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WHAT WE CAN EXPECT FROM A LABOR GOVERNMENT



BY JIM MCILROY

Labor's victory in the Federal election has thrown up a whole series of questions about what the ALP will do in the coming months. The broad majority of Australian working people of all ages have turned to Labor to provide political solutions to the social crises of our time. Labor has ridden to power on an extremely powerful current of popular frustration with the big business government and all its machinations. Workers, youth, women, blacks and homosexuals all seek a government which really seeks to tackle the widespread exploitation and oppression which they suffer under this society.

To those who believe that this Labor administration has the answers a big disappointment is in store. To those who see this tremendous Labor victory as one important stage in a long process of building a movement to replace capitalism, the first signs of the Whitlam leadership's intentions are already quite apparent. And the need for the continual fight to place alternative solutions before the majority of Australians is also clear.

A process of backtracking on key election promises has already begun. A central issue for the Labor leaders was the question of conscription. The 1971 Federal Conference resolution on National Service states that: "A Labor government will repeal (our emphasis) the present National Service Act and annul its penal consequences." Yet now, Lance Barnard (Minister of Defence) states that the Act itself will remain on the statute books. Only the regulations relating to it will be changed to make it inactive. But he specifically added that the Act should remain in case of need in some future emergency. In other words, the demands of the thousands who marched again and again in protest against Australian involvement in Indochina, and against conscription in any form and who looked to Labor to eliminate any vestige of the Liberals' criminal military policies have been diverted. The real demand has been dodged.

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LABOR'S GREAT VICTORY

DIRECT ACTION salutes Labor's tremendous victory. Labor's return to power and its crushing defeat of the L-CP government is a landmark in postwar political life. It will be a great boost to the morale and confidence of the labour movement and its allies as they press forward in their struggle against the employers and for an end to their particular oppression.

As revolutionary socialists we have participated fully in this struggle to throw out the L-CP and return the ALP to office. Without laying down any conditions we have supported Labor against the capitalist parties — the L-CP, the DLP, the Australia party, etc. But we have repeatedly pointed out that Mr Whitlam's basically conservative and procapitalist policies are not sufficient to solve in any meaningful way the problems facing the vast majority of Australians.

For this, Labor must adopt a socialist programme which challenges the power

of the capitalist ruling class, and which mobilises the workers and youth to fight for it. We have never told anyone to passively entrust their fate to any parliamentary deputies, whatever their politics, but to struggle for their demands in the streets, in the factories, on the job sites, in the schools, etc.

This is Mr Whitlam's hour. Sadly, in the period to come, he cannot but disappoint all those ordinary people who have turned to Labor. Mr Whitlam's whole approach is based on the illusion that somehow both capitalists and the working majority can live a decent life. That is not true and never has been.

A socialist approach consists in building the independent movements of the oppressed — of labour, women, youth, blacks, gays, and so on — and demanding that Labor take up their demands and fight for them, and struggling within the ALP to construct a class-struggle leadership that will.



Labor's Stand on Foreign Bases, Alliances

BY DAVE KERIN

The Liberal Party, as the political representative of the capitalist class in Australia, had followed a consistent policy in allowing and favouring the establishment of military bases in Australia. This, in turn, is quite consistent with their support for the SEATO, ANZUS and ASPAC alliances, through which the various national ruling classes have united to hold back any challenge to their rule, any attempt at revolutionary change in South-East Asia.

Foreign bases have been established at Pine Gap, Woomera, and North West Cape, and more are apparently planned. The task set for these bases is not only to assist in repelling any attack on Australia, but also to direct attacks from Australia's imperialist allies to any part of Asia. The motives of the Liberal Party in putting forward this policy are clear - as the party of the propertied classes they and their counterparts in other imperialist countries stand to lose too much from a successful revolution in Asia. Their position and motives we can understand, but where does the Labor Party, now that it is the government, stand on the question of foreign bases?

The platform of the Australian Labor Party states, under the title 'Bases and Facilities' that:

"Labor is opposed to the existence of foreign-owned, controlled or operated bases and facilities in Australian territory, especially if such bases involve a derogation from Australian sovereignty.

"Labor is not opposed to the use of Australian bases and facilities by Allies in war-time, or in periods of international tension involving a threat to Australia, provided that Australian authority and sovereignty are unimpaired, and provided that Australia is not involved in hostilities without Australia's consent.

"The tenure of these bases and facilities by other powers should not be of such a character as to exclude properly accredited access by authorised Australians charged with the duty of evaluating Australian defence policy, whether members of the Australian Parliament, defence departments or armed services."

The question of foreign bases, however, cannot be separated from the whole question of the system of imperialist alliances such as SEATO and ANZUS.

If these alliances are allowed to exist under a Labor government once again the time will arise when our ruling-class will deem it necessary to intervene in Asia for the sake of retaining or expanding their markets and maintaining their political power. What then will be the Labor Party's decision? At present, as the quote from the platform points out, the Labor Party will allow the Allies the use of bases and tracking stations. The Labor Party, purporting to be the party working in the interests of the Australian working-class, would then ally itself with the forces of capitalism and see, perhaps, Australian workers once again being forced to fight in an imperialist war against workers and peasants of other countries.

The Labor Party's shadow Minister for Defence, Lance Barnard, stated that foreign bases would be acceptable. "If they can be integrated into the Australian defence system, using Australian experts and technology, we would have to look at them favourably."

The word 'defence' has been used a lot; we have to ask however what imperialist

acts like SEATO, ANZUS, and ASPAC defend and who does the defending. As in the First World War, the Second World War, Korea, and Vietnam, the purposes of these treaties and other alliances before them, was and is to militarily defend the "right" of a set of imperialist powers to either retain what property, influence and power it has or increase it by poaching on the preserves of a rival imperialist on the preserves of the defenders of these countries. The conscript defenders of these "rights" of the ruling class are the workers; they're the ones who build the war machines and equipment, who fight in the war, and invariably die under the banner of capital.

Capitalism, on an international level, will attempt to protect its interests; however its interests are diametrically opposed to the interests of the international working-class. Hence the choice of the Labor Party, concerning foreign bases and with everything is to serve either capitalism, or the interests of the workers of the world.

In coming down on the side of the latter, it must cut all military ties with those of the counter-revolutionary alliances. The Labor Party must cease to allow the training of troops for purposes of suppression of national liberation struggles. The

Labor Party must also demand that capitalism desist in those foul and monstrous exploits which turn workers against workers and make the question of their life or death dependent upon the twists and turns of the capitalist market.

These are the real interests of the Australian workers - these principles should be the guide for the Australian Labor Party and the present "leaders" who attempt to foist on Australian workers a hideous version of a system of imperialist alliances masquerading as "defence" should be booted out and replaced by people willing to fight for the real interests of the majority of Australians.

Peron Returns

BY DAN ROSENSHINE

The November 17 return of Argentina's ex-President Juan Peron after a 17 year enforced exile has further heightened the ferment gripping Latin America's most industrialised nation. The current Argentine military dictatorship, headed by General Alejandro Lanusse, arranged for Peron's return as part of a well designed effort to head off mounting social discontent, an effort all indications show has the collaboration of Peron himself.

The 77-year-old Peron was president of Argentina from 1946 until he was overthrown by a US backed military coup in 1955. His dictatorial regime, while carefully defending capitalism, failed to establish a secure national base for Argentine capital and often clashed with the growing domination of the country's economy by US capitalism.

To gain popular support, Peron permitted the growth of a large and powerful trade union movement. Many Argentine workers were attracted to his populist style and the demagogic, nationalist attacks he directed against American imperialism and those Argentine generals and businessmen who were in his service. Since 1966, the Argentine people have suffered under a series of pro-US military dictatorships that have carried out political repression, and repeated assaults on the standard of living. The last three years have seen a rising tide of mass mobilisations by workers and students as well as military coups that replaced two heads of state, each of whom had come to power by the same method.

The Lanusse regime has been faced with two nationwide general strikes since September 1971. In an attempt to restore social stability, Lanusse has promised a return to parliamentary rule and has scheduled elections for next spring. But this directly raised the question of Peron's role, since he is the only capitalist politician with a mass following in Argentina. So Lanusse began to negotiate with Peron,

Peron's return did not lack drama. Public demonstrations were banned, and a force of 30,000 soldiers was mobilised to maintain security in Buenos Aires, while the airport where Peron's plane landed was surrounded by elite tank units. Peron himself was at first placed in seclusion under heavy guard. After a day he was allowed to proceed to a \$93,000 mansion purchased for him by his followers, where he was greeted by a mass demonstration of enthusiastic supporters.

The Peronist movement is a diverse array of forces that have used Peron as a symbol of opposition to US influence in Argentina and to the present regime. It includes traditional capitalist politicians, urban guerrillas involved in terrorist actions, and dissident sections of the military. But the most important base of Peronist support lies in the powerful CGT trade union federation (Confederacion General del Trabajo - General Confederation of Labor). The CGT leadership, and much of its rank and file, identify themselves as Peronists. For his part, Peron has promised everything to everyone, not even hesitating to link himself with the memory of Che Guevara.

A crowd of more than 100,000 people gave Peron a tumultuous welcome during his first night in Buenos Aires. While many of these were militant workers ready for a showdown with the Lanusse dictatorship, the real game being played by both Peron and Lanusse has been described by a number of commentators.

"There is, however, general agreement that the divisions that have rent this nation for the 17 years since Mr. Peron's ouster cannot be ended without Mr. Peron's presence", James Nelson Goodsell wrote in the November 15 "Christian Science Monitor".

"Whether they can be ended with his presence is something else again - but the military government of Lt. Gen. Alejandro Agustín Lanusse argues that it is worth a try. And it would seem

Military parades its armour in Argentina.



cottling classes until all demands were granted.

On November 16, students reported, Netterville asked for a meeting with Students United in his office. During the meeting which was attended by more than 200 persons, Netterville asked to be excused, promising to return shortly.

Edwin E. Edwards, governor of Louisiana later claimed that Netterville called the sheriff's office, asking state police to clear the building.

Hundreds of heavily armed state police invaded the campus. The students were ordered to disperse and tear gas was fired into the administration building. As the students fled out, the police opened fire killing two 20-year-old students, Denver

Smith and Leonard Douglas Brown.

At first, police officials and Governor Edwards sought to deny all responsibility for the killings. Police denied using bullets and claimed that the students were killed by "shrapnel". But a coroner's report revealed that the students were struck by buckshot from shotguns like those the police were carrying. Governor Edwards then admitted the youths "may" have been killed by a policeman who "accidentally" used buckshot instead of tear gas.

Netterville has denied asking state police to intervene, attributing this request to an anonymous campus cop.

The murders sparked demonstrations of protest on many US campuses.

IN BRIEF.

GIVEN THE "GO AHEAD"

President Marcos of the Philippines recently told the Philippine Historical Association how he arrived at his decision to declare a state of martial law: "I wanted a period in which I could commune with myself and with God and ask Him whether it was correct for me to proclaim martial law. I asked for a sign and He gave me several signs". No one can say the Almighty's not generous.

LABOUR THEORY OF VALUE SLANDEROUS

On October 25 a criminal court in the Swiss city of Lucerne ruled that the revolutionary socialist newspaper "La Breche" had committed an actionable offence, an assault on the honour of individual members of the bourgeoisie, by publishing the labour theory of value. The court action began after "La Breche" had published articles denouncing a wage system in the metallurgy industry in 1971. The wage system was one under which workers' incomes would be affected by their "attitude toward their superiors". "La Breche" also claimed that capitalists were using pension funds to amass capital.

Deeply offended by these cruel charges, three companies sued "La Breche" claiming that their managements had been defamed. The three suits were later joined into one. The real aim of the charges was to stop members of the Revolutionary Marxist League which publishes "La Breche" from distributing their paper and other socialist literature outside factory gates. Unfortunately, the publishers of "La Breche" were unable to demonstrate the reality of capitalist exploitation to the satisfaction of the judge. He found in favour of the companies. "La Breche" is appealing the decision and has called on supporters to aid the defence both financially and politically. Contributions and letters of support can be sent to: Case postale 1,000 Lausanne 20, Sevelin, Switzerland.

DESPERATION

Speaking in Brisbane during the election campaign, Liberal member Ivor Greenwood urged voters "... if you have a spare moment not only vote for a Liberal government but pray for one". Greenwood knew the score - short of divine intervention nothing could have saved the Liberals.

SECTARIANS DEMONSTRATE IMPOTENCE

On November 25 the sectarians of the Socialist Labor League held their much advertised demonstrations in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Hobart. The actions were called unilaterally by the SLI around the slogans "Throw the Liberals Out!", "Vote Labor", "Demand Socialist Policies". Reflecting the strength of the SLI and the fact that it refuses to enter on a principled basis into united fronts with other organisations, which in spite of disagreements might share some common perspectives, the demonstrations were pitifully small. In Sydney 65 people turned up while in Melbourne the action was called off because of rain, and in Hobart the two speakers who turned up

found themselves with large amplifiers but no audience. As yet we have received no report from Brisbane.

The failure of the SLI actions demonstrates the impotence of the organisation's sectarian politics. After devoting most of their energies over the course of a month to the actions, they were able to attract less than 100 people nationally. It is clear that the actions constituted a major focus for the SLI, an intensive poster campaign was carried on, and for the Sydney rally a bus was even hired to transport supporters from the outer suburbs; unfortunately only about eight people could be rounded up to ride in it. A sidelight to the SLI's poster campaign was the contempt they showed for the principle of democracy in the workers' movement by covering Communist Party election posters and DIRECT ACTION "Labor to Power" posters with their own. The SLI should be a firm supporter of workers' democracy, having been the victim of strong arm tactics by the Stalinist SPA to stop them selling their press on the wharves.

Why, after so much effort, did the SLI's actions flop? The failure of the SLI stems from its inability to relate to current political reality. It, like most other left groups, is small. The problem for such groups is how to communicate ideas to masses of people, and how to move large numbers of people in an anti-capitalist direction, how to lead large numbers of people through experiences which will bring about an awareness of the nature of capitalist society and the need to overturn it. The SLI rejects the only tactic which makes it possible for a small group to break out of isolation from the masses - the tactic of engaging in united action around specific issues with other groups and organisations where agreement can be reached on a common demand or aim. The SLI rejects this tactic. In the November 29 issue of their paper "Labour Press" they say "We will exclude no one from our campaign and demonstration who agrees with the demands outlined in our manifesto and who wishes to help build the Socialist Labor League and the Young Socialists ...". With such policies the SLI will remain a tiny sect existing on the fringes of the workers' movement with no perspectives for building a socialist movement capable of involving masses of people.

DRINK UP
The amount of DDT in cows' milk in this country is now three times above the level considered safe internationally.

COMMONWEALTH WORKERS STOP WORK
On November 22, 500 employees of the Commonwealth Public Service attended a stop work meeting in Melbourne. The workers were protesting the Commonwealth's delay in granting a \$6 wage increase flowing on from the 1971 Metal Industry Award. The meeting was characterised by the attempts of the union officials to obtain a decision to return to work. The officials were obviously concerned that any industrial action might affect the Labor Party's election chances and were anxious to have the matter pushed aside.

STEEL MANUFACTURERS' STUNT, NO SOLUTION TO POLLUTION CRISIS

Fourteen months ago, several big companies including BHP, Containers Ltd., J. Gadsden and United Packers Ltd., all associated with the manufacture of steel cans, announced that they were embarking on a project to eliminate the pollution problems created by such cans. The scheme was announced in an attempt to stave off a punitive tax being imposed on steel cans by the NSW government, as a result of the spiralling cost of disposing of the cans and the increasing difficulty of finding somewhere to put them. The companies' scheme was to recycle the cans. However a recent report carried in the "Sydney Morning Herald" indicates that the scheme has done nothing except provide a cover under which the government could drop its plan for a punitive tax.

The report reveals that of the 500 million steel cans dumped in Sydney each year, only about three million find their way to the recycling centres. The report also reveals that cans delivered to some recycling centres have not been recycled. For example, in Townsville cans collected were eventually dumped in the local rubbish tip and in Brisbane and some other centres the cans are being "stockpiled". Clearly the steel manufacturers' plan, announced in a blaze of publicity, was nothing more than a propaganda stunt which attacks none of the problems created by irresponsible use of the resources available to society.



DRACONIAN EDUCATION REGULATIONS PROPOSED FOR SA

South Australian secondary school principals are urging the government to introduce new regulations giving them the power to suspend students for insolence, persistent disobedience, immoral conduct or a serious breach of discipline. Of course the principals will decide what is "immoral", "insolent" and "serious" - things like male students having long hair, students handing out leaflets in schools etc., if the past conduct of SA principals is any indication.

SOCIALIST RUNS IN TRAMWAY UNION ELECTIONS

Doug Jordan, a tramway conductor from Melbourne running on a socialist platform for editorship of the Tramway Union's journal "The Record" polled 300 out of the 2,100 votes cast.

SOME FREEDOMS FORGOTTEN

Recent advertisements by supporters of the capitalist parties have urged people not to vote for the Labor Party because Labor in power would threaten "... those basic freedoms for which Australians have always fought and which they cherish so dearly - freedom of speech, association, worship and enterprise". There are some other freedoms which governments of capitalist parties have always made available to Australians - freedom to suffer political censorship, freedom to be sent to murder people in imperialist wars, freedom for some to live in luxury while others starve, freedom for black people to rot in alums, freedom for women to be killed by backyard abortionists ... to mention a few.

STUDENT VICTIMISED

Peter McMahon, a high school student seeking reinstatement after being expelled from Blacktown Boys' High School in Sydney's western suburbs has taken court action to have his expulsion revoked. At a recent court hearing of the case, the principal of the school expressed the opinion that McMahon did not have the ability to pass his Higher School Certificate and should leave the school. He then went on to say that the student had had the effrontery to want to discuss the political aspects of economics in an economics class. He also said that McMahon was one of a number of students who had committed the crime of being associated with organisations outside the school. The Socialist Youth Alliance and DIRECT ACTION were mentioned. Of course the free, compulsory and secular state education system doesn't attempt to shape students' political attitudes.

REHABILITATION

Evidence recently presented to the enquiry into conditions at Melbourne's Pentridge Gaol included the revelation that a prisoner who was refused medical treatment after complaining of stomach pains, was later found to have a bullet in his stomach.

DEMOS, STRIKES CAUSE \$2.3 MILLION LOSS TO VICTORIA'S TRAMS!

Outlining his latest plans to curtail civil liberties in Melbourne, Victorian Premier Hamer speaking on November 29 said that the Victorian government would take a tougher stand against demonstrators in the city area. This he said, was necessary because according to the annual report of the Victorian Tramways Board, the tramways had lost 10 million customers over the past year - a 7% drop in passengers representing a loss in revenue of 2.3 million dollars. He went on to say that according to the board, a major cause of the increasing disinclination of people to use trams was the disruption of their timetables caused by strikes and demonstrations.

For strikes and demonstrations to have caused that sort of a loss, Melbourne must be in a state of considerable turmoil, in fact the revolution must be just around the corner ... or could it be that the real reasons for the decline in the use of public transport lie elsewhere? For example, in the policies of the Liberal Party government which over almost two decades has neglected public transport as part of its policy of promoting the motor car industry?

... STEVE PAINTER

Marxism and Feminism

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

not in terms of society as a whole, but in terms of their families and immediate friends. They become alienated from society, because of their alienation from the means of production and because they must compete as individuals, and as family units for the available jobs and material goods essential for life. In this respect, also, the family is a wasteful economic unit because it requires the useless duplications of goods and appliances, and irrational use of labour in society.

However, the family is showing obvious signs of breaking down. The divorce rate is rising, there is a steady increase in illegitimate births, there is a high incidence of suicides among married women; mental homes house large numbers of women crippled mentally from the effects of family life. Added to this, and despite the handicaps of lack of child-care facilities, sex and wage discrimination and double work load, increasing numbers of married women are asserting their right to work outside the home and to earn an independent income. All these factors are contributing to the disintegration of the nuclear family.

As Marxists, we understand that women and workers have the same enemy. Sexual oppression has been perpetuated by every ruling class since class society and private property began. The family, and the subordination of women within it, is one of the major institutional props of class society. So the struggles of women, like those of the oppressed nationalities, must ultimately become anticapitalist struggles in order to succeed.

Oppression in the epoch of imperialism takes many forms. Revolutionary socialists give wholehearted support to all struggles against oppression. We don't measure one oppression against another, saying that one is more "real" or more important than any other, and we don't attempt to dictate which section of the oppressed should begin the struggle against imperialism.

Marxism is the theory of class struggle aimed at socialist revolution. But it is

not a formula prescribing what forms the revolution will take in the course of its development. It is a tool that helps revolutionaries understand and better intervene in the class struggle. Above all, it helps us assess the new forms in which the class struggle takes place - nationalism, the student movement, the women's movement. It helps us to appreciate the revolutionary implications of these struggles and how to give them a more radical direction.

The women's liberation movement will be instrumental in bringing down capitalism, because capitalism is incapable of granting women total freedom. Uncompromising feminism can only lead to socialist conclusions. The demands of the movement will develop as the struggle deepens, as concessions are granted others will be thrown up; and these demands will more and more strike directly at capitalism.

We know that the struggle for women's liberation will not end with the socialist revolution. It must be waged now as

well as during the transitional period which will follow the revolution, until the time when women have total freedom and equality. As Marxists, as Trotskyists, we support the independence and intransigence of the women's liberation movement and don't condemn and disparage it. Authentic Marxists are the champions of the oppressed who are casting off their oppressed mentality and beginning to stand up and demand their rights. While we build the movement, uniting women against their oppression, we try to win over the most conscious women to join us in building a revolutionary party that can unite all oppressed sectors of the population in decisive struggle against the capitalist class. The Socialist Workers League and the Socialist Youth Alliance see the women's liberation movement as a central part of the world socialist revolution in the making, and are in the forefront of helping to build and lead this movement in a revolutionary direction. Our position stands in sharp contrast to the default of all our opponents who claim to be socialists or communists.

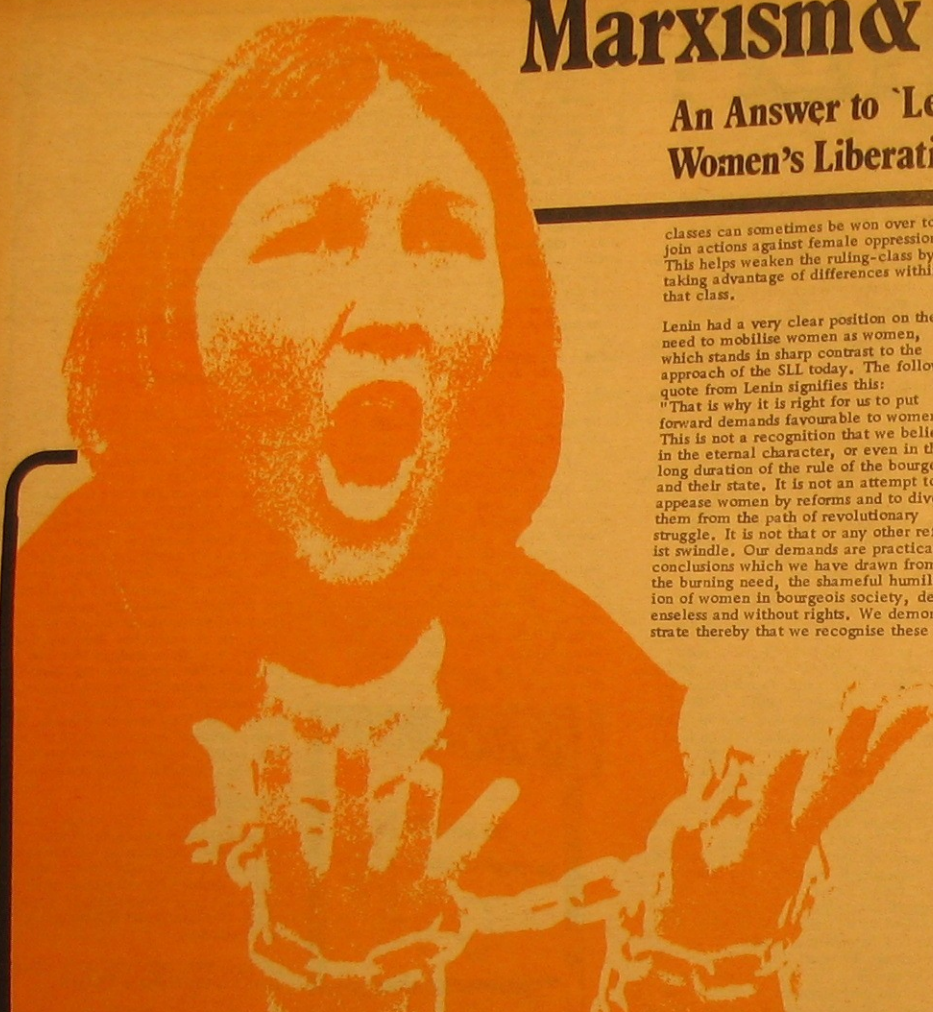
U.S. Cops Kill Black Students

Louisiana state police, seeking to suppress demonstrations on the Baton Rouge, Louisiana campus of Southern University, murdered two students on November 16.

For several weeks, students at the all black school had been boycotting classes in support of demands for on campus medical facilities, expanded black studies programmes, improved transportation to the campus, the right to audit financial records, and the resignation of the university president, Dr. G. Leon Netterville. Demonstrators occupied the administration building from October 30 to November 10 when several of their demands, including amnesty for participants in the protest, were granted. Students United, which organised the demonstration, voted to continue boy-

Marxism & Feminism

An Answer to 'Left' Opponents of the Women's Liberation Movement



BY JENNY FERGUSON

The explosive growth of the Feminist Movement has had a profound impact on the current radicalisation, not only by adding another sector of militants to the struggle, but also by attacking the mainstay of capitalism - the nuclear family. Women are now demanding the essential dignity and worth that has been denied them through the entire period of class society.

This movement has had diverse effects on the left. The Maoists were the first to reject it, and it wasn't long before the women in this grouping rebelled against the chauvinist attitudes towards them, and the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) still has divided views on this question.

The Socialist Labour League (SLL) has been without exception the most hostile toward the Women's Liberation Movement. Openly, flauntingly, chauvinist at their meetings, and ridiculing any mention of women's needs, this sectarian grouping has the audacity to masquerade under the name of Trotskyism. Their ideas and attitudes to the women's movement, oppressed nationalities, student movement, homosexual oppression etc. are completely alien to the teachings of Trotsky and the principled positions of revolutionary socialists.

No revolutionary Marxist caters to the most backward elements of the working class. Trotsky was quite clear on this point, even pointing out the role of bad language in the struggle of the working class. Quote: "And how could one create day by day, if only by little bits, a new life based on mutual consideration, on self-respect, on the real equality of women, looked upon as fellow workers, on the efficient care of the children - in an atmosphere poisoned with the roaring, rolling, ringing, and resounding swearing of masters and slaves, that swearing which spares no one and stops at nothing? The struggle against bad language is a condition of intellectual hygiene, just as the fight against filth and vermin is a condition of physical hygiene." (The Age of Permanent Revolution, A Trotsky Anthology, by Isaac Deutscher, P. 301, 302)

Revolutionary Marxists are always in the forefront of fighting any chauvinist customs and attitudes that oppress women, and not in the forefront of fostering them.

The SLL regards the pressing needs of women as "petit-bourgeois" and "reformist" and it sees that the only valid struggles for women are those waged around narrowly conceived job issues. It seems impossible for them to comprehend that the majority of women will radicalise around issues that directly affect them, and that they feel oppressed as a sex first. Neither can they see the dynamic relationship between struggles for immediate gains around issues such as abortion that directly affect women and attainment of full female liberation. Because they do not see this they have no programme which can mobilise masses of women who do not yet see their enemy as the capitalist system itself.

The two main arguments the Healyites use to defend their anti-Women's Liberation line are:
1) The basic division in society is between the capitalist class and the working class; consequently, struggles against other forms of oppression like sexual and national oppression must be subordinated to the struggle between the 2 major classes.
2) The root of the special oppression of women is in their role as exploited workers.

In answering the first argument: Marxists see no contradiction between men and women fighting the bosses and women workers fighting for their demands as women. There is no contradiction between being a revolutionary and a feminist; they complement each other. National and women's oppression are just as "real" as the oppression of workers as workers even though sexual oppression and national oppression cut across class lines. We favour all oppressed sections of society - workers, oppressed nationalities and women - organising themselves to fight in their own organisations. The independent organisation of women will be the most radical and effective way of advancing women's liberation because women know best how they are oppressed as women and have the most to gain from fighting that oppression. However, the liberation of women will only be achieved by the overthrow of capitalist society and the building of a classless socialist society, and thus women's liberation is very much a class question.

Since all women are oppressed as women to one degree or another under class society, there is a basis for uniting them and none should be automatically excluded. Even individual women from the ruling

classes can sometimes be won over to join actions against female oppression. This helps weaken the ruling-class by taking advantage of differences within that class.

Lenin had a very clear position on the need to mobilise women as women, which stands in sharp contrast to the approach of the SLL today. The following quote from Lenin signifies this:
"That is why it is right for us to put forward demands favourable to women. This is not a recognition that we believe in the eternal character, or even in the long duration of the rule of the bourgeoisie and their state. It is not an attempt to appease women by reforms and to divert them from the path of revolutionary struggle. It is not that or any other reformist swindle. Our demands are practical conclusions which we have drawn from the burning need, the shameful humiliation of women in bourgeois society, defenceless and without rights. We demonstrate thereby that we recognise these

needs and are aware of the humiliation of the woman, the privilege of the man. That we hate, yes, hate everything, and will abolish everything which tortures and oppresses the woman worker, the house-wife, the peasant woman, the wife of the petty trader, yes, and in many cases the women of the possessing classes. The rights and social regulations which we demand for women from bourgeois society show that we understand the position and interests of women and will have consideration for them under the proletarian dictatorship."

"Must I again swear to you, or let you swear, that the struggles for our demands for women must be bound up with the object of seizing power, of establishing proletarian dictatorship. That is our Alpha and Omega at the present time. That is clear, quite clear. But the women of the working-class will not feel irresistibly driven into sharing our struggles for the state power if we only and always put forward that one demand, though it were with the trumpets of Jericho. No, No! The women must be made conscious of the political connection between our demands and their own suffering, needs, and wishes." (Lenin in "The Woman Question", New York: International Publishers, 1951, pages 90, 91 and 92.)

These people are worried that an independent struggle for Women's Liberation could create "duality" in the working class. For their information the working class is already disunited. Capitalism has fostered divisions not only between men and women, but between black and white, between the more and the less privileged, between religious groups and so on. It is true that some men oppose women's demands because they have been taught to consider women inferior and don't agree with our demands. In this case, revolutionaries are wholeheartedly on the side of the women, not the backward male workers. We don't tell the women: subordinate your demands in the interests of "class unity" or postpone your struggle until the male workers are reeducated.

In this connection it is relevant to recall Trotsky's attitude toward racial chauvinism among American workers. In the pamphlet "Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination", Trotsky said:
"99.9% of the American workers are chauvinists. In relation to the Negroes they are hangmen and they are so also

toward the Chinese. It is necessary to make them understand that the American state is not their state and that they do not have to be the guardians of this state. . . . Those American workers who say: 'The Negroes should separate when they so desire and we will defend them against our American police' - those are revolutionists; I have confidence in them." (New York: Merit Publishers, 1967, Page 17.)

The spirit of the passage applies to racial chauvinism among workers. Revolutionary workers defend women in their fight for liberation, just as they defend the right of black people to self-determination. Instead of putting the onus on the Women's Liberation Movement to understand the importance of the class struggle and the fact that men are also oppressed, the responsibility should be put on the male workers and the union bureaucrats to support the just demands of women. Women organising independently to fight for their demands will most effectively convince men to support them. That is the kind of working class unity Marxists are for.

The second argument of the sectarians against women's liberation, where they see the special oppression of women as that only of "exploited workers", completely leaves out the oppressive character of the family. This simply stems from the fact that they do not have any Marxist analysis of the role of the family, or the oppression of women within it, or in society.

The Socialist Labour League thinks abortion, contraception, child-care etc. are reformist and petit-bourgeois and try to justify this position by saying "that working class women are not oppressed in this way, and besides, they like having big families". They ignore the fact that it is working class women who suffer at the hands of back-yard abortionists, and are often forced to bear child after child. The complete irresponsibility of these people on these questions can only be described as anti-working class.

This is a significant departure from the position held by Marx, Engels and Lenin on the question of the family. As Engels pointed out in "The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State", the family grew out of the needs of class society, as a pillar of the institution of private property and the class domination of human beings over other human beings. This is still the fundamental character of the family.

The family is above all an economic unit, where each individual family is responsible for such tasks as feeding, clothing, educating the children and caring for the sick and aged, none of whom are useful to capitalism, because they are non-productive. The family is forced to look out only for its own interests in competition with other families. Because having children inside the existing family structure means years of domestic drudgery for all but very rich women, the ability of women to control their bodies and to be able to make decisions about when and whether to bear children is an essential right denied by capitalism. Without this, women are unable to make decisions which affect their lives and are forced, through lack of child-care facilities or adequate social services, to be economically dependent on their husbands or families. The reason that the government will not provide low cost or free childcare facilities on a mass scale is precisely because it would help to break down the existing patriarchal, nuclear family where women remain in the home doing socially unpaid work. The family performs the task of conditioning and socialising the young. It plays a decisive function in the perpetuation of class society. Wealth is passed down to succeeding generations through the family structure. Unlike working-class children, the children of the ruling class are assured of every economic and educational advantage. Children learn to accept the exploitative and alienating social relations which exist under capitalism and develop, themselves, the selfish and competitive traits needed to survive in this system. They learn to think,