial Union, played an important role, but the majority of T.L.C. shied away from further industrial action, even when police attacked demonstrators who had fled to the Trades Hall for refuge.

In the face of increased state repression the demonstrators retreated to the University and built the strike movement. Within two weeks it had ended, the State of Emergency was lifted, and the Springboks went home. Yet it was not a defeat. The sporting bodies responsible for bringing in players from racist countries have since been hesitant about whom they import. The demonstrations against the tour led to a greater awareness about racism at home and abroad among significant sections of the Australian people. They set the stage for increased white support for the oppressed black community in Australia. The result was the Conference on Racism.

Approximately 500 people attended, including about 50 blacks, representatives from church groups, unions, various black organisations and left-

wing groups. The weeks preceding the Conference saw a campaign by the two Brisbane daily papers (owned by the one company!) against the Conference, talk of "riots", "black militants", threatened takeovers of the University, etc. These continued up to the beginning of the Conference, despite the protests of organisers that it was a Conference they were arranging, not a war. Harassment, in the form of police 'raids' on delegates, occurred regularly.

The Conference saw a move by blacks, in particular by members of the newly-formed Black Panther Party, to find out whether they would remain at the Conference. They argued that racism was the problem of black people; they welcomed white support, but did not want to be controlled by whites in the process. They would attend the Conference on the condition that the Agenda of the Conference was suited to their needs and priorities. A motion to this effect was carried by the Conference.

Although only a small point it had wider implications. Probably for the first time in Australia blacks were taking part in a Conference at which they had fought for a guarantee that it would discuss their problems, and especially attempt to formulate action to solve these problems.

Of course there was opposition, particularly from the sectarians. When blacks spoke about police repression, the "Labour Press" sectarians wrote this off as an attempt at "moving the Conference into a frenzy of hate with examples of policy brutality". Their out-and-out revision of Lenin's position on the right of oppressed nations/people to self-determination blinded them to reality. During the Conference itself, police were called to "The Open Door", a black centre in Brisbane, to stop a brawl which had broken out. By the time they arrived, the fight was over. Yet the police arrested several black people, threatening to shoot one young black for running from them. Police repression of this kind has led to demands

by groups like the Black Panthers for community control of police, and the setting up of a campaign to "police the pigs". The Panthers are in the process of setting up self-defence groups to protect black people from police intimidation. So far this has met with some success. Police have kept right away from "The Open Door" since the campaign has begun. Yet the sectarians conveniently ignore this.

Blacks are beginning to fight for the right to determine their future. The campaign against the Aborigines & Torres Strait Islanders' Act is an example of this. Large numbers of blacks are categorised by the government as "protected" persons. In fact, this means they receive below-award wages and have restrictions on their movements. Recently police attacked blacks involved in the distribution of literature and badges at the Cherburg Mission. A large percentage of black people live on reserves which are rigidly controlled by the white capitalist government. The education system, especially in Queensland, completely neglects the history of black people before the colonisation of Australia in 1788, ignores Aboriginal culture and the barbaric way in which hundreds of thousands of black people in Australia were systematically wiped out by British imperialism. This helps to maintain the system. As the Conference pointed out, we must support demands to write blacks back into history, to grant control of schools for blacks to the black community, to end government control of reserves.

Those who mouth abstractions about black and white unity do a great disservice to blacks. Real unity of the working class can only come about on a voluntary basis, and this means that socialists must fight for the white working class to recognise and support actively the right of Aboriginal people to determine their own destinies. When the organisations of the working class take up the struggle in support of blacks' demands, then we will see practical steps towards unity. Lenin summed it up well when he said:

"The proletariat must struggle against

the enforced retention of oppressed nations within the bounds of a given state which means that they must fight for the right to self-determination. The proletariat must demand freedom of political separation for the colonies and nations oppressed by 'their own' nation. Otherwise the internationalism of the proletariat would be impossible between the workers of the oppressed and the oppressor nations; the hypocrisy of the reformists... who defend self-determination but remain silent about the nations oppressed by 'their own' nation and kept in 'their own' state by force, would remain unexposed". (P147, Vol. 22, *Marx and Engels*.)

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PROTEST BY ABORIGINAL EMBASSY

by Bobbi Sykes

Since January 26th, the opening day of the Aboriginal Embassy in Canberra, Black Australians have successfully and dramatically drawn national and international attention to the plight of the Aboriginal in this country.

The Embassy was set up as a permanent protest base on the Land Rights issue,

and to focus attention on the ludicrous 'Land Use Program' as put forward by the McMahon Government - ironically on Australia Day. This Land Use Program, further to ignoring the claim of the Aborigines to Land Rights, plans out a diabolical method to force the Aborigines to enter the competitive field of European existence, and lease them back their own land 'to operate as a viable concern'.

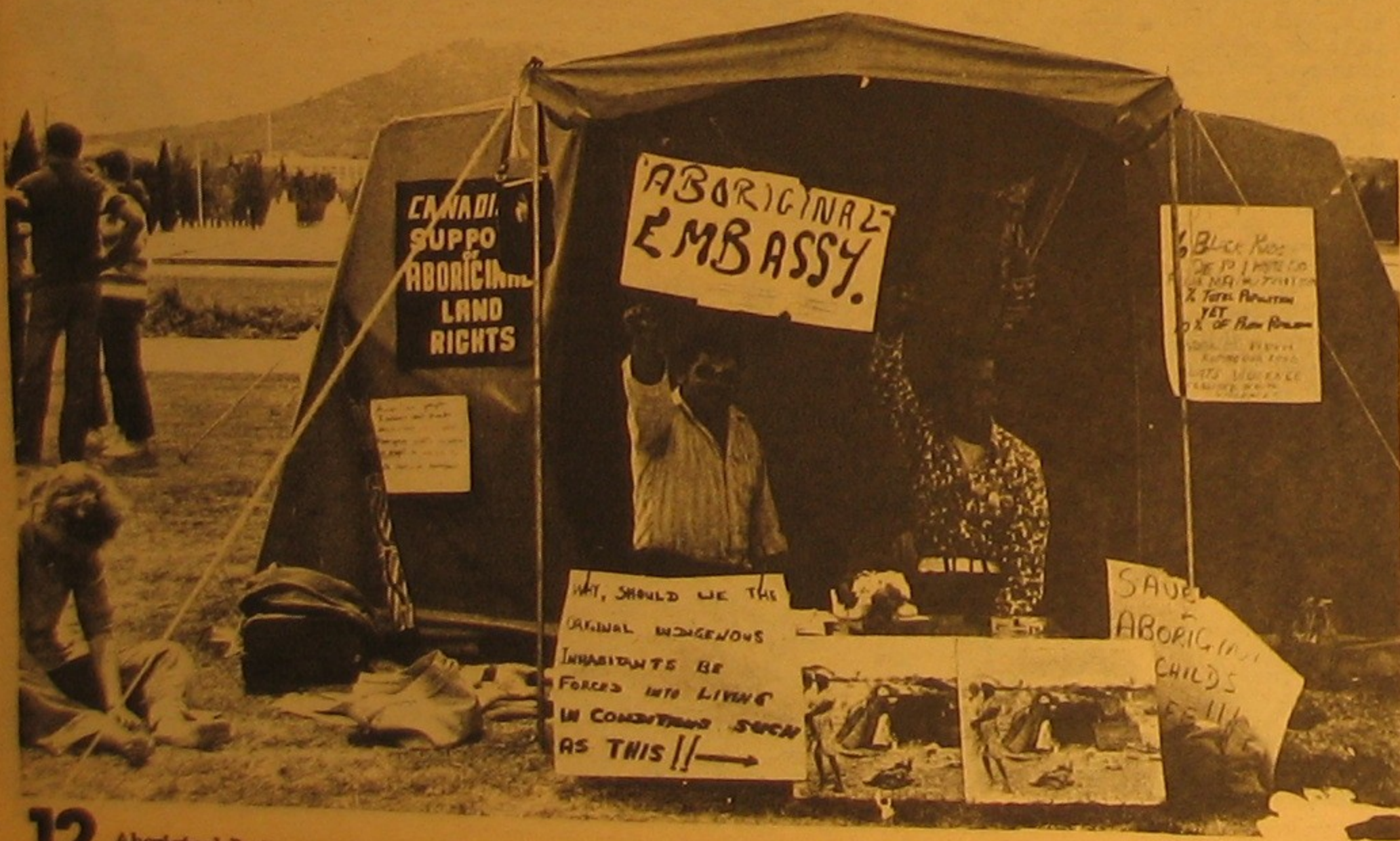
Despite rain and water-sodden conditions, morale is very high amongst the now sixteen permanent residents at the Embassy. A continual flow of supporters, friends and well-wishers convey an almost garden-party atmosphere to the canvas-flapping protest centre. Overseas tourists laden with expensive cameras and movie equipment further ensure that news of our stand will continue to be discussed across the globe.

Acknowledgement and recognition of the Embassy has come from many expected and unexpected sources, along with financial assistance which allows us to eat and continue with our work. Almost all black organisations have come out in support of the Embassy, along with Gough Whitlam, Premier Dunstan, various State representatives, and almost all Trade Unions.

While the Embassy continues to maintain a policy of all-black Embassy residents, white participation in set projects and support in any form is more than welcome. A Rally planned for February 22nd., to coincide with the re-opening of Parliament seems sure to draw a big crowd. Blacks are coming from all over the country to attend and to address the gathering. All black 'Cabinet' meetings and discussion groups have solidified the ideas and helped all participants to clarify their own positions in regard to all current black activity throughout the country.

Two flags fly from the front of the Aboriginal Embassy - one of three-colour strips, green symbolic of the land, red of the blood shed, and black for the people, and the other flag depicts a thuringa, four men seated in conference, a spearhead, and the colours are those of a bark painting - brown, black and white.

As a solid affront to the Government, and a matter of great national embarrassment, the Embassy could not be more strategically placed - opposite Parliament House, where each day politicians and public are forced to display either sympathy, ignorance, or apathy in the face of those whom they continue to oppress, and who now fight back to win their rights to an independent and dignified existence.



ZIMBABWE STILL SAYS 'NO!'

"As two British commissioners used a magnetic blackboard and other visual aids to explain the complex settlement terms, the aged Chieftain Chilwakwa, descendant of the leader of a 19th century black rebellion against white settlers, fell asleep. When he awoke and was asked to express his opinion, the chief muttered: 'Kwete, kwete,' which in the Shona language means 'No, no!'"

The incident, according to the January 23 New York Times, was a "vivid example of how the British test of acceptability of its deal with Rhodesia's Prime Minister Ian Smith was running into deep trouble, even among so-called tame tribal Africans."

After nearly a month of public hearings on the proposed pact, the commission, headed by Lord Pearce, has still come up with only one African (a pro-Smith tribal chief) who supports the agreement. The mass violence, precipitated by Rhodesian cops firing on Africans demonstrating against the sellout, appears to have subsided. But still, in meeting after meeting in the Zimbabwe countryside, the Pearce commissioners are met by crowds of Africans chanting "No! No!"

The racist Rhodesian regime has put forth two explanations of the unanimity of the Black response: Blacks are too uneducated to understand the subtlety of the agreement; and those who favor it have been intimidated into silence by savage Black nationalists. Both excuses have been shown to be patent frauds.

The January 29 "Christian Science Monitor" noted that "ordinary Britons" have been appalled by the African reaction: "They (Britons) had been led to believe that, particularly in rural areas, the average black man was too unsophisticated and too unschooled to understand what is proposed. But

television programs of African meetings to discuss the proposals with various Pearce commissioners show a high level of awareness of what it is all about."

The January 23 "New York Times" provided a revealing comment on the intimidation charges: "...if moderate Africans who had been expected to support the agreement were now afraid to say 'yes', they were clearly intimidated not so much by a small group of conspirators but by a hardened front of black opinion."

Just how hardened that front is was demonstrated on January 24, when eight Black members of parliament (appointed to their posts by tribal chiefs) formally declared their opposition to the agreement.

To the extent that there has been intimidation, it has consisted of white employers threatening the livelihood of Blacks who oppose the pact. On February 3 Bishop Abel Muzorewa, chairman of the African National Council (ANC), a group founded last December to organize opposition to the agreement, charged that white employers had been engaging in "explosive intimidation" of their employees.

He said the ANC could present documentation that five Blacks had been fired from their jobs and evicted from their homes. Edison Sithole, publicity director for the ANC, said that even an employee of the Pearce commission itself had been fired (by a Black supervisor) because he was seen talking to Muzorewa. According to the ANC, 250 Africans have been arrested by the Smith regime since the commission arrived in Zimbabwe, and thirty-one have been shot to death by police. The government admits that fourteen Blacks have been killed.

The commission tactic of trying to

interview Africans individually and in private (talk about intimidation!) has so far failed. Blacks have simply refused to hold private discussions with the British colonial "investigators."

On February 4 the United Nations Security Council, meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, voted on a resolution condemning the terms of the Heath-Smith deal. The resolution was vetoed by Great

Britain, with the United States, Japan, Belgium, Italy, and France abstaining. Nine nations voted in favor. The Zimbabwean people cannot, of course, expect justice from the leading body of the "den of thieves." But the terms of the betrayal of the African people now stand condemned on the international level, with only a worldwide imperialist front and a lone African chief speaking in their defense.



Black defiance in Rhodesian city of Gwelo

OVAMBOS FIGHT ON IN NAMIBIA

After two days of negotiations, the South African government and the Pretoria-controlled Ovambo Council on January 20 signed an agreement aimed at ending the five-week-old strike of nearly one-third of Namibia's labor force. The deal reportedly abolished the old system of contract labor, a sort of industrial serfdom under which Ovambo tribesmen were bound to white employers for periods of up to eighteen months.

According to the settlement, labor-recruiting for Namibia's mines will henceforth be handled by the Ovambo Council, instead of the South-West Africa Native Labor Organization. Workers will be advised of their wages, hours, and working conditions in advance, and the length of contracts will be reduced. The new agreement stipulates that conditions will be made easier for workers to "maintain their family ties," but no explicit mention was made of the strikers' demand that they be allowed to take their families with them when they travel to southern Namibia for long periods.

Since the apartheid regime, which rules Namibia in defiance of United Nations and World Court orders to withdraw from the territory, consistently refused to deal directly with the strikers' elected representatives, it is unclear whether the settlement will be accepted by the Ovambos. Although no strikers were present during the negotiations, Johannes Nangatula, widely recognized as a respected strike leader, has called for acceptance of the pact.

According to the February 1 "New York Times," about half the workers have indicated willingness to return to work under the new agreement. But many members of the Ukwanyama tribe, the largest of the seven Ovambo subtribes, have rejected the settlement as a "watered down version of the old system."

The government's decision to negotiate with the Ovambo Council, a move that was originally rejected, was prompted by the rapid spread of militant action throughout Namibia. When Pretoria sent police reinforcements to Ovamboland, the population, instead of becoming

intimidated, defended themselves against the illegal occupation. Even after the signing of the settlement, on January 30, about 100 Ovambos attacked a police unit. Four Ovambos were reported killed in the clash.

On January 28, some sixty Ovambos armed only with bows and arrows battled a police patrol. At least two cops were injured; two Ovambos were killed. Many white-owned cattle corrals have been destroyed by Ovambo activists.

Even if the government manages to end the strike, the political situation in Namibia will not return to "normal". The February 3 "Christian Science Monitor" reported that though the unrest had erupted over economic issues, it "now appears to be based on political grievances and is no longer a mere labor question."

Blacks who have been through the strike are trying to form a new opposition political party. Despite a ban on meetings imposed by the Ovambo Council, the new group has been able to hold some secret gatherings. Still more police reinforcements have been sent to Ovamboland to bolster the power of the now widely discredited Ovambo Council.

An additional facet of the Ovambo resistance that is creating problems for colonialism in Africa is the fact that some of the Ovambo tribes live across the border in Portuguese-occupied Angola. South Africa has closed the Namibia-Angola border (a move that was supported by the Ovambo Council) in an effort to prevent Africans from coordinating their independence struggles.

On their part, Portuguese troops took up positions on the Angola side of the frontier, after Black freedom fighters tore down eighty miles of border fencing.

Bishop Colin O'Brien Winter, the top Anglican church leader in Namibia, recently returned from visiting his mission in Ovamboland. On February 3 he described the situation there as "critical and deteriorating daily."

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BRITISH MINERS STRIKE

STOP PRESS: Miners have now returned to work victorious with a fifteen percent wage rise.

Well into the fifth week, there is a growing optimism amongst Britain's 200,000 miners that they are going to win their strike "for a decent wage." Unlike the 1930s and 1940s, when the British working class were still feeling the effect of the defeat of the 1926 General Strike, the mood amongst the miners and the British working class as a whole is today one of confidence and determination to win.

The effectiveness of the miners' strike is unquestionable. Their militant pickets have succeeded in tying up the coal supplies going into practically every major power station in the country. Yesterday (February 8) the Heath Tory government invoked a "state of emergency" empowering the government to take desperate measures to meet the effectiveness of the miners' strike by cutting off electric power supplies and potentially to use the British troops to clear pickets so that scabs may transport coal.

Significantly enough, the "state of emergency" was declared after well over 8,000 miners and their supporters converged on London by the trainload last Sunday from coalfields as far away as Scotland, bringing with them their wives and children, militant slogans, and a cheerful determination that they will succeed.

The miners' case is unimpeachable. In 1947, when the mines were nationalised, there were 985 mines; since that time, 770 have been closed; with new openings, only 292 remain. More than 400,000 jobs have been lost, creating derelict communities, moving miners and their families to other areas like refugees, many having to move two or three times.

Since nationalisation 6,545 men have been killed at work, and 38,000 miners have been injured in accidents. Last year alone ninety-two miners were killed in the mines. Their work is hard and dangerous; industrial accidents and pneumoconiosis (800 deaths in 1967) reap a heavy toll.

During the past fifteen years, there has been a severe deterioration in the miners' pay, to the order of 25 percent, resulting in them going from the top to the sixteenth position for the British work force.

Productivity almost doubled in the twenty years since 1947, yet the National Coal Board refuses to pay more. The basic rates are £19 underground and £18 surface, with a takehome pay of £13-£14 respectively. This causes 88,000 miners to accept welfare benefits in addition to their earnings.

The National Coal Board offer of £2 and £1.90 increases is an insult. The miners' demands come at the end of a twelve-month period when the cost of living has risen one percent per month!

Sympathy for the miners' cause is widespread both inside and outside the trade-union movement. Oil workers have refused to cross picket lines, and railwaymen have refused to carry coal. S-U carburettor men in Birmingham have walked out in a twenty-four-hour strike, and the 109 men are threatening to take one-day strikes until the miners get their demands.

Some Labour MPs, themselves members of the NUM (National Union of Mineworkers), have joined the picket lines alongside the miners. Many student groups are calling meetings at their colleges and universities to discuss the strike and to give financial assistance and to help out on the picket lines.

An emergency committee in Colchester comprising members of the Essex Labour party, Communist, Marxist, and Women's Liberation groups, and students from Essex University - billeted fifty-three Yorkshire miners who travelled down from the north to picket the power station in Ipswich.

After a massive rally of between 30,000-40,000 students responding to Tony attempts to curtail the autonomous functioning of student unions terminated in Trafalgar Square, a contingent of about 5,000 of them marched further to the National Coal Board to express their solidarity with the miners.

Even the bourgeois press has begun to recognize the intransigence of the British miners. Many are editorially expressing sympathy with the miners' demands.

The miners themselves have been travelling up and down the country picketing power stations, coal deposits, and docks. Many miners have been

injured and/or arrested as a result of harassment by the police, who have attempted to break picket lines to let scabs go through. Perhaps the most vicious of these police attacks is taking place many miles away from the coalfields, at Saldley, Birmingham, where more than 500 pickets from all over the country have come to prevent the moving of 100,000 tons of coke, which is the last accessible stockpile in Britain.

The likely outcome of these police assaults occurred last Thursday (February 3), when one miner, Fred Matthews, was killed by a lorry breaching through a picket line at Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire. Mr. Matthews's four brothers, themselves miners, were on the demonstration on Sunday (February 6), and his mother sent a letter which was read to enthusiastic approval, urging the men to continue their fight against "the most vicious Tory Government of this century."

Among those taking part in Sunday's protest march were 700 miners from South Wales, 500 from Nottinghamshire, along with counterparts from Yorkshire, Scotland, and Kent. Traffic was, of course, brought to a halt as the procession, led by kilted pipers and seven colliery bands, marched through central London from Speakers Corner to Trafalgar Square.

Many onlookers joined the march, which looked very much like a miniature of the 150,000 trade unionists who demonstrated last February against the Industrial Relations Bill. The march was joined by some Belgian miners over here, with moral and financial support, and a large contingent of students, Labour party Young Socialists, and other political organisations.

At Trafalgar Square a piper played a one-minute lament for Fred Matthews. Afterwards the square, swelling with supporters, was made available to speakers from the miners' union, Transport and General Workers Union, and the Labour party. Significantly enough, despite the forceful arguments of the union brass, they were often not strong enough for rank and file, many of whom kept shouting for a general strike.

In the event of the government using the industrial Relations Act against

the miners, Lawrence Daly, general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, said: "Let them try it. We will break that legislation, as eventually it will be broken by the trade-union movement."

Daly emphasised the unity and determination of the men and suggested that the Trades Union Congress might help the situation by translating its moral support into practical action. One of the main speakers at the rally, Wedgwood Benn, chairman of the Labour party, was reproached by some miners who reminded him of pit closures under Labour governments. He commented that the government had deliberately tried to stir up public sentiment against the miners and had completely underestimated the spirit of the miners and their families.

Jack Jones, leader of the Transport and General Workers Union, the largest in the country, called on the whole trade-union movement to unite behind the miners, but he did not elaborate precisely what actions would bring about this unity. Collections totalled more than £1,900 in cash, apart from cheques, which were also contributed.

The miners' strike is in large part a response to the Tory government's large-scale assault on the British labour movement, but it looks as if the government is having at least second thoughts. The miners represent the tradition of British working-class militancy against the Tories, and their solidarity in this fight is quite a remarkable index of the power of the British working class.

In an interview with the "Sunday Times", one old-timer summed up today's sentiment: "The National Coal Board threatened they'll close down pits if the strike goes on. At one time this would have shocked a mining community. The miners lived for a pit and the pit helped them to live. Generations of pitmen have lived with this philosophy. But now that's all gone. The older generation count no longer. If the Coal Board shut the pits, the younger generation won't give a monkey's, and I don't blame them. We've been treated shabbily, and we want a fair wage for a fair day's work. We won't go back until we get it."

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VICTORIAN MILITANTS TO MEET

In what should be a stimulating exchange of experiences and ideas, a day conference, organized by over eighty job militants and union officials has been called.

"The Victorian Conference for Militant Unionism and Socialism" will discuss unemployment, class society and "industrial relations"; which trade union policies, activities and method of campaigning challenge the power-base of capitalism; and how to increase workers' involvement in trade union affairs and job activity.

Michael Barrat Brown, lecturer for the British Workers Control Institute, Plumbers Union Federal Secretary and Victorian A.L.P. President George Crawford, Jack Munday, N.S.W. Secretary of the Australian Building and Construction Workers and Sam Armstrong, S.E.C. shop steward Latrobe Valley are to be the lead speakers.

The discussion, so soon after the leadership failure in the S.E.C. dispute, should be sharp. Many of the participants in Victoria's recent workers control conference could, in the light of their experiences, pose controversial questions to the conference.

Clearly, new initiatives must be taken. The hiatus between leaders and led, the apathy felt by rank-and-file workers towards their unions and the shrinking proportion of unionized workers in this country, point to the necessity for deeper analysis of the dialectics of class conflict in neo-capitalist Australia.

The conference is to be held in the Greek Community building, 3rd floor, corner Russell and Lonsdale Streets from 10 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. on Sunday March 5. Inquiries should be addressed to Jim O'Neill, Phone 6621866.



REPRESSION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The wave of arrests in Czechoslovakia of persons accused of carrying out antistate activity is continuing, with an estimated several hundred involved. Very few have been released, and at least two have already been sentenced to prison terms.



Lederer: spoke too soon?

The scope of the arrests, the identity of those known to have been arrested, and the similarity of the "crimes" with which they are charged all lend substance to speculation that the regime of Gustav Husak is laying the groundwork for trials of leading intellectual figures in the 1968 "Prague Spring" - despite his promise when he took office that there would be no such major political trials.

There have actually been several waves of arrests in the past two and a half months. The first came at the time of the national elections on November 26 and 27 last year. At that time about forty persons - among them Jaroslav Sabata, a former high official in the Communist party in Moravia, and a close adviser of Alexander Dubcek before the latter was replaced by Husak - were arrested for "sabotage of the elections by distributing and producing tracts that were hostile to the state."

This was followed by another wave of arrests near the end of December of persons allegedly engaged in opposition political activity. On December 29, a leader of the former Union of Czechoslovak Students, Ladislav Mravec, was sentenced to a year and a half in prison following a secret trial, Bernard Marguerite reported in the Paris daily "Le Monde" January 14. At the same time, two other prisoners were given suspended sentences of ten and eighteen months each.

Mravec was accused of handling three documents from the student union, in particular a list of demands raised during the student strike in November 1968, to two Polish citizens, and was found guilty of "using a mimeograph machine for them to run off their 'noncensored bulletin,' thereby attempting to 'contribute to the overthrow of the socialist system in a fraternal country.'"

These arrests continued throughout January. Among those known to have been arrested during this period are Milan Huebl, former rector of the Communist party college; Ludek Pachman, former chess champion; Karel Kyncl, journalist; philosopher Karel Kosik; historian Karel Bartosek; journalist Vladimir Nepras; Karel Kaplan, a scientist; Jiri Littara, former secretary of the Prague party committee; Rudolf Slansky, son of the former general secretary of the party, who was executed in 1952 after a frame-up trial; Jan Sling, son of Otto Sling, another party figure who was executed at the same time; Jiri Lederer, a well-known journalist and commentator in "Reporter", the former organ of the journalists' union that has been banned for three years; and Valeho Ochetto, an employee of Italian radio and television, who is accused of serving as liaison between Czech emigres and the opposition inside Czechoslovakia.

Lederer, whose trial began on January 14, was condemned on February 2 to the maximum sentence of two years in prison for his "crime." He was found guilty of "defaming an allied state and its representatives." This was in reference to his articles dealing with Poland and Gomulka, published in April and May 1968 in "Literarni Listy," the then organ of the Writers' Union. According to the February 4 "Le Monde", Lederer had "criticized Gomulka for having lost his authority and for being incapable of controlling the situation in his country." The same criticisms have since been made officially by Gomulka's successor as head of the Polish party, Edward Gierek, particularly in December 1970 when the former first secretary was forced to resign. Foreign journalists were not allowed to cover Lederer's trial, but only to hear the reading of the verdict.

Lederer was also accused of giving an interview in 1968 to a Polish journalist employed by an English magazine, who then published a report on the interview in an emigre Polish review, "Kultura," put out in Paris.

The arrest of the Italian journalist Valerio Ochetto added a new ingredient to the brew the Husak regime is cooking up. Ochetto was arrested at the beginning of January, but it was not until a week later that Italian authorities were notified, and not until a month later, February 5, that the first Italian representative, Ambassador Agostino Benazzo, was able to visit him. He is accused of having "aided criminal, subversive activity against the Czechoslovak Republic." He could receive a three- to ten-year prison term.

According to the February 8 "Le Monde", the Czechoslovak Communist party newspaper, "Rude Pravo," accused Ochetto of being a go-between for opposition groups in Czechoslovakia and Czech emigres in Italy, in particular Jiri Pelikan, the former head of Czechoslovak television and later

cultural attache at the Czech embassy in Rome, where he stayed after the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. According to "Le Monde", "Rude Pravo" claims that Pelikan and "the persons arrested in connection with him" had been admitted to playing this role. The CP newspaper asserts that Pelikan hoped by means of this arrangement to obtain information on secret political and economic data that "are of interest to imperialist news agencies," and that he and his "contacts" were hoping to "overthrow the present regime" of Husak.

Pelikan refuted the charges against Ochetto in an interview with Agence France-Presse that was reported in the February 8 "Le Monde." The intellectual arrested in Czechoslovakia are not "reactionaries", he stated, but persons who have "devoted their entire life to the cause of socialism and freedom."

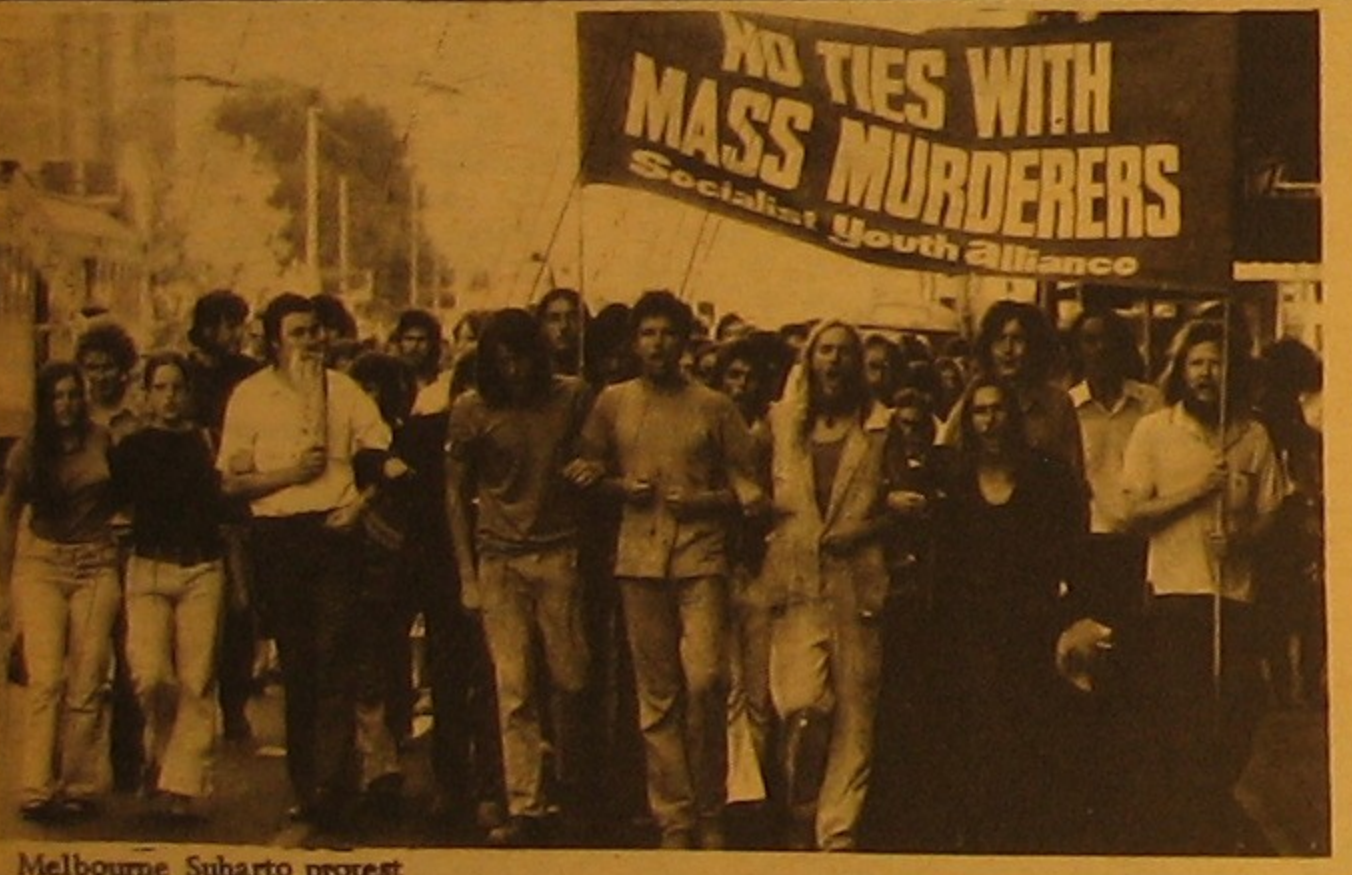
"It is quite clear," he continued, "that Prague wants to prepare the way for a trial against the alleged 'second center' of the party. For that they need activists in the 'Prague Spring,' a foreign agent to serve as a 'liaison,' and Czechoslovak exiles who will be presented as agents of 'imperialist' news agencies. But through those arrested, it is the leaders of the 'Prague Spring' such as Dubcek, Smrkovsky, Kriegl, and others - and their 1968 policy - that are the real targets."

Pelikan said he was not surprised at the charges made against himself. "Rude Pravo," he explained, had already branded him as "a revisionist," a Trotskyist, a Zionist, an imperialist agent and a Maoist. Interviews that I never had with members of the American Congress have been invented, as well as meetings I never attended, and they have even gone so far as to accuse me of having been a Gestapo agent during the war because I was able to survive the Nazi persecutions."

On January 20, the Italian Communist party newspaper, "L'Unita," joined protests of Ochetto's arrest that are sweeping Rome, reports the January 22 "Le Monde". It has also voiced strong protest over the expulsion from Czechoslovakia during the first week in February of a former editor of "L'Unita," Ferd Zidar. According to James Feron, writing in the February 10 "New York Times," Zidar, who is secretary of the International Organization of Journalists and has been an active member of the Italian Communist party since 1938, was expelled on three hours' notice "on charges of having spoken with former party officials" in Prague.

"Western newsmen have been quietly warned to stay away from former party officials and dissident newsmen," Feron said.

He also noted that on February 7, another Italian journalist, Demitrio Volcic, "was searched for an hour and a half as his train left the country, according to Italian sources. They say that only a copy of "Rude Pravo", the Czech Communist party newspaper, was taken."



Melbourne Suharto protest

SUHARTO PROTESTS

Indonesian dictator Suharto was "greeted" by Sydney demonstrators during his visit on February 9th. Approximately 200 demonstrators chanted slogans such as "Go home, Suharto!" and "Free your political prisoners!" Meanwhile Suharto was protected by 700 police who arrested one of the demonstrators.

Climaxing Melbourne's opposition to Suharto's visit was a demonstration of about 200 people in the city square. The demonstration was organised by the "Committee for Action Against the Suharto Visit."

Emphasised by the Committee was complete opposition to any form of military and economic pact with the Suharto regime, considering that an obvious reason for the extravagant diplomacy was to conclude a deal that

would enhance "stability" in the regime. Also emphasised was the need for the Australian working class to re-establish its links with the Indonesian people and to support their struggle against imperialism.

Although, for obvious reasons, the strong ties which existed between the respective Union movements in Australia and Indonesia have been temporarily severed, there is a rich history of solidarity between the two movements, particularly during the second world war and the Indonesian people's subsequent fight for independence against the Dutch. The Seamen's and Waterside Workers' Unions directly assisted the defeat of Dutch imperialism by refusing to load Dutch ships bound for Indonesia.

remacy by the imprisonment of the Tolai 18. Australian imperialism should be on trial - not an oppressed people.

FREE THE TOLAI 18 !! SELF DETERMINATION FOR THE NUGINI PEOPLES!!

CAMP
S.Y.A. EDUCATIONAL CAMP
MELBOURNE
At Camp Eureka near Warburton, March 11, 12, 13. For details of talks, transport, etc. ring 347-3507.

NIUGINI ACTION

A demonstration to condemn the jailing of 18 Tolais, accused of the killing administrator Jack Emanuel was held on February 4th in Melbourne. The protest organised by the Free Niugini Association, attracted over 100 people. Max Ogden, recently banned from entering Niugini, Jim Welsh for S.Y.A. and David Evans from Monash University addressed the spirited crowd. After the rally a march around city blocks was held.

It is essential that further protests be organised to highlight the attempt by Australia to discredit the Matangian Association and consolidate white sup-



Melbourne demonstration to free the Tolai 18

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