

# DIRECT ACTION

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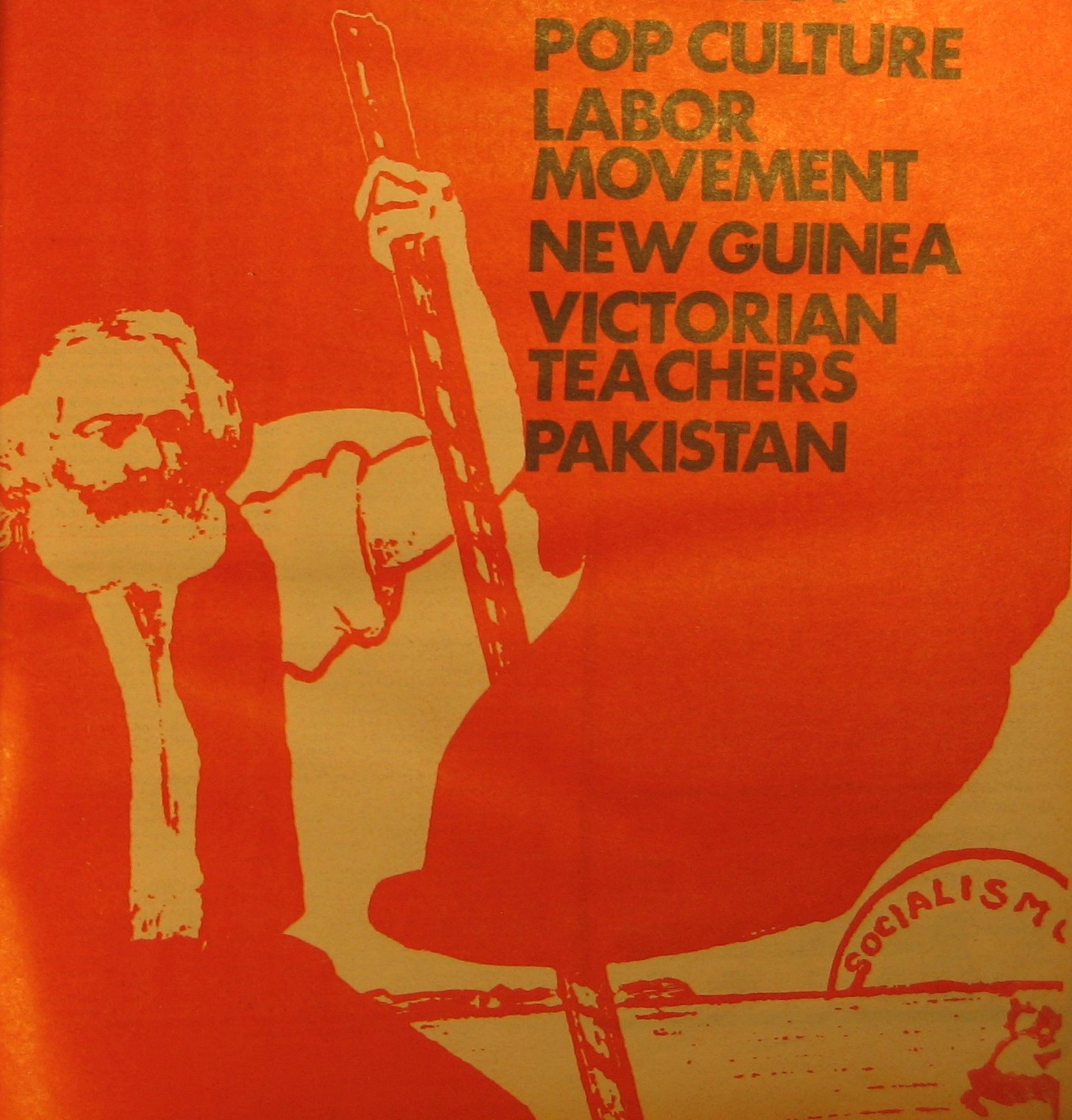
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# DIRECT ACTION

NUMBER 6, MAY 1971.

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COVER: KARL MARY UNFURLS THE RED BANNER IN THE SOCIALIST DAWN.

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## ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT

"The anti-war movement is dead!" said Nixon, and a lot of Americans agreed, including many leaders of the anti-war movement. The only ones who didn't agree were those who held the perspective for continuing the job of building mass, independent demonstrations to unite as many people as possible around the demands of immediate withdrawal of all US troops and material from Indo-China. The outcome of the tireless efforts of those who held this perspective was the massive out-pouring of hundreds of thousands of anti-war Americans on April 24, marching on Washington and San Francisco.

This action united people of every strata of American society. There were Third World contingents, Gay contingents, Women's contingents, the labor movement as well as the youth and students marching. We believe that there are a few basic principles to be used in building the anti-war movement and ensuring its success. Firstly, putting the movement on a non-exclusionary basis. That is, anyone who agrees with the central demands of the movement (e.g. immediate withdrawal of all troops) can participate, no matter what political or philosophical views they might hold. This is the only way of uniting all people in Australia who

are opposed to the war into actively demonstrating their opposition. Secondly, the principle of operating by democratic procedures. It is essential for holding together the coalition and giving people in the movement the opportunity to be able to participate fully in the debates and decisions on policy, tactics etc.

Finally, the form of action to take in demonstrating our opposition to the war must be that of militant but non-violent mass marches. It is this point that is most often balked at by sections of the movement who are tired of marching and tired of organising. The significance of mass marches must be emphasised over and over again.

Sydney was the only city able to build a march for April 30. A coalition of liberals, ultralefts, pacifists and the Communist Party decided against mass action for this date in other cities. Even in Sydney, delaying tactics by these same forces have meant that the march will be smaller than it should have been.

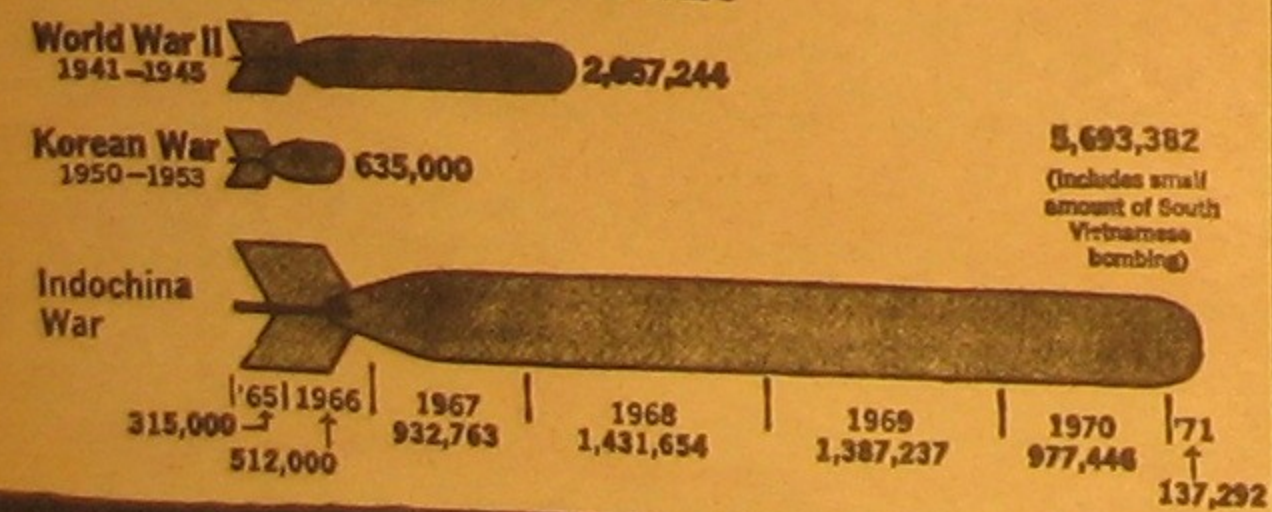
We cannot afford these same mistakes for June 30!  
**REBUILD THE ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT!**  
**BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW!**  
**VICTORY TO THE VIETNAMESE REVOLUTION!**

## CEYLON

The Coalition Government in Ceylon which was elected a year ago has recently shown its true reactionary character. Since mid-March it has been following a policy of torture, mass arrests and summary execution. Even the bourgeois press has been full of stories of bodies floating down the river. Originally civil rights were suspended when a state of emergency was declared. Reliable information has been hard to come by since then, the censorship and mass arrests make use of that. The attack on the Ceylonese people was completely unjustified. Bala Tampoe, the General Secretary of the Ceylon Mercantile Union pointed out that when the state of emergency was declared there was only one specific instance of action by anyone, which could be construed as politically motivated violence. That was an attack on the United States Embassy in Colombo on March 6. When the state of emergency was declared none of the persons arrested as suspects had been identified in court as actually participating in the attack. The utter hypocrisy of the Ceylon Government has been demonstrated

most clearly by its treatment of the JVP (Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna - People's Liberation Front) Several months ago, at a time when it wished to protect its 'socialist' character it attacked the JVP as 'an agency of reactionary forces'. At that stage they had to protect the image that got them into power, a coalition which consisted among others of the Communist Party (Moscow) and an ex-Trotskyist party (Lanka Sama Samaja Party) couldn't afford to attack their opponents as 'communist' or 'insurrectionary'. Now there is a strong possibility that the attack on the Ceylonese people was not caused by any attack on the American Embassy but that the attack on the embassy was fabricated in order to give the government an excuse to suppress opposition. Now the JVP is suddenly accused of leading an insurrection. News from Ceylon is scarce, but not sufficiently so for the Australian government to send arms to put down the workers, peasants and students of Ceylon, or for the Soviet government to send planes to bomb and strafe these same people.

## U.S. Bombing Tonnage in Three Wars



# TEACHERS FORCE REPEAL OF ANTI-STRIKE REGULATIONS

DAVID HOLMES

The recent teachers' struggles in Victoria have been notable for several reasons. Firstly, the government was forced to capitulate completely to the striking teachers. Secondly, the strike was marked by the militant unity of important sectors of the industrial and white collar unions of the organized working class. Finally, the strike has shaken the leaden conservatism of the Victorian Teachers' Union.

On March 24 the Bolte government brought in exceptionally harsh regulations against individual striking teachers. The essence of the regulations was that striking teachers would forfeit part of their service for the purpose of calculating long-service leave entitlements. A teacher who struck repeatedly could thereby lose his or her entire long service leave entitlement.

Stop-work meetings called by the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association and the Technical Teachers Association of Victoria for the following Tuesday were massively attended. The 'Age' (31.3.71) reported that more than 4,000 VSTA members attended the Music Bowl meeting and more than 3,000 TTA members participated in a separate meeting. The stop-work crippled the state educational system: 80 out of 104 Tech. schools were shut and nearly all of the state's 250 high schools were shut. 200,000 students were without teachers.

The teachers won strong support from other workers' organizations who saw in the regulations a threat to the entire working class movement - industrial and white collar. The 26 'rebel' unions declared their support for the teachers and said they were prepared to strike if necessary.

On the first day of the strike the Government unconditionally withdrew the regulations. The massive working class support for the teachers was the essential reason for the government's abject capitulation. The Government tried to partially offset this defeat by attempting to get the teachers' organizations to participate in an 'independent inquiry' into teachers' grievances. This manoeuvre has so far been a complete failure, the VSTA and TTA having completely boycotted it.

Why did the Government do it? Can the resulting widespread opposition have been entirely unforeseen? Several considerations were discussed in the bourgeois press (Age, 27.3.71). Firstly they overestimated the internal divisions in the teachers ranks. The VSTA in particular has come a long way since 1965 when it held its first stop-work in its twelve years of existence. Secondly, they failed to foresee the massive militant solidarity of the rest of the workers' movement with the teachers. The third consideration advanced was that the Government was prepared to lose on the regulations issue in return for concession by the teachers on the question of the 'independent' inquiry and on the Tribunal issue.

This manoeuvre too, has failed. The strike remains a total victory for the teachers and the working class movement as a whole.

A notable feature of the strike was the march by TTA members from the Shrine through the city to Parliament House. Some VSTA teachers participated but the VSTA did not officially endorse it. This reflects the different stages of development of the two unions. The march was one of the most militant tactics yet used in the teachers' struggle.

The VTU which did not strike along with the others teachers' unions, played a very dubious role in the struggle. However, the strike has had its reverberations in this large (23,000) long-time conservative union. A revolt has broken out in the VTU spearheaded by the 3,000-strong primary men's branch. A stormy, post-strike meeting of 500 primary teachers censured the VTU leaders and set up a 24-man committee to reform the union. ('Age', 8.4.71)

Thus, the lesson that direct action pays off is being learnt by more and more teacher layers. Capitalist development has created, alongside the 'classical' industrial proletariat, extensive strata of white collar and 'intellectual' workers. The teachers belong to these layers. Today, these layers are part of the proletariat (ie, those who must sell their labour power for wages in order to live.)

Once, an intellectually trained person could expect to become an independent professional and gain a good position in the State or in business. Such jobs had room for a degree of independent initiative. Today, a university training is generally a ticket to the neo-capitalist 'intellectual proletariat'. It gives one a job which in its essential aspects more and more resembles those of the industrial proletariat. Hierarchical work relations, alienation and lack of control over one's activity, an ever more deeply felt meaninglessness in one's work - these are the hallmarks of white collar and intellectual work today.

Not only is intellectual work becoming 'proletarianized', but the differentials between these layers and the industrial working class have never been lower. As Ernest Mandel points out, the proletariat is becoming more and more homogeneous.

These are some of the underlying factors in the phenomenon of the increasing militancy of white collar and intellectual workers. Along with the objective 'proletarianization' of these layers there goes, albeit unevenly and contradictorily, a growth in trade union consciousness - a conviction of the necessity to wage a militant struggle for better conditions of work. The recent teachers' strike is surely an important milestone in this process.

# EAST BENGAL FIGHTS FOR INDEPENDENCE

From Intercontinental Press

Pakistan exploded into civil war during the night of March 25-26 as federal troops attempted to reimpose President Yahya Khan's control over the eastern section of the country. The fighting began with deliberate attacks on civilian areas considered to be strongholds of independence sentiment.

Negotiations between Yahya and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, leader of the Awami League, which favors autonomy for East Pakistan, broke down on March 25. Yahya flew back to Karachi that afternoon.

About 11 o'clock that night, Sydney H. Schanberg reported in the March 28 *New York Times*, intermittent firing was heard in the provincial capital of Dacca as troops began to attack the university and other areas of the city.

Schanberg, like other foreign reporters in the city, was confined in the International Hotel until the army expelled him from the country on the night of March 26. He wrote:

"From the hotel, which is in North Dacca, huge fires could be seen in various parts of the city, including the university area and the barracks of the East Pakistan Rifles, a paramilitary force made up of Bengalis, the predominant people of East Pakistan. . . .

"On the ride to the airport in a guarded convoy of military trucks, the newsmen saw troops setting fire to the thatched-roof houses of poor Bengalis who live along the road and who are some of the staunchest supporters of the self-rule movement."

Schanberg described West Pakistani troops firing indiscriminately into buildings with machine guns and rockets. Yahya's troops had the advantage of other equipment as well:

"Helicopters wheeled overhead yesterday morning [March 26], apparently on reconnaissance. Four helicopters given to Pakistan by Saudi Arabia for relief work after last November's cyclone and tidal wave in East Pakistan were reported being used for the military operation in the province."

Early on March 26, troops occupied the Dacca radio station, which had previously been under the control of the Awami League. A few hours later, a clandestine radio, apparently located in the northern part of the province, broadcast a declaration of Bengali independence.

The same station later in the day announced that Bengali forces were fighting back against the army and had surrounded the West's troops in the cities of Sylhet, Jessore, Barisal, Khulna, Chittagong, and Comilla.

It was clear that nothing short of a bloodbath would be able to put West Pakistan in control of Bangla Desh. Press reports estimated that as many as 10,000 persons, mostly unarmed civilians, may have been killed in the first days of fighting.

The March 29 *New York Times* gave the following account of continuing battles:

"Reports from India said that civilians in East Pakistan were fighting with knives, clubs and scimitars, while the East Pakistan Rifles and police forces were using their limited arms, such as rifles and pistols.

"According to one report, the East Pakistani force was using guerrilla tactics to fight the troops. The civilian population was said to have been denying food and other supplies to

the troops, as well as obstructing their advance by blowing up bridges and railroads.

"The report said West Pakistani troops were continuing their attacks with Soviet Tiger tanks, United States Saber jets and Chinese small arms. Air force helicopters were said to be firing on the populous towns of Comilla and Chittagong."

Estimates of the number of West Pakistani troops involved ranged from 30,000 to as high as 70,000.

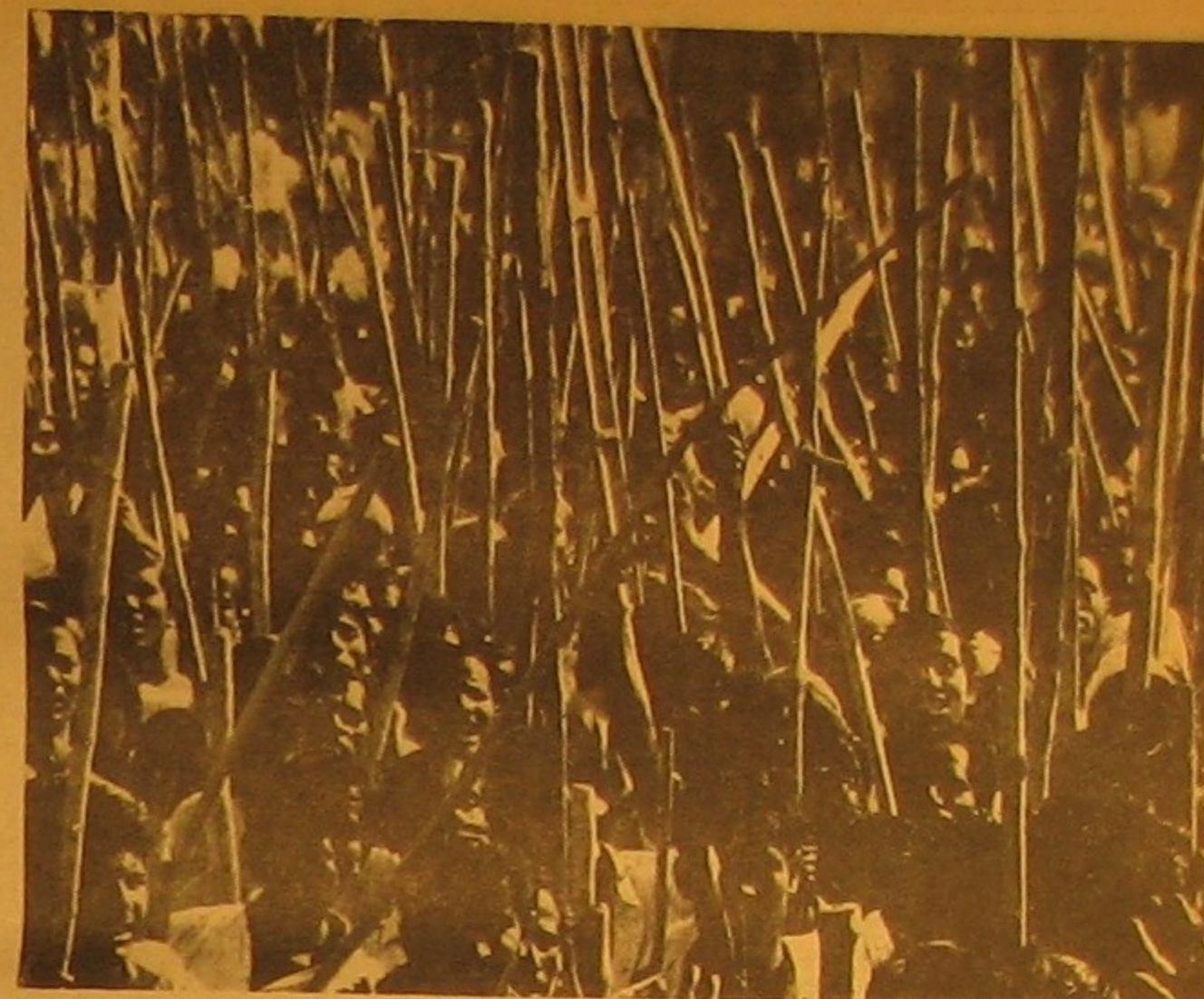
The clandestine Bengali radio was said to have announced the formation of a provisional government headed by Major Jia Khan, who was called commander in chief of the Bengali forces. The radio said that he would function under the direction of Mujibur Rahman.

The radio also claimed that Yahya's martial-law administrator for the East and four of his officers had been killed. This was denied by the government radio in West Pakistan.

Most accounts agreed that government forces were in control of Dacca, but they appeared to be hampered by strikes and passive resistance. Schanberg reported in the March 29 *Times*: "On Friday morning [March 26], 15 rigid new regulations were issued, including one aimed at the noncooperation movement. All Government employees were ordered to report to work by 10 A.M. Saturday or face trial in a military court.

"At 12 noon Saturday, radio Pakistan announced that all department heads had to submit the names of absentees to martial-law headquarters. There seemed no reason for this order unless large numbers of Bengalis were still staying away from their Government jobs."

The nationalist radio meanwhile announced that a "liberation army" was marching on Dacca to free it from



East Bengalis demonstrate for independence

army control. The radio also said that Bengali forces had captured military barracks in the cities of Khulna, Comilla, and Jessore.

An Indian report that the northern city of Rangpur had been captured by Bengalis after bitter fighting was denied by the government radio, as were nearly all Bengali claims of successes.

Dacca radio, under control of the army, said that several thousand troops had been airlifted into Khulna and Chittagong to "quell disturbances."

In the short run, it appears unlikely that the Bengalis will be able to defeat the superior firepower of the West Pakistani troops, at least so long as Yahya is able to keep them supplied and to pour in reinforcements. Because he is denied the opportunity to fly over Indian territory, Yahya is sending troops by way of Ceylon. By granting landing and refueling rights to the West Pakistanis, the "United Front" government in Colombo has become an accomplice in the military offensive against Bangla Desh.

But in the longer run, Yahya can hardly expect to establish more than isolated garrisons in the major cities

unless he is able to win the cooperation of some section of the Bengali population.

While the East Pakistani bourgeoisie might be willing to extend such cooperation in order to restore "normal" conditions, such a betrayal would clearly spur the masses into intensifying their struggle and turning to socialism to win national freedom.

Perhaps an even more important factor in the outcome of the struggle will be the response of other oppressed nationalities in the subcontinent. A continuing and determined fight by the people of Bangla Desh is likely to bring forth a nationalist upsurge among Bengalis in India and destroy the artificial division imposed in 1947 by British imperialism and reactionary religious interests.

Such a process could spark even bigger struggles in India, a fact that has been noted with concern by American imperialism. As the *New York Times* put it in a worried editorial March 28:

"Separatism on the Indian subcontinent threatens to touch off a chain reaction that would render the entire region unstable and insecure in all of its parts."



MAO GREETS PAKISTANI DICTATOR YAHYA during latter's November visit to Peking. Maoist regime has joined conspiracy of silence on Yahya's massacre of East Bengal freedom fighters, and published Yahya's condemnation of Indian aid to Bangla Desh. Mao prefers diplomatic ties with Yahya rather than supporting just struggle of Bengali people as indicated by caption

on this photo from January 1971 China Pictorial: 'Chairman Mao warmly shakes hands with President Yahya Khan, Chairman Mao . . . met General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and his party, and had a cordial and friendly conversation with the distinguished Pakistan guests.'

# TOLAIS FIGHT FOR RIGHTS

## MATAUNGAN ASSOCIATION CLASHES WITH POLICE

About 160 Mataungan supporters retaliated with a heavy barrage of rocks, bottles, cocoa pods and petrol bombs when police riot squads, armed with anti-riot equipment, batons and pick handles, charged and lashed out at resisting villagers who were gathered on the grounds of the Ngatur fermentary on the Gazelle Peninsula. The clash at the fermentary, which had previously been closed and barricaded by Mataungans several weeks ago, was only one of three separate incidents directed against the recently formed New Guinea Islands Produce Company.

At the Ngatur fermentary, 100 riot police took up positions in the early hours of the morning with orders to keep villagers off the fermentary grounds. Minor scuffles broke out as Mataungan supporters jeered and harassed police. Finally riot squads were ordered to charge resisting villagers who would not disperse. This happened at 9.00 a.m. on Saturday March, 20th.

The villagers then began to rain an assortment of objects at the riot police who had initiated the attack. The first petrol bombs were directed at one of the fermentary buildings and this resulted with the well prepared police retaliating with long and short range tear gas grenades and projectiles which trapped many villagers. It was not until after an hour that Mataungan supporters were finally dispersed.

Although no extensive damage had been reported - only one of the dozen molotov cocktails burst into flames, scorching a fermentary building - twelve riot policemen were injured, one administrative police officer was covered in petrol from a bomb that failed to explode, another officer suffered a broken hand and the new District Commissioner for the East New Britain District J. Emanuel received a body injury from a rock.

This change in tactics by the Mataungan Association shows that they are favouring more radical actions with the support of neighbouring Tolai villagers. Mataungan spokesman John Kaputin said that further violence can be expected as long as Niuginians cannot run their own affairs.

The Thursday afternoon previous to the Ngatur clash, about 250 Mataungan supporters clashed at another guarded cocoa fermentary on the Gazelle Peninsula. This took place at the Napaper fermentary, 22 miles from Rabaul and involved 100 riot police.

Last week's incident at the Katakatai fermentary was the first confrontation with police by the Mataungan Association and its supporters when police riot squads armed with helmets, steel shields and batons prevented an attempt to re-occupy the cocoa fermentary near Bitapaka in the Gazelle Peninsula. The 75 man contingent with standby reserves were called out by the Gazelle Council said District Commissioner H. West.

This action involved police using shields and batons to force back the advancing crowd of angry villagers who had closed the fermentary the previous day. Police were on the verge of using tear gas as the crowd grew harder to handle, while vocal harassment of policemen continued, and at one time the crowd had cut them off from other standby reserves.

In the early hours of the morning police had converged at the fermentary and dismantled barricades of trees interwoven with bamboo. Numerous trees, felled across access roads, were later cleared by police guarded chain saw gangs. At one time villagers were on the verge of cutting fighting sticks until Oscar Tammur M.H.A. (Kokopo) and long time supporter of the Mataungan Association arrived and calmed things down.

The initial crux of the confrontations that have taken place, is that the Mataungan Association is determined to collect \$625,000 in compensation and goodwill for what they consider the Tolai people's property, indicating that there has been a betrayal of the Tolai people by the petty bourgeois faction of the all-Tolai board of directors of the 18 fermentaries of the Tolai Cocoa Project now the New Guinea Islands Produce Company.

Warnings were issued that the take-over of the fermentaries on Mataungan land, would begin if the Gazelle Council did not pay up. Mataungan chairman Damien Kereku was quoted as saying that "we will take over the fermentaries if we don't get paid".

multi-racial council on the Gazelle Peninsula, - at least within the control of what Mr Barrett described as the 'Kumul' Council. It was also reported that the Mataungan Association has no legal right to take control of the fermentaries.

Someone ought to remind the administration and his men that there is no fascist government in this country. Mr Johnson has stated that the MA has no legal right to the fermentaries. Perhaps the MA as a body has no right, but the people who are in the association and who had controlled the former all-Tolai Council, are the owners of the properties of the Tolai Cocoa Project.

The MA, let us be frank, simply provides the forum for people to discuss their affairs. The term 'Mataungan Association' is merely a name given to a body of people. These are the people who slaved to build the Tolai Cocoa Project.

The Tolai people control the three factors of production which have formed the basis for the Tolai Cocoa Project: the people who own the land, labour, and the cocoa and copra.

Through these commodities, gold, has cash was obtained to build the Tolai Cocoa Project. And, therefore, we know what is ours and what belongs to white people.

But while we know our rights, let us look at what the court has said about the properties of the Tolai Cocoa Project. It might help the Administration.

In the judgement in October, 1969, the magistrate, Mr. Paul Quinlivan, said (Gazelle Council U Tomot and others):

The Tolai Cocoa Project owns 18 of the 27 commercial fermentaries and, since the crops they process are good income producers, and since the number of licences is restricted, each of those 18 licences is a very valuable property quite separately from the view of the fermentary itself.

"The manager of the project gave evidence that, if each was sold separately they could be expected to realize \$900,000 and since they are about to have \$90,000 worth of new equipment installed (to be paid for by the Tolai Growers) it is not beyond the rules of possibility that a wise-but-wealthy buyer might add the \$10,000 to make up a round million.

"In fact, since a joblot purchase would give him a commanding position in the field, I feel that it is not unreasonable to suppose that the purchase price would be considerably higher for the total project, lock, stock and barrel.

"With the exception of a mini scale contribution from a European who was helped by the project, the whole of the Tolai Cocoa Project was paid for by the Tolais and, while the Council was exclusively Tolai, it was convenient to the ownership vested in the council.

"but it is not the part of the municipal assets or of the patrimony of this area. There cannot be the slightest doubt that

The initial reaction of the administrator L.W. Johnson, emphasised that the administration would not tolerate "illegal" intervention by any group in Territory affairs - specifically referring, at that time, to the Mataungan ultimatum. He said that the administration would not permit any "illegal action . . .", "under any circumstances."

Administrator Johnson said that the arguments by the Mataungan Association were completely "groundless." The Tolai Cocoa Project, which had operated as a business enterprise . . . had never operated on the basis of commercial profits . . .

The only funds withheld from growers have been to meet operational costs and to repay bank loans.

What is also claimed by the opposition to the MA arguments is that the Tolai Cocoa Project had an all-Tolai board of directors. The same as the recently formed NGIP Co. which incidentally made a profit of \$1,608 during its first month of operations. Nevertheless, the capitalistic, economic system exists only to make profit at the expense of others. There is no difference if it is run by black or white profiteers.

At the House of Assembly, Oscar Tammur had put forward questions regarding army and police, directed at the deputy administrator Mr Newman, but it was ruled out of order by the Speaker, Dr Guise. Oscar Tammur demanded a reply but was rebuffed by the Speaker because his questions were not on the agenda. His questions were: "Is it a fact that the administration is considering sending members of the army and additional police to the Gazelle Peninsula?" "I would like to know if people have the right to fight for their beliefs?"

### OPEN LETTER BY JOHN KAPUTIN

TOLAI COCOA PROJECT BELONGS TO THE TOLAIS NOT TO A COUNCIL

On February 26 the ABC reported that the Administration would use all its power to keep the properties of the former Tolai Cocoa Project within the control of the



the ownership is exclusively Tolai.

"But it was handed lock, stock and barrel, to the multi-racial council, and there appears to have been no mention of the fact that this was one of the implications of the conversion."

In her research of the Tolai Cocoa Project Dr. Scarlett Epstein wrote: "The project is run on a non-profit basis. It has no formal constitution and is not in itself a corporate body".

However, if the Administration is implying that their newly sponsored New Guinea Islands Produce Company has a constitution that should now govern the properties of the Tolai Cocoa Project, we in the M.A., do not know the N.G.I.P. Co.

As far as we are concerned, the new company is just another instrument of Australia's policy of integration, which means nothing to us.

The Tolais who are pro-multi-racial council are free to sell their fermentaries to the whites if they so desire. That is their business, and we recognize their right to make their own decisions - good or bad.

But, for those of us in the M.A., we will fight to the end to control those that are in our areas. We want the Tolais and other Papuans and New Guineans now living on the Gazelle Peninsula to own something 20 years from now.

Neither Mr. Johnson nor the administration has any moral right to dictate our affairs

and activities, for which we know our rights. We know them, and we will make sure that they are respected.

We had demanded the Tolai people be compensated \$600,000 and be paid \$25,000 for goodwill. The multi-racial council and the Administration have failed to meet our demands.

We were aware that the multi-racial council and the Administration might not have the resources apart from the Army and the police forces, to answer our call, but we simply wanted to demonstrate that we have dealt with business before. We value our project.

If they fail to meet our demands, then, if we care about the future, we will act to protect our rights and interests.

unions, students, churches and sporting organizations, declare that to halt the proposed sporting tours we shall:

1. Organize mass demonstrations to halt or to totally disrupt the sporting tours.
2. Call on the ACTU and TLC to implement policy regarding South Africa already on the books.
3. Call on the "rebel unions" to mobilize their members against the tours.
4. Call on the churches and sporting bodies to state their opposition.

## ADELAIDE COLUMN

1. The Computer Crisis - A confrontation with the Adelaide University administration has precipitated from the publicity of the fact that the university's 6400 computer is linked with the Weapons Research Establishment's counterpart. The implications of such a link are obvious - a direct exposure of the university/military-industrial complex complicity. A demand was made by the students that the link be immediately severed. So far the administration has made no moves to comply with this demand, nor have they even bothered to deny or justify the substance of the accusations. There are many other instances, some more serious, of such collusion, but this obvious association with a US-controlled military institution could provide a focus through which students may become aware of the real nature of the university in a capitalist society.

2. Rufus - A new group of new Left-anarchist pseudo-revolutionaries has emerged on campus this year, with the appropriately meaningless name of RUFUS. Among the absurdities instigated by the organisation have been: (a) During orientation week, Rufus established a "counter-culture". This involved giving away hundreds of dollars worth of food to the already well fed university students, and denouncing SYA as counter-revolutionary for selling Direct Action. The members of Rufus apparently considered themselves extremely revolutionary in not giving the food to the plethora of poverty stricken pensioners instead of trying to sell the idea that communism merely involves building a small utopia. Rufus might smoke pot and Rufus might paint, but hell, Rufus is petit bourgeois to the core. (b) In the same vein, two Rufus members painted "Free Rufus" on the war memorial in the classic ultra-left tradition. This meaningless action achieved nothing, but the artists were caught and given a severe taste of bourgeois "justice" - three months hard labour and a \$50 fine. While SYA might sympathise with their treatment by the capitalist courts, Rufus must realise that such adventurism achieves nothing but the alienation of all.

5. Organize activities in all tertiary institutions with the aim of mobilizing student opposition to apartheid.

The next general meeting of the ARM will be held at the Victorian Railways Institute's Ballroom. Everyone who is interested and supports the aims of this coalition should attend. If we succeed in stopping these tours, the blow dealt to apartheid in South Africa will be tremendous.

Down with racism!  
Down with capitalism and imperialism which engender racism!

## ANTI-RACIST MOVEMENT FORMED

On Tuesday April 6, about one hundred people met, representing student groups, trade unions, revolutionary organizations and various other groups, being in same way opposed to apartheid.

A discussion then took place concerning the nature of the coalition, its main goals and activity at the present time. Some groups supported a multi-issue coalition while others wanted one which would be specifically concerned with anti-apartheid action, and the sporting tours. The question was finally resolved when the meeting decided that the main activity of the coalition at this stage would be initiating a campaign of HALT ALL RACIAL TOURS.

The meeting carried the following resolutions:

- 1st Resolution: The aims of the anti-racist coalition should be:
- (a) that we oppose all South African tours of Australia while the system of apartheid exists, recognizing that no team representing the white South African government can be representative of the true potentialities of South African Sportmen because of the repression of black South Africans by their white exploiters.
  - (b) that we oppose Australia's growing diplomatic, economic and defence ties with the White South African government because these ties help maintain the system of apartheid and the

racial policies of the South African regime both internationally and internally.

(c) that we support the Southern African liberation movements; the A.N.C., P.A.C., Frelimo, P.A.I.G.C., M.P.C.A., and Zimbabwe.

(d) that we are opposed to racist oppression, particularly of the Aboriginal people of Australia and New Guinea.

2nd Resolution: That the first major activity of the organization be, to initiate a campaign to Halt all Racial Tours primarily aimed to stop the sporting tours from South Africa. Possible dates for action were May 31st - Republican Day, and June 26th African Freedom, prior to the Melbourne Rugby match on July 3rd.

3rd Resolution: That a steering committee be established to:

- (a) Contact all interested groups to obtain their active support.
- (b) Circulate literature to interested peoples.
- (c) To call general meetings which will form policy.

4th Resolution: That a press release as indicated below be circulated to all the media:

### PRESS STATEMENT

That the newly constituted ARM (Anti-Racist Movement) consisting of representatives of 30 groups, including



SOUTH AFRICA

# FOLK, ROCK & THE MIND FOR REVOLUTION

IAN MACDOUGALL

The social historian, of all the historians, save perhaps the archaeologist, has the least source of materials at his disposal. Historians of politics or economics, science, literature or art have, as a rule, a problem of selecting what to use and what not from a comparative mountain of source materials.

But the social historian, the one who is concerned with how the popular masses lived rather than with the ruling elites, has usually little to document his work with. For the bulk of the people who ever lived and died on this planet did so without leaving permanent written records of themselves or their thoughts.

For this reason, the social historian usually places high value on literature in all its forms, particularly the lyrics of popular and folk songs, on the basis that the feelings of the masses will be expressed in the culture they produce and support.

The future historians who write about the youth radicalization going on today throughout the world will get no better understanding of what is on the minds of this generation than from the lyrics of rock music—the most important art form of all, in this period. All music, from Beethoven to Steppenwolf, has its origins in folk music, just as all poetry has its origins in anonymous ballads. No wonder then that folk is never far away from the minds of musical innovators.

The great popular folk revival which began in the early 1960's produced many good performers, but it was almost completely a middle-class, coffee house phenomenon, while rock music as played by Gene Vincent, Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry, Col Joye and all of them was strictly commercial, crude and low-brow. Apart from the beat it only had one enviable quality—extreme popularity.

This could not last long. Folk musicians after confining themselves to traditional songs and styles began to branch out, mainly by writing their own songs. Some folkies, notably Bob Dylan, set a course towards the heavy beat of rock, while the Beatles led rock musicians away from awopbalooboplopbamboom and their early Love Me Do stuff towards more meaningful lyrics—ie. towards folk and poetry.

This horrified the purists of folk, and still does. Traditions die hard. But as the eminent British folklorist and singer, A.L. Lloyd has pointed out in his book *Folk Song in England* (which is also excellent social history: \$1.50 in Panther Arts) the boundary between the folk and pop music of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is a hard one to draw.

For example, one of the great folk songs in the English and Australian singer's repertory tells of the woes of an Irish convict transported in the early part of the last century to the colony of Van Dieman's Land. To my knowledge, Van Dieman's Land has always been treated as a genuine folk song. Yet it was almost certainly not composed by a transported convict.

"The first day that we landed upon that fatal shore,

The planters came around us and there might be twenty score,

The ranked us off like cattle and sold us out of hand,

And they yoked us to the plough, brave boys, to plough Van Dieman's Land."

This is one of the great traditional poems. Yet nobody who had ever been to Tasmania could have written:

"Our huts we ring with firelight and slumber when we can,

To keep the wolves and tigers from us in Van Dieman's Land."

with any knowledge of that island's native carnivores.

In fact, says Lloyd, this song was almost certainly written by a public house poet in the employ of one of the printeries turning out broadsides—sheets with the words of songs printed on them and sold on the street. These were the 18th and 19th century counterpart to today's L.P.s and singles, and this Englishman writing of Van Dieman's Land without ever having been there was a popular song writer, and a very good one at that. Many other 'folk' songs made their debut in the pop scene of long ago.

Lloyd traces the development of English folk music from the earthy, erotic songs of the countryside (all of them cleaned up by Victorian collectors, and taught now in schools to the very young) to urban songs, which appeared with the enclosure of the common lands by the rich and the driving of the yeomanry to the towns, to become the proletariat. Industrial ballads have their own distinctive chord sequences and musical structure—making more use

of minor chords and wavering vibratos than the solid, confident pastoral songs. The workers who went to sea in the great boom of merchant sailing in the 19th century developed their own distinctive styles of work songs, and called them shanties.

In the popular/ folk songs we find the people saying what they think of the military press gangs, life in the army and navy (hell most of the time) coal and mill owners, the sailors life etc— which dispels many a romantic image.

America's most distinctive contribution to the world's music is without question, the blues. This style was developed originally by the blacks, and was played by one singer, accompanying himself on guitar and using the instrument as response in a call-response pattern derived from Africa. (Latest example of this is in a ditty on the charts at the moment: Chirpy chirpy cheep cheep.) The singer would sing a line, then play it back to himself on the guitar.

When the blues was played by a group, there developed traditional jazz, which grew not only into the locality styles after New Orleans, of Chicago, New York, and Kansas City but into the big band sounds like Ellington and a mutant called 'swing' which became very popular white music in the 1930's and, surviving in the bands of Glenn Miller, Woody Herman, Tommy Dorsey etc became the style of the back-up bands of the big commercial singers from the 30's to the 50's, and is still very much alive today.

So there is a direct line connecting Bessie Smith accompanied by Louis Armstrong singing the St Louis Blues in the early 20's, to Bing Crosby in 1950 singing June Moon Spoon to the strains of Nelson Riddle and his orchestra— which is a transition in popular taste from great poetry and music, to the dream factory's all round musical horseshit.

This change is understandable if we realize that between Bessie Smith and Bing Crosby lay a depression and a world war— which meant that songs about real insecurity were bound to be less popular and those of false security would make it to the top of the charts.

The depression years, and the war and postwar period up to the sixties that is,

apart from a few like Woody Guthrie, musical and lyrical write off beside the 1920's. What people looked forward to most of all during the depression and war was a house with a brightly-painted picket fence and a front door that shut the world out.

Someone (I think it was Vera Lynn) wrote it in one of the hits of 1944 or 45:

"With someone like you,  
A pal good and true,  
I'd like to leave it all behind  
And go and find  
Some place that's known  
To us alone  
Just the spot to call our own  
We'll find perfect peace  
Where joys never cease  
Out there beneath a kindly sky  
We'll build a sweet little nest  
Somewhere in the West  
And let the rest of the world go by."

That's even better than Tea for Two. While the music corporations and the batteries of crooners and manufactured popular music and fed socialist syrup to the masses, serious jazz moved off in a new direction. Jazz became 'progressive', as with Miles Davis and Brubeck, and this was pretty well music. It was great stuff if you took trouble to listen to it closely, but was never popular. Popular music is made easily remembered tunes based on the traditional three chord patterns that are the basic stock of all folk musicians— what those advertisements in magazines the suckerbait schools of music guarantee to have you playing from scratch in an hour. This is also why old Ludwig Beethoven is king of the classics and always be played more than someone like Bartok.

Compare for a moment the British industrial and sea songs and Australian bush songs with American folk music and the blues. In the former, the singer as often as not sings as if in a gathering: "Listen shipmates unto me..."; "And so to do him justice, boys I set his office alight..."; "We were passing down from Roto for the sheds had all cut out..."; and sings often of 'we' rather than 'I'.

The mood engendered by these songs is what you might expect in a tradition extending from villages to taverns and workers' pubs to ship's foc'tles and the camp fires of the Australian proletariat of the last century. The singer is part of a very cohesive group. But in the circumstances where it is every man for himself, where individualism, not collectivism is normal, the singer performs as an isolated individual, and the 'I' takes the place of the 'We'.

America, which has an extremely strong social tradition of individualism, produced in its white folk tradition (see for example Alan Lomax's massive collection: *The Folk Songs of North America*) and in the blues the furthest expression of 60's



But folk music has always been with us, and because it is so rich it is not surprising that after rock had explored the rather limited possibilities of heavy amplification and electronic sounds like feedback it began to move back towards folk styles, and take much more inspiration from country music and the blues. After all, there are half a million rock groups in the USA alone, all looking for ways to develop their own sound.

The 60's saw a tremendous improvement in the musical and lyrical quality of pop, and the works of many popular song-writers like Dylan, Donovan, Lennon/McCartney, Tom Paxton, Gordon Lightfoot, Roger McGuinn, Pete Townshend—the list goes on— should be included in poetry anthologies of the period. And just like the folk music as used in social histories, contemporary rock reflects people's attitudes to one another and the world about them remarkably well.

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this. In the blues the singer is commonly broke, down and out, and treated badly by the opposite sex as well. The beauty of the blues lies precisely in the way it produces sympathy in the listener with this simple theme, and with the self-comfort it brings to whoever sings it. (This is, incidentally, why some black radicals have regarded the blues as decadent, helping the black man to resign himself to his lot.)

It is mainly young middle class whites in America and elsewhere who are writing the new song lyrics, and they show their social origins in their songs. For example, Simon and Garfunkel, sounding as if they had just emerged from a semester of existential philosophy, wrote: "A winter's day, in a deep and dark December,

I am alone,  
Gazing from my window, to the street below,

On a freshly fallen, silent stand of snow,  
I am a rock, I am an island."

Take them seriously and they are classic examples of the alienated artist. Similarly, put any track of Bob Dylan on and you'll find him preoccupied, like so many others, with what he did and said and thought and dreamt, with his best work occurring in his most genuine, sharing phases.

The Creedence Clearwater Revival made it to the top on a bayou country sound and a set of lyrics that relax every muscle by letting you identify right off with a Huckleberry existence. Proud Mary is a rock classic and something of a hybrid-folk origin, but leading right back towards June Moon Spoon again.

"Left a good job in the city,  
Workin' for the man every night and day,  
But I never lost a minute of sleepin'  
Worryin' about the way things might have been,

Big wheel keep on turning,  
Proud Mary keep on burning,  
Rollin', rollin', rollin' on the river"

"Washed a lot of plates in Memphis,

Humped a lot of grain down in New Orleans,  
But I never saw the good side of a city  
Till I hitched a ride on a River boat queen,  
Big wheel etc"

"If you come down to the river,  
Bet you're gonna find the people who live,  
You don't have to worry, if you have no money,

People on the river are happy to give  
Big wheel etc"

This is pure fantasyland, in contrast with some of the stuff that hauls a surrealistic net through the real world, like Dylan's *Desolation Row*. Aside from the bubblegum of the hit parades, serious pop not only faces the danger of turning into Disneyland like this, but also the inevitability of being incorporated into the business world, despite appearances of breaking out of it.

All the weaknesses of the new generation still mainly in the phase of cultural rebellion, are seen vividly in rock festivals. Beside the 'legitimate' aspects of organization, public relations and finance carried on by the management, we have in the crowds that go to them not the peace-love-togetherness of the image, but fragmentation. People still sit, talk and camp in little groups. They come from their individual suburban housing in their individual cars and go back again. Beneath the veneer of the publicist's image their is as much human alienation as in a city street.

This is clearly seen when violence starts. At the Rolling Stones' concert at Altamont, California, a few hundred Hell's Angels stoked up on \$800 worth of beer, provided by the Stones (in return for body guard services—prevention of people getting onto the stage etc) terrorised a crowd of 300,000. People were scared to leave—to move out of the crowd—bashings and rape were commonplace, and the Angels did not stop short of murder. If the crowd had been 300,000 at a union rally—or a mere fraction of one percent of that, the Angels would have been massacred.

Unfortunately, the same has occurred at festivals in Australia. The need for social cohesion has been learned and understood by the working class for about the past 100 years. It has to be relearned by each generation, particularly by middle class people.

The pop 'revolution', despite the gimmicky, bubblegum, mindless consumerism the underlying individualism of capitalist society and the charlatans promoting it all, has given new artistic horizons and forms of expression to the popular masses, and with its snub of established bourgeois values of dress style, hair length, social behaviour etc starts people on the road to deeper questioning of their whole social environment and heads them in an anti-capitalist direction. Much of it, of course succumbs, because the system still has great flexibility and powers to incorporate protest movements into itself (witness the fate of the word 'revolution': used freely as part of the gimmickery of TV stations and advertising agencies.) Its most positive cultural rebellion is its idealisation of meaningful human relationships i.e., the attempt made by so many people in all kinds of ways to get away from the worst aspects of individualism and consumerism as promoted by this society.

The only way forward lies in deepening its consciousness. Establishing a common solidarity born out of struggle against the War and Vietnam and the many other repulsive aspects of the capitalist system—as distinct from a mere Woodstock-style community of interest, of people listening together to rock, turning on, tuning in and dropping out.

Musically, I think the way forward is through a more consciously anti-individualist development. There is still a great deal in the folk tradition, untouched as yet, to be built upon. The solidarity of 'we' as found in sea shanties, Irish and Australian folk songs is needed alongside—though of course, not in place of—the 'I' of personal songs as seen in the blues and contemporary folk-rock. We all live in a yellow submarine.



BOB DYLAN



THE WHO



JOE COCKER



RICHIE HAVENS

Top right: JOHN LEE HOOKER



LED ZEPPELIN



JANIS JOPLIN

# LESSONS OF THE COMMUNE 1871

COL MAYNARD

The Paris Commune was a milestone in the development of the modern working class into a revolutionary force, capable of changing society. Although the working class had organised and carried out actions for its betterment before the time of the Commune, the significance of the Commune lies in the fact that it was the first time in history that the working class held state power (even though for only a short time and limited geographically). For revolutionaries today the centenary of the Commune should be more than just a day of remembrance, but a time to draw the lessons of the Commune and apply them to today's circumstances.

In 1871 the French capitalists and landlords seated at the head of the new republic, found that they could accommodate themselves with the humiliation and defeat brought to them at the hands of the Prussian armies, if only they could be left with the unbridled exploitation of the new wealth of industrial France, and thereby levies imposed upon them by the Prussian ruling class could be extracted from the French workers and peasants. To do this they would now have to turn their attentions from the Prussian army of occupation to the restless working class of Paris, who were now armed and organised. The National Guard was an overwhelming proletarian militia formed in defence of Paris during the siege of 1870. Other civil organisations of workers were also formed in this period, such as the Montmartre Vigilance Committee, which was to play a leading role in the organisation of the Commune. Realising that for one class to rule over another it must have a monopoly on armed force, the French bourgeoisie under the leadership of Thiers ordered the disarmament of the Paris working class and its National Guard. However, the Paris working men and women had different ideas. Having survived the hardships of the Franco-Prussian war and the siege of Paris, they were not willing to submit once more to the subjection of capitalist exploitation.

They not only refused to lay down their arms but went a step further and decided to take full governmental power into their own hands. In mid-March of 1871

the Paris Commune was proclaimed. The bourgeois government of Thiers and his Bonapartist generals fled to Versailles to set up house there in the name of all France. The Parisian working class and sections of the petit bourgeoisie (small shop-keepers and republican businessmen fearful of financial ruin under the provisions of the treaty with the Prussians) now elected to the administrative body of the Commune by universal suffrage, began to reorganise the state apparatus to suit their own needs.

The main alterations made to the state were the abolition of a standing army and conscription, institution of universal suffrage, all public offices to be elective, reduction in wages of all civil servants to that of an average competent worker, all public officers to be recallable at any time and the separation of church from state and secularisation of free, compulsory education. Under the leadership of the working men and women of Paris, particularly those followers of Blanqui and other Internationalists, the communards instituted further reforms such as the abolition of night work for bakers, the granting of certain pensions, a moratorium on all debts, foreclosures on mortgages and rents on government-owned buildings and houses, and the re-opening of factories closed down during the siege, under the control of workers' associations.

However, due to its isolation from the rest of France, the Commune weakened and on May 25 1871 the troops of the Versailles government launched a major offensive against proletarian Paris. The communards, men, women, children and aged, fought heroically against the mercenaries of Thiers but could not hold out against such superior (in terms of numbers and equipment) forces. The bloodbath that took place is excelled by few others and the tens of thousands of people killed, maimed, tortured, imprisoned and exiled, show with what zeal the bourgeoisie extract revenge from those who would dare to challenge their authority and dominance.

The communards' sacrifice was not in vain. Besides giving an impetus to their fellow workers throughout the world to struggle for self-emancipation, the Commune provides the world proletariat, oppressed and exploited, with an example of what a working class, taking both political and productive power into its

own hands under its own direction can achieve, and more importantly by the Commune's negative example, how to advance and thereby more adequately defend the initial victories of the proletarian revolution, that of seizing state power and the ownership of the means of production. The basic mistakes of the Commune must be noted, analysed and understood by the present day revolutionary vanguard in its projection of a strategy for the socialist revolution. The negatives of the Commune example are firstly, its failure to immediately expropriate the basic means of production (the large factories) and place them all under the management of those who work in them. Secondly, its failure to nationalise the Bank of France and the larger credit institutions. (They did put effective control on pawn brokers). Thirdly, its failure to carry out a vigorous political and military attack on the rest of France instead of using "moral example" with an appeal to "reason" and a "higher justice". (Vestiges of bourgeois influence amongst the ranks of the workers in the form of "radical" republicans and followers of such people as Proudhon). Finally, that which explains those listed above - the absence of a revolutionary proletarian party armed with Marxist theory and with mass support of the working class.

This final point future revolutionary socialists like Lenin took very seriously and from the negative example of the Commune, were able to organise such a party with mass support of the working class and successfully led the Russian proletariat and peasantry to victory in the October revolution of 1917, and furthermore carried out a vigorous attack on the counter-revolution of the Russian bourgeoisie and the Western imperialists. Lenin and the Bolsheviks also took the positive examples of the Commune, like the need for close ties between the workers and soldiers and the need for developing proletarian democracy after the revolution under the control of the workers themselves.

Today in both the colonial and imperialist segments of the world, as well as in the bureaucratically degenerated workers' states (USSR etc.), the revolutionary forces must remember it, take example from it, and fight for the same things now as the Paris communards did in 1871, the emancipation of the working class and by it, the emancipation of humanity as a whole.



## Women The Paris Commune

DIANNE FEELEY

One hundred years ago this March 18, the working people of Paris took power into their own hands. In the words of the Communards, the workers "understood

that it was their imperious duty and absolute right to render themselves master of their own destinies by seizing upon the governmental power".

With the average working woman (and man) to labour thirteen hours a day for a pittance - and having to buy her necessities and thread out of her wages - it is no wonder that Parisian working women mobilised as a force on the side of the revolution. Excluded from citizenship, deprived of an education, often defrauded of their wages and forced to supplement them by prostitution, women were also kept under the yoke of the clergy. The story of the Paris Commune of 1871 cannot be told without pointing to the role of women in it. Lissagarry, one of the Commune's greatest historians, and Marx, who analysed the revolutionary meaning of the Commune, both pointed to the heroism of the women.

In 1870 France and Prussia were at war. Napoleon III was captured and the French Empire fell. Paris was surrounded by Prussian troops for 135 days. Cut off from the countryside throughout the winter of 1870, the people of Paris faced food and fuel shortages. To the tune of a popular ballad they sang:

Not a single store  
Has anything on display.  
Except in the baker's kitchen,  
Look wherever you may,  
It won't do any good.  
There's not even any wood.

One day a poor mother  
Stands in line for a dole,  
Out of wood and coal,  
One day - one whole day.  
She holds against her breast  
Her baby, frozen to death...

Two members of the First International, Nathalie Lemel, a bookbinder and Louise Michel, a teacher organised soup

surrender, Paris organised a boycott against occupation by the Prussian army. The population, which had purchased the city's cannons through subscriptions, brought the cannons into the working-class districts for safekeeping.

When Bismarck's army entered Paris on March 1, a silent crowd gathered. The statues on the Place de la Concorde were veiled in black, the shops were closed. The next day the army withdrew to the surrounding countryside, and Paris celebrated its moral victory.

In order to consolidate his government, Thiers had to disarm the people of Paris. He first moved to suppress the left-wing press. A law regulating promissory notes - leading to the financial ruin of thousands - was passed. The revolutionaries Blanqui and Flourens were sentenced, in their absence, to death. By the morning of March 18, Thiers felt the situation was sufficiently under control, and ordered the French troops into the working-class districts of Paris to remove the cannons.

Although the plans went smoothly at first, it is one of the small ironies of history that the government's horses were late in arriving. The delay allowed the people of Montmartre to awake and spread the alarm. The people of the district, primarily women out on their morning's errands, gathered around asking the troops and each other for information. The crowd grew larger, becoming a solid human blockade. Sensing the militancy of the crowd, the general ordered the troops to fire. But, as Louise Michel recounts: "March 18 was to witness the victory of the foreigners, allies of the future king or emperor, or that of the people. It witnessed the latter. The army fraternised with the people instead of shooting them down. That triumph of the popular cause is perhaps chiefly due to the intervention of the women, who covered the artillery with their own bodies, and even placed themselves at the muzzles of the guns, to prevent the latter being fired".

Although many of the leaders of the Commune held backward views on women, the Commune did begin to deal with the concrete problems women faced. The French section of the First International - itself a minority within the Commune - was dominated by Proudhon's reactionary views on women, rather than on the demand for women's equality held by Marx.

Proudhon saw women as inferior to men physically, morally and intellectually. As his natural inferior, a woman must subordinate herself to a man; marriage alone could keep her safe. It is the natural and just role of a man to dominate his wife. With this reactionary attitude Proudhon influenced the French section of the First International to such an extent that in 1866 it presented a memorandum against the right of women to work.

Proudhon's theories justifying women's oppression did not go unchallenged, either by the feminists of his day, or by other members of the International. However, what is significant is that in the short life of the Commune, many women

did not heed his views and began to organise toward their liberation.

The Commune passed a series of measures which were concrete steps forward for women. Tenants could cancel their lease, and could not be evicted for a period of time. Pawnshops were prohibited from selling their articles, particularly tools, for without tools a worker had no chance of employment. The Commune decreed that people could freely withdraw up to 20 francs of their clothing, furniture, linen, bedding, books and tools from the pawnshops.



A 600 franc pension was granted to the widow of any National Guard who had been killed defending the Commune, and a smaller pension for each child. In neither the case of the women nor of the children was the Commune interested in the legal relationship. This decree, dealing a blow to the clerical-feudal institution of marriage, was, in the eyes of Communist Arthur Arnould: "an act of justice as well, for it is time to have done with that iniquitous prejudice, that legal barbarism, which - in what today is called concubinage - as opposed to legal marriage - strikes only at the weak, the seduced woman and the innocent child".

In another decree, a food pension was given to any woman who asked for separation from her husband.

Consistent with the democratic nature of the Commune, a commission of three men and three women proposed secular, free education for all children, based on scientific principles. While the Commune held power only two months, the educational plans it outlined, and began to set up, are a testimony to the power of the revolutionary government. Advocating the right of women to an education, they established an orphanage, and turned a girls' school into an experimental project. Recognising the need to provide a technical education for women, the government organised workshops in some districts, where young women would apprentice to a trade. A professional school of industrial arts was opened for women. It gave instructions in drawing, sculpture and carving.

A plan to reorganise day nurseries was outlined. Seeing that the existing nurseries were not organised for the children, they suggested that nurseries provide gardens, bird houses and brightly coloured toys for the children. They suggested that young women who enjoyed working with children be assigned to work in the nursery at the ratio of one woman for every ten children.

A far reaching Communist decision was the equalisation of teachers' salaries. Under the leadership of Edward Vallant, a brilliant scholar and later to become a close friend of Karl Marx, the Commission of Education declared this measure "seeing that the necessities of life are as numerous and imperative for women as for men, and, as far as education is concerned, women's work is equal to that of men".

Unemployment was a major problem in Paris from the fall of the Empire. The cooperatives and workshops set up during the siege of Paris provided the basis for reaching out and caring for the thousands of unemployed women. When even the work of making National Guard uniforms gave out, these workshops were transformed into medical centres. Overcoming the prejudice of many men, these women organised the medical teams, and were canteen workers and soldiers of the Commune.

The Clubs, disbanded for a period under the Thiers government, sprang to life during the Paris Commune. Many of them were open only to women. They were the "stockpiles of fire and courage" for the Communards. The topics discussed varied from the role of women in the revolution, to the right of divorce, to women's subjugation under the Catholic Church, to the problems of prostitution. The newspaper "La Revolution politique et sociale" devoted a major portion of its space to these discussions, as did several other papers. As one of the editors wrote:

"It is time for us to halt the injustice and prejudices of which women are victims. When we shall have placed every woman in a position where she can earn a living, when strong men no

longer steal from them the work that is theirs by right, our daughters will no longer sell their honour to the vilest shopkeeper... I shall never cease to protest against the ill fate that the egoism of modern society has imposed upon them."

In addition to the Clubs, other forms of women's organisations existed. There was a women's section of the Montmartre Vigilance Committee, the Union des Femmes (Women's Union) (a section of the International), and a variety of local committees and societies. Their functions varied. Some sent their best speakers to agitate at the Clubs. The Montmartre Vigilance Committee hunted people who refused to defend the Commune, ran workshops, aided impoverished women and recruited women.

While setting up services within the city was essential to the revolution, others understood that it was necessary for Paris to appeal to the provinces for support. Andre Leo, a novelist and journalist, wrote several such appeals herself. However, the Commune had lost its military advantage as early as April 4. From that point onward, the Communist energies were increasingly involved in fighting to maintain power. Despite the heroism of the Commune, Paris itself was invaded on May 21 by Thiers' army.

Louise Michel, one of the great figures of the Commune, states that in the last desperate battles within the sections of Paris itself, the women "flinched at nothing. They reconciled themselves much more speedily to the inevitable". It took Thiers' troops another week to break the resistance.

In the end, fifty thousand people were executed or imprisoned; seventy thousand more had fled the country or disappeared in a bloody orgy of rulling class revenge. This slaughter was done in the name of restoring "law and order". The women, along with the men, were rounded up and shot indiscriminately. Over a thousand women were tried by the military courts. Some were condemned to death on the basis of the most fabricated testimony. Many were accused of deliberately setting fires although little evidence has ever been uncovered to support this accusation. Others, including Louise Michel, were transported to New Caledonia. Freed in the general amnesty of 1880, Michel was later imprisoned again for leading a demonstration demanding bread.

The history of the Commune illustrates the validity of the conclusions drawn by Andre Leo during the life of the Commune. She pointed out that women had not simply to let men take that place themselves. "The revolution means - since we must take its side - liberty and responsibility for every human being, with common rights as their only limit and without any privilege of race or sex".

The experience of 1871 showed the world the power of women, organised and ready to throw off their yoke of oppression. As Louise Michel noted, "In rebellion alone woman is at ease, trampling upon both prejudice and sufferings. All intelligent women will sooner or later rise in rebellion".



APRIL 2, 1871. Communards in foreground, under red flag, halt advance of counterrevolutionary Versailles troops flying the tricolor. Scene is a barricade on the Pont de Neuilly. Rev-

# SOCIALIST YOUTH ALLIANCE NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Second National Conference of the Socialist Youth Alliance was held in Melbourne over the Easter weekend in April. Ninety members and observers attended over the two days of the conference, coming from centres as far afield as Sydney, Canberra, Hobart, Adelaide and Perth.

In the period dating from the founding conference in August 1970, the organization has doubled in size, and indications are that this rate of growth will accelerate during the coming period. A strong branch has been built in Melbourne and members in Canberra, Hobart and Perth look forward to the prospect of forming functioning branches in the near future. A lot of our success can be attributed to the increasing sales of 'Direct Action' which now has a circulation of eight and a half thousand.

The conference was divided into six sessions, five devoted to the presentation and discussion of documents dealing with different aspects of our program and organization, and the last session given over to reports from branches and the National Office, and the election of a National Committee.

The first paper, 'The New Radicalization and the Role of SYA' was presented by Jim Percy. This document made an analysis of the current radicalization amongst youth on a worldwide scale, and its development in Australia so far. It also analysed the politics of the new radicals and pointed out the pitfalls of reformist and ultra-leftist politics, and also stressed the futility of working outside of a revolutionary organization. The second part of the document dealt with the organizational forms of SYA, its program and methods of work, pointing out the need for an ideologically homogeneous

and democratically centralized organization.

'A Socialist Strategy for Womens' Liberation' was presented by Nita Keig. Recognition of the revolutionary nature of this struggle and its importance for all socialists is something that many groupings on the left have yet to come to terms with. The analysis of womens' present role in society and their historical role showed the family to be the chief institution oppressing women and upholding capitalism. The strategy for building a mass movement around womens' demands was seen as the only way to effectively involve wide layers of women in the struggle against the system which oppresses them, and to raise the confidence and level of consciousness of the movement. It was realized that this important plank of our program must be brought into the consciousness of all members of our organization.

Discussion of the Womens' Liberation document was followed by the presentation of a document on the labour movement, entitled 'Australian Labor Movement and Mass Radicalization - Perspectives for the Future', by Ian MacDougall. It was felt that although our involvement in the labour movement at this time could only be minimal, and our contact chiefly with young workers, we needed an orientation for this sphere. Such a document serves also as a valuable educational document. It covers briefly, post-war labour history, going into its relationship with the international economy and international political developments. How the labour movement has related to the radicalization of youth and other sections of the society in the past decade was also treated, along with an analysis of the role of the ALP

and the ACTU in the mass working class movement. This whole document has been made all the more relevant in the light of increased union militancy and strike activity over the last period and the increased use of direct action in on-the-job disputes, and the ability of the working class to be involved over political rather than merely economic issues.

The second day of the conference opened with the international document 'The World Revolution Today' presented by David Holmes. This document covered the main areas of the World Revolution today. It covered the advances made by the world revolution in the three main sectors: the colonial world, the degenerated workers' states and the advanced capitalist countries, in the most recent period.

The central focus of the world revolution, and the struggle giving main impetus to the worldwide radicalization, remains the Vietnamese revolution, and our defence of it remains perhaps our most important task. However, as the document and the discussion which followed showed, the world revolution is breaking out in almost every part of the world. Every day we hear of fresh struggles in the colonial world, and encouragingly more political struggles in the ossified stalinist states, for example in Poland and in Czechoslovakia. The revolution in the advanced capitalist countries is still manifested mainly in student and youthful struggles and in the anti-war movement. As the document pointed out the crisis of leadership still poses the greatest difficulties to the success of the world revolution, and, as a revolutionary socialist youth organization, our task must be to help

create a revolutionary party to give such leadership.

The document on the Anti-war movement in Australia was presented by Rod Webb, and gave an analysis of the present state of the war and the present state of the anti-war movement in Australia. Most important was the vindication of our strategy of mass action and its ability to mobilize opposition to Australia's involvement. There was discussion on how to pull the movement out of its present malaise, which was attributed to the absence of any unified action over the past seven months, and the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the leadership. Overall, this apparent decline in the movement was attributed to subjective factors rather than the objective factors. There is plenty of evidence to show that people are still radicalizing around the issue of the war, and it remains our task to help direct this in an anti-imperialist direction.

The last session was perhaps the most inspiring of all from the point of view of our organization. Reports from all our branches show that we are growing steadily and we are gaining members in new areas all the time.

The Financial Report defied all laws of accounting and the final figures led to a call for a fund drive over the next few months. The election of a National Committee followed, and the Conference concluded with the singing of the 'Internationale'.

The National Office Report covered our achievements over the past eight months including the production of five issues of 'Direct Action', the sponsoring of two tours by overseas speakers—Andrew Pulley and Patti Iiyama, the holding of two national conferences, production of pamphlets etc.

Slightly abridged reproductions of two of our conference documents appear in this issue, one on the anti-war movement and the Labour Movement document. Extracts from the three remaining documents will appear in the next issue.

tralian capitalism, as a client of US imperialism, finds itself obliged by political and economic pressure to pay the price of its basic subservience to foreign capital. Unlike France and to some extent Great Britain, Australian capitalism is not sufficiently independent of US capital to allow it some sort of political independence. But even if Australia had a measure of economic independence, its independent imperialist ambitions would impel it into counter-revolutionary intervention in South East Asia.

It is possible to overstate the importance of Australia's client status with regard to its military involvement in South East Asia. Indeed, most analysts tend to rest on this assumption far more than on the independent imperialist status of Australian capitalism. Meanwhile, the Australian ruling class is not so confused on this question. Harold Holt, John Gorton and William McMahon have all on most occasions been further to the right of their statements on the war than have the successive US presidents or their spokesmen. And Gough Whitlam, representing the liberal alternative face of Australian capitalism, has on many occasions stated the Australian Labor Party's intention of maintaining a military presence as far north as Singapore at least.

It is in this light then that the task facing Australian revolutionaries must be viewed. Australia, as a semi-autonomous imperialist state, is involved in various stages of oppression, be they military, political or economic, in various parts of South East Asia. Its weakest link at this point in time coincides with the weakest link of the whole of world

Vietnamese would not submit in the same manner as had the Koreans.

There is no need to detail here the effects that his heroic resistance has had on Australian bourgeois hegemony. As with the United States, Australian society is divided over the moral and political validity of its involvement in Vietnam.

In Australia, the Vietnam conflict has almost invariably been argued in moral terms. Direct involvement by 19-year olds in conscription has of course, some bearing on the growing hostility towards our involvement, but even this issue has had an over-riding moral aspect with those who are not, or can not, be directly affected. But this difference with the United States situation does not affect the basic necessity for building the same kind of anti-war movement here. The opposition of the Australian masses to the war still springs from their immediate needs, precisely because the solution to their moral objection is the removal of Australian troops from Indo-China. What should interest revolutionaries, however, is the effect such a withdrawal would have on the objective international circumstances, as well as its effect on Australian imperialism. If we were able to force the withdrawal of Australian troops, there is no doubting the demoralising effect it would have on the Australian bourgeoisie, and the corresponding heightening of the class struggle. The Australian working class is at the moment in the process of achieving a series of victories over the capitalist class. A defeat for Australian imperialist policy in South East Asia would add a further

of the Vietnamese and hasten the defeat of imperialism.

In this respect then, our revolutionary task is clear. While Australian troops remain in Vietnam we must continue to build the mass movement that calls for their withdrawal.

Once we have decided on this political task we can proceed to determine the strategic formula that offers the best chance of achieving our goals. The method that Marxists have chosen in the past is one which seeks to make the support of the masses of the people felt, that brings social forces into action. This mass action approach has also been the most effective means so far of limiting the powers of the imperialists to wage the war in Indo-China. It has also proved to be the best method of moving the new layers of radicalising youth from a liberal approach to the war to one which sees it as an imperialist war of aggression.

The anti-war movement to date has taken many forms, from the individual draft-card burning, through window-smashing to massive peace marches in the streets. By now, there is plenty of evidence to show that it is the last form that has been really effective in curbing the power of imperialism and in involving wider and wider layers in action. Short of outright fascism, imperialism has not been able to devise a means whereby it can ignore large masses of people in the streets. The individual acts of defiance of conscription can be, and are ignored by the ruling class, and political capital can be gained from window smashing. But a massive show of strength can't be treated the same way. You can't ignore 100,000

drawal of all troops, we must determine the tactical and organisational means used to implement this policy.

The form that has proved most effective and the one argued for by socialists is a united front coalition of all the forces who can agree on the central demand. This form of organisation allows all forces to help build the central rallies and marches of the movement. The Moratorium has been the widest coalition yet erected and has shown that it can mobilise the largest numbers yet. No single tendency could hope to pull even a proportion of the numbers on to the street. The anti-war coalitions achieve a momentum of their own and build the actions.

The united front coalition will first of all be a coalition of left-wing forces but will also include from time to time forces such as the Australia Party, who come to agree with the central demand of the campaign. It is not a role of the Left to exclude these forces who agree with all troops being withdrawn unconditionally. It is certainly our job to see that their political perspectives do not become the dominant ones in the coalition. On the other hand, their weight adds enormously to the possibilities for building really large actions.

Mass street demonstrations have shown themselves to be the best way of drawing the working class into action on the war issue. In the past, whenever the working class has been stirred into action, it has expressed itself in the streets. The Moratorium mass actions therefore present to the workers a traditional method of demonstrating their grievances. Workers are not attracted by window smashing or cop fighting or ultra-left rhetoric, but as with the rest of the population, when a certain level is reached, they will turn up in numbers in massive marches.

While the Australian anti-war movement remains largely composed of youth and students, it must also be noted that the size of the marches in Melbourne last year showed that significant numbers of workers were becoming active.

With this lesson seemingly lost on them, various groupings within the movement have begun opportunistically to argue in favour of some sort of a "turn to the workers". The formal enunciation of this policy has been in terms of the movement making "the main direction of its activities towards achieving a forthright effort at all levels of the working class and labour movement for mass consciousness and action for the (Moratorium) aims". We have no quarrel with this policy so long as we are agreed on what is understood to be the anti-war movement. If the CPA means the sponsors, coordinating committees and a few trade union leaders, then the proposals suggest nothing more than a return to the old bureaucratic mode of operation within certain sectors of the industrial working class from which will accrue limited gains at the expense of the movement that we have thus far been able to build. In their actions around this "new" strategy, they significantly leave the mass movement out of their calculations. While this interpretation of the "new" strategy is by no means universal within the CPA and associated trade unions, its present most vocal proponents have been partially successful in Sydney, and wholly successful in Melbourne, in undermining the basic mass component of the movement. When such a strategy is counterposed to the strategy of mass action, it will become increasingly difficult for the CPA to demonstrate to the movement that it really means business. It will merely further delay the development of any serious workable strategy for a greater involvement of the working class in the movement.

It appears to us that if the workers will not join in the Moratorium now, they will probably only do so when either the Moratorium grows in size to such an extent that the workers or their leaders cannot ignore it any longer, or when an important objective change (inflation, repressive labour laws, unemployment etc.) within Australian capitalism manifests itself in a form visible to the workers, or both, or a combination of each.

But what remains true for any of these possible variants is that the Moratorium must retain its aims, size and impact, despite the present overwhelming youthful composition. There is no easy way to make the qualitative and quantitative

# MASS ACTION & THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT

## A STRATEGY FOR SOCIALISTS

Military developments in the war in Indo-China during the last year indicate the determination of both the Vietnamese and the imperialists. To the Vietnamese the goal is clear - socialism - and they have shown little inclination to waver from this path despite the most extreme provocation from the aggressor and the most concerted pressure from their nominal allies, particularly the Soviet Union.

For the imperialists, the dilemma becomes more acute with every passing month. Every attempted escalation of the war has failed, and with each escalation on the opposition within the United States has grown. That the imperialists should persist with such fatal action indicates the extremity of the situation facing imperialism in Indo-China. The political price that imperialism would have to pay for disengaging from Indo-China would not be lighter than the price they have to pay for continuing the war. A military withdrawal of American imperialism from Indo-China, whatever the political camouflage to cover it up, would be seen by all the peoples in the colonial and semicolonial countries as a tremendous defeat for American imperialism and therefore as a tremendous stimulant for revolutionary struggles everywhere.

Faced with this dilemma, the United States is obviously seeking some sort of acceptable compromise. But such a compromise would have to avoid the revolutionary effects of their defeat in Indo-China. The whole purpose of initiating the Paris negotiations was to try to find a way of reaching such a compromise. The Soviet bureaucracy has done everything it could to push the Vietnamese revolutionaries in this direction, pressing the claim in all circles that to end the war in Indo-China

you have to make it possible for American imperialism to "save face". But contrary to this current of opinion, the area of compromise is practically nonexistent. It appears certain that the liberation fighters will not be prepared to make the most important compromise: laying down their arms. So whatever the final combination for ending the conflict, the revolutionaries will hold power. It is possible that they will make opportunistic political compromises, but they will hold power.

This evident truth is behind the recent desperate invasions of Cambodia and Laos, in the hope that in some way, the balance may be upset in imperialism's favour. But it keeps swinging to the Vietnamese and each escalation poses the threat of social upheaval within the United States. It would be dreadful to contemplate the lengths to which the imperialists would have pushed their aims in Indo-China had there not been a large mass anti-war movement to restrain them from within. The attempted news blackout over the invasion of Laos is sufficient to indicate the potential power of the present movement. That the blackout was only partially successful is an indication also of the dissensions with the US bourgeoisie, but the motive behind the attempt was more revealing: Nixon could not afford to have the mass reaction which had before been set off by the invasion of Cambodia.

The international anti-war movement must therefore be reckoned with in an assessment of the development of the Vietnamese revolution. As the imperialists become more desperate, so must the movement resolve to resist strongly any further escalation, and press for an immediate withdrawal of the

forces that are seeking to hold back the Vietnamese revolution.

The nature of the opposition to the war in any given social setting must be analysed in terms of whether the opposition is either a product of the immediate needs and demands of the broad masses or a result of a process of political radicalisation of the vanguard. This analysis is of paramount importance because, of course, the nature of the anti-war sentiment in Australia will determine the nature of the movement built to express this sentiment.

The international anti-war movement has two different origins and functions: inside the aggressor countries and outside.

Outside, it is essentially a political vanguard movement, the expression of the radicalisation process, of radicalised anti-imperialist sentiment in a growing sector of the youth and marginally of the working class; but it does not spring from day-to-day immediate material needs of the masses, and it cannot fulfil an immediate practical function except the very indirect function of putting pressure on American imperialism. Inside the US, Australia and New Zealand, on the contrary, the anti-war movement plays an immediate practical role of helping the Vietnamese revolution. The bigger the anti-war mass movement in these countries, the more people that are mobilised, the more that they argue around the specific slogan of withdrawing their troops immediately and unconditionally from Indo-China, the bigger becomes imperialism, and the bigger becomes the possibility of victory for the Vietnamese revolution in the immediate or near future. With such large amounts of US money, material and manpower involved

in Indo-China, to demand the withdrawal of these forces from that country is the most effective way to aid the victory of the Vietnamese revolution. By the association of many thousands of Americans with this demand, the US ruling class is made to face the two alternatives: either continuous radicalisation of broader and broader masses inside the US if they stay in Indo-China, or a big political, social and military defeat in South East Asia if they get out.

By comparison with the United States, the anti-war movement in Australia is in a secondary position. But its essential character and demands are by no means dissimilar.

Revolutionaries in Australia address themselves to a society which has seen its governments consistently, over the last 20 years at least, prepared and willing to throw its army and resources into counter-revolutionary campaigns in South East Asia. Before Vietnam, the Australian army's principal reactionary obligation was to assist the British in crushing the insurgency in the Malayan peninsula. With the flight of the French from Indo-China, and a reluctance on the part of the British to maintain their military presence any longer than necessary, the gap had to be filled by the United States and any other capitalist state whose interests would be directly threatened by the victory of the Vietnamese revolution. Australia's involvement in Indo-China can therefore be viewed in two ways. Firstly, Australian capitalism, by and of itself, cannot afford to allow South East Asia to remove itself from the capitalist orbit. Its attitude in this direction is governed by its imperialist ambitions in Malaya, Singapore, Indonesia, Fiji and, probably most important of all, New Guinea. Secondly, Aus-



COL MAYNARD (Sydney) OPENING THE CONFERENCE

imperialism: Indo-China.

The relative smallness of Australia's troop contingent in Vietnam should not be seen solely in terms of military logistics: even if its size were increased tenfold it would still pale in comparison with the US commitment. The Australian presence has therefore no military value, but it has great import as a political commitment. In a world scene where imperialism's blatant aggressive face rapidly loses credibility the United States needs all the allies it can get, and what is equally important for this discussion, where Australian capitalism's own interests coincide with those of the United States, it seizes the opportunity to have these interests defended by the greater imperialist power for the minor price of a token military and moral involvement in the struggle.

Such an evaluation would have been made by Australian capitalists when they decided to send troops to Vietnam in 1965. And at that time their evaluation of the political cost was correct, considering the actual number of troops involved, the general acceptance by most sectors of the society of Australia's role in the Pacific, particularly after the success of the campaign in Malaya, and the relative affluence and consequent dormancy of the Australian labour movement.

What the ruling class could not foresee, however, was the success of the liberation struggle in Vietnam, and the resulting questions raised by the masses throughout the world as to why the

internationalist class dimension to these victories. Equally important is the effect that an Australian withdrawal would have on US policy. It is almost certain that an Australian withdrawal would also precipitate a similar action by the New Zealand government. In this eventuality, the United States would no longer have the active support of any other capitalist country for its aggression in Indo-China. International pressure and pressure from within the US would aggravate the situation to an even higher dimension, increasing the contradiction between the two alternatives faced by the ruling class, and stiffening the resolve of the Vietnamese fighters.

The anti-war movement in Australia has therefore the potential for revolutionary activity beyond its immediate subjective aims. And this potential exceeds that of any other political issue in this country at this time. The war will remain a major issue in Australian politics until our troops are withdrawn. We as revolutionaries should approach this reality with a view to defend the Vietnamese revolution and, by so doing, inflict a further defeat upon Australian, and through it, American imperialism. For a variety of reasons, large sectors of Australian society are opposed to their government's role in Indo-China. On two occasions last year, 100,000 people took to the streets with their demand for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all Australian and US troops from Indo-China. While the fulfilment of this demand would certainly satisfy most of those who marched and most of those who supported them, its fulfilment would also objectively serve to advance the struggle

people, and, as the hysterical attacks on last year's Moratorium show, the government was forced to become involved. This publicity value of massive numbers has an effect on all layers of the population. The second reason these massive marches are effective is because of their intrinsic nature. They step outside the bounds of usual parliamentary process. They, by example, urge that politics is more than voting. Direct action in the streets achieves more and raises the form of struggle. People on marches change their outlook about the usual methods of parliamentary mystification. It is on these marches that revolutionaries have a chance to attract others to their ideas, to explain that the war is not a mistake but simply part of imperialism. It is here that the Left has a chance to lead a mass struggle outside the controls of the conservative bureaucracies.

During these marches, it is the duty of the Left to raise the consciousness of the participants. The ruling class knows that by this method serious opposition to their power will arise. They fear action by the masses most of all, especially action around an anti-imperialist demand of immediate withdrawal, because this demand has the possibility of being pushed by wide layers of the society. Yet if it is implemented, imperialism suffers an incredible setback.

Once we have determined that our overall central strategy towards the anti-war movement should be one of building mass anti-war demonstrations around the principled demands of immediate with-

**ANTIWAR**  
CONTINUED FROM  
PREVIOUS PAGE

transformation of the movement's composition, and it certainly must not be done at the expense of the present movement, no matter what its composition. In this sense, the aim of worker involvement should not be seen as merely a transformation but as an addition of the most important sector of the society to a movement which, even without this addition, plays a very important role in the defence of the Vietnamese revolution. This is not to say that more can't be done to develop working class involvement in the anti-war movement; only that the present moves are either misapplied though maybe well intentioned, or more probably a cynical extension of inter-party and inter-union bureaucratic squabbles.

While the movement retains its mass character, and at the same time involves as many of these masses in its decision making processes, attempts to divert the movement along narrow blind alleys will become less and less successful. This democratic aspect of the movement is very important, and its development this far has indicated the relative ease with which the movement dispenses itself of those who have a more bureaucratic approach and who are unprepared to adapt to the new demands of such a large coalition.

During the last year's development of the national anti-war coalition, different circumstances existing in different areas have resulted in the movement attaining varying levels of advancement. But it is fair to say that most problems encountered in one centre have been encountered, although perhaps in varying degrees and forms, in the other centres. SYA members have been engaged in the same struggles against spontaneism, reformism, ultra-leftism, opportunism and stalinism in all centres with varying degrees of success.

The breeding ground for all or most of the above tendencies is defeatism, born out of a failure to understand the nature of the war, its protagonists, its opponents, and its supporters. Such a feature is common to mass movements after a period of operation, but often this defeatism is only exhibited by the leaderships. A concomitant of this attitude is impatience, also almost exclusive to the leaderships. This is where the struggle of democracy is important. Too often movements have failed to divert themselves of tired bureaucracies which are unable to meet the accelerating demands of the class struggle.

SYA has an international obligation to face up to the task presented it by the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people. Not one member of this national revolutionary socialist youth organization should be exempted from activity in defence of the Vietnamese revolution.

To be a revolutionary socialist in Australia in 1971 is to build a national anti-war coalition to demand the removal of the obstacle in the way of the socialist revolution of Indo-China, imperialist military and political power in Southeast Asia.



12 KESTER BAYNES (Melbourne)

# AUSTRALIAN LABOR MOVEMENT & MASS RADICALIZATION

## PERSPECTIVES FOR THE FUTURE

The internal conditions in the trade unions and the ALP since the war have been dependent on the level of mass struggle and unrest in the period.

Following World War II there was a period of intense unrest, brought about principally by the inability of capitalism to readjust to peacetime operations quickly enough to give the war-weary masses a style of life equal to their expectations. In the period 1946 to 1949 a series of economic struggles of great intensity occurred with a Labor federal government endeavouring in all cases to channel them into the arbitration system (and even tightening the penal provisions to make the system more effective against illegal strikes).

This period saw a marked rise in the number of key industrial unions in the metal, transport, shipping, stevedoring, engineering, clerical and other industries coming under the direct control or strong influence of the Communist Party. It culminated in the 1949 coal strike, which brought the nation's economy to a halt for seven weeks, and which was in fact a head-on confrontation between the CPA and the ALP for control of the entire labour movement. This struggle was a main contributing factor in the fall of the Labor government and was a disaster from any radical point of view. Its failure, and the stabilisation of capitalism in the early 1950's, coupled with widespread acceptance by the masses of cold war doctrines, marked the end of this period of upsurge.

The CP went into retreat, and a number of big unions - notably the Ironworkers, Amalgamated Engineering and Clerks unions threw out left-wing and communist leaders. However, despite the general air of defensiveness on the Left through the period up to the beginning of the Vietnam war, the class struggle continued. The years between were sprinkled with small-scale struggles in the industries with the worst capital-labour relations and saw extended strikes by waterside workers, glass and steel workers and by the Mt. Isa miners.

However, it was a stable period because capitalism had succeeded in convincing the workers that it could deliver the goods. The workers' goal was solely a bigger slice of the cake. Strikes were effectively controlled by the penal provisions of the arbitration acts, rendering unions engaged in strikes liable to fines of up to \$1000 a day, and giving bureaucrats of the Left and the Right a beautiful excuse for living the quiet life, in the three-part harmony of office, arbitration court and hotel.

ALP governments in the period ignored the wishes of the party's membership and affiliated unions, and did nothing to abolish the penal clauses, or to alter the deadening system in favour of collective bargaining, or to encourage struggles against capitalism that would lead the masses out of apathy.

The ALP in the period went through an evolution again attributable to the state of mass consciousness. A rise in left-wing influence up till the early 1950's was followed by a fall and the rise of the industrial groups, which had been taken over from the left-wing by Catholic Actionists basing themselves on the large number of Catholics in the ALP and being assisted by the extreme right-wing political position of the church internationally in the reign of Pius XII.

By 1954 the power of the extreme right-wing Industrial Group movement was such that the Evatt leadership of the parliamentary wing - by no means leftist - was moved to outlaw it, which precipitated a split in the party. For not only were the groupers posing themselves as a strong faction capable shortly of taking the party over from within, they were taking the party in such a right-wing direction that they were threatening to alienate a large part of the working class (and also the Protestant vote). They were creating the possibility of a leftist breakaway or even a new party moving in and capturing significant mass support.

The 1955 split was most pronounced in its effects in Victoria. It produced a mass exodus of right-wingers from the party and the formation of the mass-based DLP (which drew its policy inspirations from the clerical-fascist doctrines of the various Catholic Action organisations headed by that subterranean master of entrim, B. A. Santamaría). At the same time DLP branches formed in the other states, and a close affiliate formed in Queensland. But it was only in Victoria that the church leaders publicly urged their flocks to vote for it in any systematic and enthusiastic way.

In Victoria therefore, a left-wing "rump" was left in control of the ALP - to the torment of vote-seeking reformists ever since. In NSW and elsewhere the right-wing did not split out *holus bolus*, but divided into two sections - the "stay in" section - many of whom are now in leading positions in the NSW ALP - and the leavers, who set up other state branches of the DLP. In NSW, the Right remained the strongest in the ALP and the DLP remained relatively weak.

The period of quiescence in the 1950's and 1960's saw also the entrenchment of left and right-wing bureaucracies in the unions and the ALP from whence they became more or less irremovable. Interest in the formal side of union affairs on the part of the workers fell to a very low level - union meetings being generally poorly attended (with the exception of on-the-job meetings). Left and Right bureaucrats alike found personal tranquility within the arbitration system, and those on the Left showed no eagerness for Clarrie O'Shea type confrontation of this particular paper tiger. This was despite the fact that the Left has had the latent power right through the period to confront the system by refusing to pay fines and challenging the system to gaol officials and attempt to smash unions.

However, during the last three years we have seen a significant revival in militancy. The position of the Left has strengthened everywhere (except in the Liquor Trades Union). Notable swings to the Left - which will have almost inevitable effects on the internal life of the ALP - have occurred in the Ironworkers Federation, the ACTU and most incredibly, in that right-wing rock of eternity, the AWU.

In this rise in militancy the significance of the O'Shea events cannot be underestimated. Clarrie O'Shea and the Victorian Tramways Union only had to challenge the arbitration system and the government to a showdown to show that the whole thing was a giant with feet of clay - a paper tiger in the classic sense. And now we are in a period when the working class is making endless demands on the system - and for far more than - give - pushing the system into deeper financial and political crisis. Moreover, the bourgeoisie and its government know that there is no way to bring the working class or the unions to heel. Their greatest bluff, which has worked well since Menzies took office in 1950, has now been blown open. Despite attempts by reformists like Whitlam to defend and retain it - with defence of the "integrity" of the arbitration courts in the face of bourgeois displeasure over the wage rises the unions have screwed out of them - the whole thing is faced with the likelihood on present trends, of being pushed aside. We are moving into a system of de facto collective bargaining presided over by emasculated arbitration courts.

There have been bigger industrial struggles in Australian history than the O'Shea events - if the number of man days lost are the criterion. But in its own way this struggle, waged by a working class which has never been more confident of its own capacities, which has never been more technically competent, and which has never been materially richer, must be counted as the most important struggle in the industrial history of this country. For while it resulted in less dislocation of the economy, unlike other struggles of a mass nature it ended in victory - and outright political victory at that - for the working class. That the workers have obviously been encouraged by this victory is shown by the present industrial crisis. It has shown the workers how weak the minority which rules this society really is. Never have they entered direct action with greater confidence in victory than right now.

As the capitalist system continues to fail in both domestic and foreign affairs to meet the rising expectations of the workers we can see clearly the development of a swing to the Left politically. The reformist ALP has been voted into office in South Australia and Western Australia, has just missed out in NSW, and on present trends will probably win federally by 1972.

Needless to say, whatever else happens, ALP reformism, like that of the British Labour Party, will be unable to solve any of the basic ills of capitalism. The reformist leadership will attempt to straddle the contradictory forces within the class struggle within the possibilities of the system.

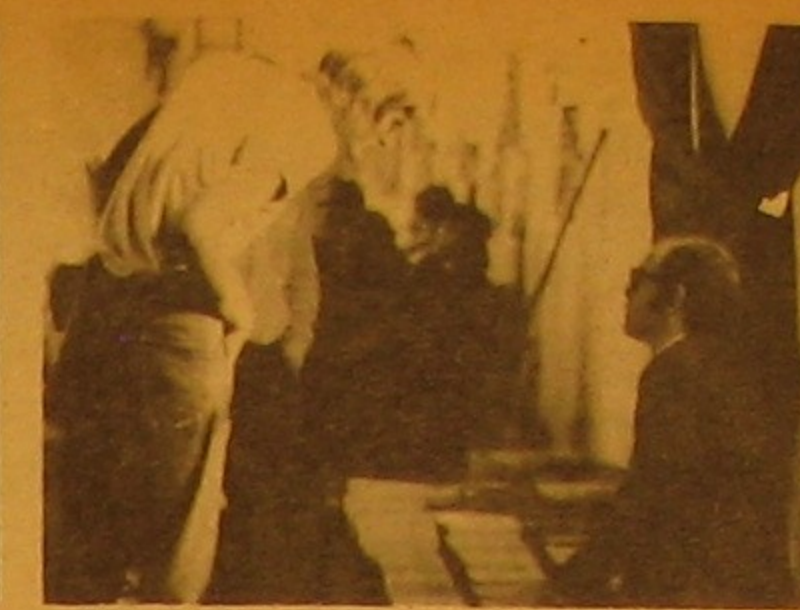
But this does not mean future security for it. It is torn with a mounting and so far uncontrollable class struggle at home, and with the crisis of US imperialism and the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people leading more and more Australians to question its whole rationality - particularly the younger ones, on whom it relies for acceptance.

In the world system of imperialism, Australia now stands in a quite peculiar and potentially unstable position. It has the characteristics both of an advanced society and of a neo-colony.

It is an advanced industrial society in the classical sense - it has a high standard of living, low ratio of people to cars, high per capita output of steel, consumer durables etc., high per capita consumption of electric power, and a high rate of urbanisation. It has a long tradition of working class industrial organisation and struggle and has a mass working class political party.



SINGING OF THE INTERNATIONALE AT THE CLOSE OF THE CONFERENCE.



JOHN PRICE AND MIKE COLLINS (Melbourne)



DEBBY PAYNE (Sydney)

But at the same time, like any of the countries of the third world, it relies for nearly all its foreign exchange on the export of primary products and raw materials. Like those countries, it is at the mercy of the world market for these goods - which is the most unreliable market of all, as the ruin of Australian agriculture clearly shows. Economically, Australia is moving into a relationship with Japan closely analogous to that of say Chile or Venezuela to the USA: that of supplier of minerals and primary produce to an industrial giant - with all the economic disadvantages inherent in such a relationship.

Consequently, as the international contradictions of world capitalism sharpen and the third world economies are hit first and hardest, Australia is likely to be amongst them - despite the present mineral bubble.

This is important, because the political position of the ruling class has always been based on the apathy and acquiescence of the masses, not on their enthusiastic and active support. In recent times we have had very clear evidence of this.

Despite Vietnam, which according to government propaganda is Australia's first line of defence against the yellow hordes - a domino which once toppled will topple the rest in turn - we have yet to see any sort of large pro-war or even pro-government street demonstration. We can have no doubt that reactionaries would try organising one, as they have tried in America on several occasions, if they thought there was a chance of success. It is important because it is capitalism itself which will eventually convince the masses of the need to overthrow it - not any socialist party or group even with all the propaganda facilities it could have.

The task for the future is one getting ourselves in a position to present a transitional programme to the masses as they rise out of apathy, not the more difficult one of converting them from active support for the capitalist system and its form of government.

## PERSPECTIVES

At this point in time we can base our perspectives for the future on the following realities:

1. The working class, which is that section of the population drawing its income predominantly or wholly from sale of its labour power (i.e. about 85% of the population) has the latent power to completely overwhelm the ruling class of rural and urban capitalists. There is also no strong petit bourgeoisie (small capitalists) sufficient to form a power base for a fascist movement as in Germany in the 1930's. This class is being rapidly exterminated as a class by the big bourgeoisie. White collar workers are continually moving closer to blue collar workers in industrial outlook - and a fascist movement could not be effectively based on them either.



CONFERENCE FROM LEFT AND RIGHT

Thus the last line of defence for Australian capitalism is not a mass reactionary movement (fascism) but the continued acquiescence and apathy of the working class itself.

2. "People's capitalism" - the idea that the workers through buying shares in private companies will come to share common social attitudes with the bourgeoisie - has proved a failure. Recent experience has shown that workers with a little free capital to invest in shares are a minority - about 5% of the working class - and because they have so little capital they have to live through speculative profits - not dividends. Moreover, the recent share market crashes have clearly shown the masses the hollow nature of "people's capitalism".

3. The contradictions within Australian capitalism are sharpening. Small capitalists and farmers are continually going out of business, and being taken over by big capital. At the same time the capacity of the economy to meet the workers' demands is diminishing.

4. The position of the Australian bourgeoisie on the world market is worsening steadily in relation to the bourgeoisies of Japan, Europe and North America. This is due to their reliance for foreign exchange on minerals and primary products, and to the tendency for overseas capital to take over the growing points of the economy - mineral and oil exploration, automobiles, petrochemicals, chemicals, textiles, plastics, electrical goods, electronics and computing, business machines, etc. Also the most profitable agriculture (like the Northern Territory).

The economy is being tied to Japan's in the manner outlined above, and Australia has, like the imperialist dominated countries of the Third World, no hope of moving much into the export of manufactured goods - except where it is acting as Asian base for an overseas giant - e.g., in the growing automobile export business.

5. Industrial expansion - which is fundamental to capitalism - is seriously affecting both the urban and rural environments and the quality of life of the population. But the system cannot maximise profits and protect the environment as well.

The automobile is easily the main contributor to this decay. It is directly responsible for 50% of air pollution, virtually all the noise pollution and in its final form - garbage - a great part of the unsightly despoliation of the environment. (This of course is apart from the questionable aesthetic appeal of cities studded with chrome plate and ducos objects in the streets and gaily decorated saleyards).

Indirectly, automobiles create an even greater amount of pollution - because they are chiefly responsible for the continual expansion of the world's oil and steel industries - the two filthiest.

Yet it is impossible for a capitalist society to switch community investment from car to public transport without plunging itself into depression - simply because automobiles directly or indirectly employ about 12% of the population. The

irrationality of the planning of modern Australian cities is shown by the fact that town planners the world over, now agree that automobiles are a dead loss as a system of mass transportation in urban areas and favour public transport. Yet our capitalist decision-makers continue to channel most public investment into expressways and leave public transport starved for funds.

As the president of the Chamber of Automobile Manufacturers said recently: "The continued growth of the Australian car market is due to a number of factors, particularly the lack of suitable public transport".

Environmental decay is bringing large numbers of previously non-political people into de facto opposition to the system - witness all the suburban associations forming now to fight this phenomenon.

6. Life in capitalist society is becoming increasingly distasteful to the masses as they become more sophisticated. It is no accident that it is among young people, who have never known hard times and are thus less prone to the acquisitive values of their parents, that the alienation engendered by the system is felt most keenly, and who are now in a mass way rejecting the conformist cultural values of the older generation.

The explosion of youth culture, which characteristically is made by young people themselves, tends all the time to be taken over by entrepreneurs and incorporated in the system. But at the same time it can be seen as the first stage of a developing political consciousness - which is clearly shown in the heavy swing of young voters away from the Liberal-Country Party coalition, and in the predominantly youthful composition of the Moratorium movement.

Important in this process is the fact that the hypocrisy of the capitalist system is obvious to young people. The ideology of "free enterprise" is shown to be false by the blatant collusion of monopolies - and government acquiescence in this, and by the increasingly obvious need for planning to takeover from capitalist anarchy.

Christianity, which historically has moved from a position of ideological prop for feudalism to one of justifying every form of capitalism, is now tending to conflict with capitalism. That is to say, the teachings of Christianity regarding social questions - opposition to materialist values, on the brotherhood of mankind etc. is leading many thinking Christians away from the unthinking support of capitalism, expansion of empire, colonial war etc., characteristic of previous generations. This can be seen in the conflicts between old and young clergy in the Catholic Church, in the number of clergy and laity involved in anti-war activity.

In the pop scene, Christianity is making something of a comeback - and along with Asian religions, astrology etc., is one of the bodies of doctrine being considered by those who are repelled by the world they see and want something different to believe in. However, it is an individual, non-church form of Christianity that is reviving. The churches continue to ossify.

7. Women are becoming rapidly conscious of their inferior role in society, and that existing social patterns prevent them from realising anything near their full potential in personality, sexuality and intellect. The women's liberation movement is the fastest rising star in the political sky and is raising transitional demands. It is also having a very healthy effect on interpersonal relationships generally within Left organisations.

8. Aborigines are becoming more militant, and their demand for the return of their tribal lands could not be granted without dealing a heavy blow to the established property rights of the big pastoral companies. This movement has its foundations in the occupation by the Gurindji people of their tribal lands on Wave Hill Station, NT. Their continued occupation of the Wattie Creek area has stimulated other tribal groups to make similar demands, from the Gove peninsula to Victoria.

The aboriginal people, in the course of lifting themselves out of the degrading, marginal existence they have tolerated for so long, are finding a new attraction in their old tribal culture - which, under the influence of European culture, they have tended in the past to reject. Like other ethnic minorities in the capitalist world, they are finding new self dignity in identifying with their race and cultural traditions. They are also rejecting the government's policy of "assimilation".

The development of aboriginal consciousness has not kept pace with the struggles of ethnic minorities overseas. Unlike American blacks, for example, they are dispersed through small rural communities - which hinders their development, both in consciousness and organisation. Where American blacks form a majority in some American cities, aborigines are a tiny minority in our cities. (One estimate places the number of people of aboriginal descent in Sydney, for example, as between six and ten thousand. This is in a population of three million).

The inherent anti-capitalist direction of the aborigines' movement will be most significant in the future in those areas where aborigines have the greatest social weight - particularly in the cattle industry of tropical Australia.

9. Educational institutions at secondary and tertiary level are radicalising their students by concentrating them together and then attempting to condition them to take a passive place in a pyramidal, oligarchic society. The students own interests are treated as irrelevant. What is needed by the business interests consciously served by universities, are properly trained employees.

Consequently, university graduates are amongst the most politically conscious members of the contemporary working class.

10. Overseas developments, specifically, i the colonial revolution ii the upsurge in the advanced capitalist countries iii the anti-bureaucratic revolts in Eastern Europe and the developing anti-bureaucratic movement in the USSR do not favour capitalism, and the continuation of all three "revolutions" will help

# LABOR MOVEMENT & MASS RADICALIZATION

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

radicalise the Australian population. The Vietnam experience on its own shows that political developments in this country, isolated as it is, cannot be considered except in a world context.

Future indications are that the whole Indo-China area faces a long period of revolutionary guerrilla warfare, with imperialism fighting on as viciously and as long as it can against the revolutionary forces.

At the same time, another colonial revolution with the potential for even greater domestic impact in Australia looms in New Guinea.

Australian imperialism in New Guinea has already produced a mass movement in opposition to it - the Mataungan Association formed by the Tolai people of the Gazelle Peninsula of New Britain. In this one small area of New Guinea the Mataungan Association has already successfully offered itself to the people as a dual power alternative to the Administration's Multiracial Council and has staged the violent defence of tribal land in the face of government settlement schemes (designed to create a class of native smallholders - the kulaks of the Gazelle) and the violent occupation of their cooperatively owned cocoa distilleries, in resistance to government inspired transfer to a private Tolai company.

The Administration has been trying to train a native elite to run neo-colonialism for the Australian bourgeoisie after direct colonial rule ends. Results, as shown by the Tolai example, are not promising. For elite or not, the Tolai are the most advanced and radical people in the area.

Reactionary hopes for the future in New Guinea depend on inter-tribal rivalries, linguistic differences, and the mass of the population (in the highlands) remaining primitive and passive in the face of imperialist plans for the development of their country, in contrast with the more advanced and radical coastal minorities.

The experience of Africa in particular shows that bourgeois "democracy" is unstable in neo-colonies, and that the alternative to continuing social revolution culminating in socialism is military dictatorship.

Given the development of a popular revolution in New Guinea along the lines established by the Mataungan Association, this country will almost certainly become involved in a colonial war: not - as in Vietnam - in a token fashion, but as the main reactionary force.

If a socialist revolution should triumph in the next few years in just one advanced capitalist country (e.g., France), this would have a fantastic effect on the consciousness of the Australian population, as would a political revolution in the USSR. Neither can be left out of our perspective.

Because the position of capitalism in Australia (whether led by a Gorton, McMahon or Whitlam) is worsening, there is a strong possibility that the country will have a Labor government after the next Federal elections.

As the ALP stands now, this would produce no more than the usual reformist results - except in foreign policy, where an ALP withdrawal of the troops from Vietnam would help weaken the US

politically, just as the original Australian intervention strengthened it. (This is one reason why Whitlam and the ALP Right have opposed withdrawal in the past. Given the political, rather than military nature of the Australian commitment, they don't want a political defeat for imperialism).

The task after the election of Whitlam (or whoever is leader) will be to see that ALP policy is carried out.

Domestically, an ALP victory would not alter the nature of Australian capitalism. Extra tax revenue to the level of about \$200 million per year would provide some improvement in social services, but that would be nothing beside needs. Civil liberties would probably improve (particularly for Commonwealth public servants) and ASIO's star would wane a bit.

As the crisis of capitalist society deepens, the ALP government would probably respect the recent history of Wilson's party in England - holding back improvements in real wages in the "national interest" etc., and attempting to put things over the masses that the bourgeoisie would never dare do.

However, a number of possible crisis situations can be seen on the horizon: the Indo-Chinese revolution, New Guinea, domestic class struggle - over which the ALP could split, producing a left-wing party with a mass base within which revolutionary Marxists could work with the perspective of forming from it a revolutionary mass party with a transitional programme.

A whole range of transitional demands based on the above analysis is possible, to be raised everywhere in the labour movement:

These include:

1. Immediate withdrawal from Vietnam. Smash the National Service Act.
2. Immediate self-determination for Papua and New Guinea.
3. Workers' control and self management of industry.
4. Price control by workers' industrial committees. Open inspection of companies' books.
5. Freedom of speech for all employees to be a constituted right: for them to be able to freely criticise in public the way their enterprise, public service department, etc., operates without fear of reprisal. Abolition of ASIO. Files of all domestic government departments to be open for inspection by any citizen at any time.
6. No alliances or trade, cultural or sporting exchanges with South Africa.
7. Free public transport of sufficient frequency and comfort to be more attractive to the population than use of private cars for suburban travel.
8. Immediate abolition of all forms of discrimination against women in society. Free abortion on demand in public hospitals: free child care centres with properly qualified staff attached to work places and under workers' control.
9. Immediate return to the aboriginal people of their tribal lands, regardless of present ownership.

10. Free distribution of certain goods and services, to be paid for out of tax revenue, thus avoiding wastage of resources in billing, collecting money piecemeal, accounting etc., - services like mails, gas, water, electricity, intra-urban phone calls.

11. Education for all to meet everybody's needs and interests. Abolition of matriculation requirements to universities. Staff-student control of universities and high schools and of their course contents. Government provision of educational materials - books, TV tapes etc., to those studying privately.

12. Abolition of all state and local government obstacles to communal living experiments for the benefit of those wishing to set them up.

13. Abolition of all barriers to migration both ways between Australia and New Guinea.

14. State provision of cultural complexes for the pursuit of all forms of culture - including free rock festivals etc., - to eliminate undesirable commercialisation of culture.

As well, there are many more specific transitional demands related to specific local and job conditions - e.g., there are many gradations of workers' control - from control of one aspect of the production process to control of the whole thing. But they are all undigestible as far as capitalism is concerned.

## FUTURE TASKS

The ALP was originally set up by the trade union movement to be its political arm - which meant originally, and to a large extent still does, its parliamentary arm. This can be particularly easily understood when we realise that the lesson most people drew in the early part of this century was that direct action was not enough to secure social change.

However, since World War II particularly, the working class has increased in strength and parliament has become peripheral in much of the decision-making affecting Australia's social and economic development.

ALP governments have not by any means given the trade unions, let alone the working class, state power. The clearest illustration is the failure of the last ALP government in NSW to carry out ALP and trade union policy and abolish the penal clauses of the state arbitration act.

One small flexing of the muscles of the working class and the penal clauses disappeared - without what some expected as a prior necessity - ALP majority in both houses of parliament. Likewise, the recent ACTU action which at one blow smashed resale price maintenance in the retail trade - and threw the bourgeoisie into more confusion than it has known in living memory - was done against the wishes of the Liberal government and without the need of an ALP one.

The value of this type of action is that it shows the working class its own strength. Particularly in the case of the ACTU's price war, reaction was completely disarmed because it could find no credible argument that the form of the action was against the public interest - it was an intensely popular issue with obvious immediate benefit to every worker in Australia. The bourgeois politicians and press were left pathetically

arguing that this was an improper use of the strike weapon' (Sneddon) - as if there was ever a proper one for them: that it undermined the ALP by usurping its role (ie. in parliament) and electoral prospects, and constituted an unacceptable departure from the previously accepted role of trade unions. (Sydney Morning Herald) The struggle now begins: to show the bourgeoisie that it hasn't seen anything yet: to show that all sorts of issues can lead to popular strikes and that a strike does not necessarily mean simple abstention from work.

We begin by defining what we mean by a trade union. It is not just an organisation with a central office, phones, typewriters, arbitration advocates etc. The union exists on the job or it does not exist at all. The union is all the members at each particular site, and it is as strong and as politically conscious as they are.

Consequently, we work to build shop committees and consciousness of local strength and ability to make decisions at each work place. Our effort is to encourage workers to act for themselves - not to trust parliaments, arbitration courts etc. Our industrial program is designed to build the workers' consciousness of their ability to control their own industries, and to overcome the traditional burden to the working class itself involved in conventional strike action.

Examples of such forms of action:

1. Refusal of transport workers to take fares.
2. Postal employees transmitting mail without stamps, refusing to transmit phone bills etc.
3. Workers going on strike against unjustifiable price increases on the part of their employers.
4. Refusal to engage in environmental destruction.
5. Refusal to go on with normal work until the workers themselves have brought working conditions up to their own standards of satisfaction.
6. Refusal by women workers to abide by any rules and regulations directed against them as women.
7. Workers' control of standards of entry into their own professions and trades - workers themselves deciding who is qualified and who isn't - regardless of tickets or lack of them from bourgeois educational institutions. (We note the less regard demarcation disputes as the worst form of industrial struggle, as they pit worker against worker and foster reactionary craft prejudices. But if under capitalism there are to be standards, it is not hard to make out a case for on the job control of them.)

In the labour movement our contact and organization will mainly be with young workers and young members of the ALP. Our task is to ally ourselves to them in principled struggle around the above demands and tactics, recognizing that political consciousness is rising faster among young workers than among older ones.

The adoption of any part of our program or tactics by the ALP or the ACTU or unions does not decrease its validity. In fact, as ultra-leftists would have it, the time has come to step up the program to one of demanding outright revolution.

Departure from a transitional program in favour of a revolutionary one just as the demands are gaining wide support is the surest way to head the revolution and hand leadership over to the reformists and the bourgeoisie.

The immediate struggle is to gain such popularity for transitional demands that the bourgeoisie is thrown into crisis by them, made to look weak in the eyes of the workers, and forced itself further conceding to them. The main demand is still withdrawal from Vietnam.

All these events, and others relating to them were presented by the media in distorted form, which underplayed a student consciousness that was forming. After the summer vac. the "Maoists" (spontaneists), the strongest left grouping at La Trobe, falsely believed that every body involved in last year's events had suddenly become "Che Guevara's", ready for action. Hence they organised an "anti-imperialist" demo. early this year, at Northlands shopping centre. However, only about 70 marched and the demo. was a failure. Disappointment again occurred for the "spontaneists" when a few weeks later, they could only muster 30 students to march to the west Heidelberg police station. There a motion condemning the Victorian police force,

# PRAGUE SOCIALISTS SENTENCED

RUSSELL JOHNSON

FROM SOCIALIST ACTION(N.Z.)

Sixteen young Czechs, charged with "Trotskyism", were convicted in a Prague court March 19. The leader of the group, Peter Uhl, was sentenced to four years in gaol. The others received prison terms ranging from 12 months to 30 months.

The prisoners were arrested in December 1969. A Gence France-Presse gave this background to the case:

In January 1970, the Czech press reported discovery of a "Trotskyist" organisation hostile to the state, whose aim was to disrupt the process of consolidation and to create a political crisis. According to the Prague daily, *Rude Pravo*, the goal of this organisation, known as the 'Revolutionary Socialist Party of Czechoslovakia' and arising from the so-called 'Revolutionary Youth Movement', was to overthrow the socialist regime not only in Czechoslovakia but also in other socialist countries, including the Soviet Union'. The newspaper also specified that this movement was mainly composed of students and young workers, and that it was active primarily among the steel workers, the printers, and among students'.

During the course of the trial, supporters of the alleged Trotskyists waiting outside the court-room were joined by the sons of Ota Sling and Rudolf Slansky, two scapegoats of the Stalinist purges of the early fifties. They were refused entry to the courtroom on the grounds that if all those who held entry tickets were let in, "the courtroom would overflow." This provoked general ridicule from those in the corridor.

The fact that the children of purge victims, together with the supporters of young revolutionists fighting for workers' democracy, could mock Stalinist hangmen in their own courtroom confirmed what the hearings themselves had indicated. The time is gone when all-powerful prosecutors could vilify and slander the innocent victims of the bureaucracy, certain that these would be echoed by Stalinist parties around the world. Today, only the most degenerate pro-Moscow sects would dare defend the persecution of the young revolutionary socialists in Prague.



Peter Uhl

# PETER WEISS

DAVE RILEY

We live in a new epoch it seems and although art, its forms and concerns, doesn't predate the revolutionary wave it certainly develops from it. Now at large, changing theatres more often than shoes, The Living Theatre drags its rituals of libertarian revolution from one European audience to another. The group is confrontationalist proffering slices of bizarre metaphysics and with a new sensual mythology twines the alienated to each other in group celebration of the Paradise Enow. Theatre of emotion, of touch - massage propaganda.

Since the *Marat/Sade* he seems to have resolved this dichotomy. By 1966 he had completed *The Investigation*, a recreation of the Frankfurt War Crime trials; an edited and extracted version of the actual court text in 11 cantos. Instead of relying on any presentational gimmickry Weiss concentrates on the sheer weight of dialogue. "I worked with just words," he has said, "the words of the victim's evidence, to wake these things up for us so that we could investigate them".

In 1968 he visits north Vietnam. His commitment broadens. One plan, Vietnam Discourse, and a unique little book on the DRV (*Notes on the Cultural Life of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam*) are the results of that visit. In Discourse he maintains that the war is imperialist. In Notes he concludes: "The cultural life of Vietnam provides the basis for the people's unbroken will to resist."

In early 1970, Peter Weiss finished his latest play, the yet untranslated *Trotsky in Exile*. By June Exile was a highly controversial subject in the Communist party press of Sweden where Weiss lives. Later when the Moscow Stalinists joined the attack on Weiss' interpretation of Trotsky's place in revolution, the playwright was able to talk about the new struggle between dialectical thought and dogmatic ossification. As the controversy rose *Trotsky in Exile* gained the polemical interest of another *The Deputy*.

With *Trotsky in Exile* the indecision of his first political play, *Marat/Sade* seems to be resolved into a firm commitment to socialist revolution.

There is no more de Sade. The protagonist now has no other self. Where *Marat* was used as the antithesis of the indulging ego (de Sade), *Trotsky* is the historical personage that must be confirmed.

In contrast to this is the Marxist tradition of the German-theatre, the tradition of Piscator and Brecht, and more recently, of Peter Weiss. Best known for his *Marat/Sade*, Weiss has developed a style of play construction and dialogue that synthesized the best of that same tradition plus those surrealistic elements of touchable spectacle that are his common source with the Living Theatre. The *Marat/Sade* blends the orgiastic intermittent ritual of sound and sight with a thoroughgoing schizophrenic dialogue between the main protagonists: Marat and de Sade. De Sade can say:

I don't believe in idealists who charge down blind alleys. I don't believe in the sacrifices that have been made for any cause. I believe only in myself.

If Weiss (A) is de Sade the other self, the unresolved dichotomy, is Marat the revolutionary - Weiss (B) Jean Paul Marat can say:

Against Nature's silence I use action In the vast indifference I invent a meaning I don't watch unmoved I intervene and say that this and this are wrong and I work to alter them and improve them.

"The New Course" is the title for the S.Y.A. newsletter at La Trobe and so far two issues have been distributed. The first explained our position and tactics towards the anti-war movement, and the second news sheet dealt with our rejection of an occupation as being an effective method of struggle against the university's admission and exclusion statute.

The situation is still not clearly defined but the events of the next few weeks will enable a coherence to emerge. As at La Trobe, other universities are going thru issues of localised interest, and in future S.Y.A. will attempt to develop from these and move on means of posing transitional demands to create a real revolutionary movement.



# LATROBE UNIVERSITY

DARRYL HILLGROVE

Over the past year La Trobe has become one of Australia's most important universities. This was due to the radicalisation that grew in 1970 after such events as:

1. An occupation, by sixty students, of the Careers and Appointments office because of the presence of two recruiting officials from the Army (June 16th. 1970)
11. A sit in three days later on the ground floor of the Administration building, by sixty students. This was over the vice-chancellor's refusal to accept student demands on the nature and timing of the disciplinary hearing against seven of the students in Tuesdays occupation.
111. The arrest of 19 students, last September, after baton-wielding police smashed a march of about 200 students moving back to the campus. The brutal police disruption of a smaller "anti-imperialist" march a week earlier, was the main issue behind this demonstration. A meeting of 800 students (the largest ever attended student meeting at La Trobe) condemned the police action.

If an occupation had occurred then a few well-known students would be selected out for suspension and thus a new issue would develop, completely clouding over the unfair statute controversy -- the initial issue. All in all, "Maoist" occupation tactics would restrict a mass movement against the statutes.

S.Y.A. has set up a base at La Trobe and will be an effective left grouping of the future. We were active during orientation week, presenting international speakers, Patti Iiyama, Bala Tampoe, and a Palestinian forum. Two showings of "In the Year of the Pig" were attended by capacity crowds, and our bookstalls are becoming more and more successful.



JOHN PERCY (Melbourne)



IAN MACDOUGALL (Canberra)



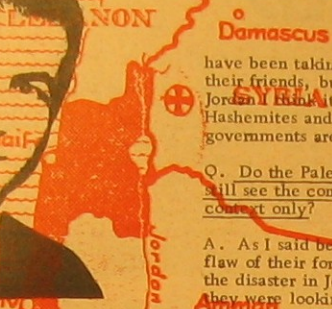
JIM PERCY (Sydney)



DAVE HOLMES (Melbourne)



# Direct Action Interview: THE ARAB REVOLUTION & THE DEFEAT IN JORDAN



The following is an interview with John Bechara. John was born in Lebanon and is fluent in Arabic. He has recently returned from a three-month tour of the Middle East. A revolutionary socialist, he is currently a post-graduate student at Macquarie University.

Q. What was the main reason for your visit to the Middle East?

A. I was invited by the General Union of Palestinian Students to attend the Second International Symposium on Palestine, held in Kuwait. It was held to inform the world as to the plight of the Palestinian people and the various dimensions of the Palestinian problem, because the GUPS and all those concerned with the Palestinian revolution feel that there is a tremendous ignorance vis-a-vis this question at the international level. This is partly due to the preponderance of Zionist propaganda in the world and partly to the lazy official Arab policy, or should I say the official Arab NON-policy.

Q. How was discussion in the conference divided?

A. Discussion was divided into three parts: the background of the Palestinian revolution based upon a paper given by Dr. Walid Kalidi. The second part was the strategy of the Palestinian revolution given by Dr. Youssef Sayegh and the third session was based on a lecture by Dr. N. Shaath on the Palestine of tomorrow.

Q. Who attended this conference?

A. There were some people invited from almost every country. Most people who were there did not represent any official level, only liberation movements, trade

union movements, especially concerned with the situation of those whom we regard as the oppressed of the Middle East, the Black Panthers and revolutionary people like Tariq Ali of the IMG in Britain and Anna Frances from France.

Q. What was the main theme of the conference?

A. Most of the speakers agreed on one thing, that is, the collaboration between the Zionist authorities in Israel with world imperialism and also with the Arab reactionary forces. They raised the need for support of the Palestinian revolution by revolutionaries and others as a part of the international struggle for liberation.

Q. Turning now to recent events, what were the repercussions of the September massacre last year as you noticed them?

A. I pointed out before the collusion between Zionism, imperialism and the reactionary Arab regimes. They have the same class interest basically. When the Rogers Plan was presented and it appeared that all the Arab governments were agreeing to it, the only stumbling block in the way of peace with Israel was the Palestinians, so that there was a move agreed upon by most Arab governments that the Palestinians be crushed in Jordan. If they were eliminated in Jordan then it would be easier to crush them in Lebanon and elsewhere and the whole revolutionary movement would be done away with - that was what was done. As to the number of people who were killed, it was over 10,000. I don't know much about it. It's just what you hear. There is no doubt that they have crippled the movement for the moment and the revolutionaries in Jordan are forced to reassess their total strategy. They admit to one major

error. They thought that the Jordanian masses were on side but they operated within a narrow framework of Palestine, rather than within the whole Arab proletariat, and that made it easier for the Hashemites to appeal for national survival. The appeal for national survival got some proletariat on the side of the Hashemite Nero, whereas if an appeal was made by the revolutionaries to all the masses, they would have been protected by a belt of Jordanian and Lebanese proletariat. One point I would like to mention that was made in the conference: A British journalist was speaking to a Palestinian peasant in Jordan and the peasant said to him, you are hashemites, first you brought us the Hashemites and then you brought us the Zionists. This would indicate that the Hashemites are regarded as big an enemy as the Zionists are.

Q. How do the Palestinian people feel about their recent defeat?

A. It has been pointed out at the conference that there are some tendencies on the part of certain defeatists in the area that we should give up the whole idea of the struggle, because the Palestinians were smashed in Jordan, and now it will take time to rally their forces and start again. But it was also pointed out by the revolutionaries in the conference that defeat is part and parcel of the dialectic of revolution, that is to say that if you don't have defeats you won't in the long run have victory. This is the idea put forward by the Polish philosopher Kolakowski. At least in one sense there is a positive aspect about the last defeat. It leads to the maturation of revolutionary experience and it clarifies for the revolutionaries who their real friends are among the Arab people. This is very important. They

have been taking the Hashemites to be their friends, but after the last events in Jordan it is very clear that the Hashemites and some of the Arab governments are not really against Israel.

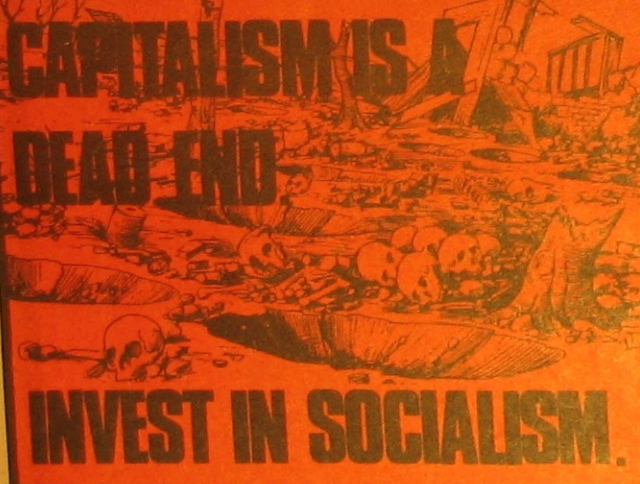
Q. Do the Palestinian revolutionaries still see the conflict in the Palestinian context only?

A. As I said before, they admit to one flaw of their formal policy which led to the disaster in Jordan, and that is that they were looking at it from a Palestinian framework. They were thinking this is a Palestinian struggle only and this is why they got slaughtered. Now there was a consensus of opinion in the conference that this whole battle must be fought in the context of the whole Middle East.

There may be a peoples' war. Where you have a Lebanese army or an Egyptian army this will never do it, you will succeed for the reasons that I have shown before. So it has to be a long and protracted peoples' war against Israel, and the Palestinian framework is too narrow for it. This is because once you think in terms of the Palestinians only you have Palestine sandwiched between the Zionists on one side and the Arab reactionary forces on the other. If the Palestinians appeal to the Arab masses to rally their forces behind them to kill two birds with one stone, i.e., kill the Arab reactionary regimes and the Zionist authorities in one blow, then they will be successful. If they think in narrow, parochial terms they certainly won't be able to fight this battle successfully.

Q. Do they now see the need for a revolutionary leadership with a common programme?

A. Movement strategists like Dr. Sayegh raised the lack of leadership, i.e., the crisis of revolutionary leadership, the need for revolutionary leadership. If any chance is to be given to the revolution it is most essential that it have unified leadership. Any unification will have to be on a class basis between the Popular Front For The Liberation Of Palestine, the Popular Democratic Front For The Liberation Of Palestine and the revolutionary elements in Fateh (there are revolutionary elements as well as chauvinist ones in Fateh). Time will clarify positions and get all the revolutionaries together.



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