

Spartacist



ED. BOARD COPY

Number one 26 July 1973

REVOLUTIONARY REGROUPMENT

Australasian Spartacist is the publication of a small propaganda group, the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand. For us to publish a fine-looking professionally printed newspaper would be a dangerous deception, because although we could supply the technical requirements of such a press, it would not represent our real political work or our real ability to fulfil the needs of the Australasian workers' movement. So much of our efforts would be devoted to the paper that essential tasks would go neglected.

In its first months in Melbourne leaflets for interventions into specific demonstrations, meetings or organisations and occasional pamphlets on specific issues represented the publishing requirements of the actual political work of the Spartacist League. As our press is prepared for the actual people on whom it can have an influence this mimeographed newspaper format represents an important transitional stage, not only in the press of the Spartacist League, but also in its abilities and responsibilities. We are now a recognised pole on the left, and we have a growing ability and responsibility to struggle for our politics throughout the left.

The left -- in Australia and internationally -- is degenerated, fragmented and isolated, but it includes many elements trying to find the revolutionary path. It is the job of the Spartacist League to work for the political and theoretical polarisation of the ostensibly revolutionary groupings and for the crystallisation of all anti-revisionist Marxist elements on the Leninist-Trotskyist programme of building the revolutionary vanguard party of the working class.

Such Leninist regroupment is NOT achieved through the "unity of the left" which is merely a strategy of worshipping the lowest common denominator in order to further the cause of unprincipled dodging of political issues. Only the most trenchant mutual criticism of competing theories and programmes tested in the class struggle, only in the process of splits and fusions, can regroupment be on the sound basis of Leninism.

United action among different left groupings, when there is real political agreement on specific issues, is essential to this process. The united front tactic of Lenin and Trotsky aimed at exactly this: The regroup-

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DEFEND THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT

The fragility of bourgeois democracy internationally has been demonstrated again recently with the growth of right-wing reaction to the crisis of world capitalism, bringing new military rule and fascist movements. The French government outlawed the "Trotskyist" Ligue Communiste, section of the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" after it attempted to break up a meeting called by French fascists. In Peru there has been a wave of savage repression by the dictatorship of General Velasco. Among those arrested have been members of the POMR (affiliated with the French Organisation Communiste Internationale) and the Liga Comunista (affiliated with the Socialist Labour League). Despite our severe criticisms of these organisations, which do not represent the politics of Trotskyism, we vigorously protest the reactionary moves as an attack on the entire workers' movement.

FOR A UNITED FRONT DEFENCE OF ALL WORKERS' ORGANISATIONS!
FOR WORKERS' ARMED SELF-DEFENCE AGAINST FASCISM!

INTERNATIONALISM AND TARIFFS

On July 18 the Labor government cut tariffs by 25% hoping to lessen inflation. Since inflation is essentially international, this plan to make inefficient domestic industry lower prices or go broke -- creating unemployment -- cannot work.

The decision was condemned by many union leaders, who have to control rank and file discontent, but the international proletariat is not helped either by high tariffs, or by the feeble fight put up by the labour lieutenants of capital against cheaper products being imported. The only answer to capitalists who move their industries seeking cheap labour is international unionism (just as the striking Ford workers needed a strike by their American counterparts). Unemployment and low wages can only be defeated by the force of the proletariat organised internationally.

We must begin with the formation of revolutionary caucuses in the trade unions, fighting around a transitional programme calling for such things as: 30 hours work for 40 hours pay! Open the books! Nationalisation of industry under workers' management!

REVOLUTIONARY REGROUPMENT (continued from front page)

ment of both cadre and rank-and-file of the non-communist workers' parties into the communist party. The united front is not a mutual amnesty, nor is it political subordination of one group to another, or of all to a common organisation, but it is agreement to co-operate against a common enemy and an opportunity for each to demonstrate the superiority of its programme to this end. "March separately! Strike together!"

The opportunities in Australia today are great. Capitalism has experienced a prolonged but essentially temporary boom, during which most of the left has become very comfortable. Now, in order to limit working class discontent with the bourgeoisie's attempts to place on it the burden of capitalism's growing crisis, the leaders of the left are, in accord with their social-democratic, Stalinist and Pabloite politics, introducing programmes which depart further and further from the interests of the working class they pretend to serve.

Stalinism, which has gone through two deep and searing splits in the last decade, is disintegrating. The Communist Party of Australia, the most hegemonic body on the Australian left (and consequently containing large numbers who will participate in the real communist party to be built in Australia) is still deeply influenced by Stalinism but has moved a long way to the right towards social democracy. It is headed for a series of repeated crises. Maoism, which yesterday looked to some as revolutionary, today has disoriented its best followers with the blatancy of its capitulation to nationalism and world imperialism. The disintegration of the fake "Trotskyist" internationals -- the 1971 breakup of the International Committee and the forthcoming breakup of the United Secretariat -- are reflected in Australia. In reaction to this a variety of groups and individuals are breaking away -- empirically and tentatively -- searching for the path to revolution.

The hour has seldom been better for the building of the revolutionary nucleus, and -- with the developing inter-imperialist rivalries which move us slowly towards more and more desperate capitalist attacks on the working class and thence to the Third World War -- the hour has never been more urgent! Only world proletarian revolution can cut through the unrelenting programme of imperialist war.

Without the crystallisation of a real international revolutionary leadership there can be no revolution. Australasian Spartacist is launched to fight for Leninist-Trotskyist politics and so precipitate that crystallisation.

Australasian Spartacist, an organ of revolutionary marxism for the rebirth of the Fourth International, is published by the Central Committee of the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand, GPO Box 2339, Melbourne. Telephone 419-1103. (Subscription: 50 cents for the next ten issues).

Frightened Maoists Fight Politics

Melbourne Maoists, desperate to protect their remaining disoriented followers from contact with revolutionary politics resorted to strong-arm tactics on Sunday July 15, outside a public meeting to welcome the Chinese ambassador to Australia.

The international rightward turn of Maoist Stalinism has led here to the break-up of the Worker-Student Alliance and the virtual withering away of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist). Their tactics at the welcome show how worried they are lest this process continue.

Two supporters of the Spartacist League went to distribute propaganda outside the meeting, as they would outside any political meeting. When they began selling several Maoists, under the guidance of Ted Bull of the CPA (M-L) confronted the Spartacists, telling them not to sell papers, but the Spartacists insisted on their right to distribute their literature and the Maoists became increasingly aggressive in their attempts to prevent them.

SPARTACISTS DRAGGED

After enlisting help to defend the right to fight for politics, the Spartacists, in an effort to conciliate, offered to withdraw to the top of some stairs away from the entrance of the meeting. This offer was refused. Eventually the Spartacists and their supporters were pushed, dragged, carried and otherwise manhandled up the flight of stairs and away from the doorway to the point to which they had previously offered to move. They could not be moved further and were left, with a couple of guards, but allowed to sell their papers.

The only physical damage done was a few torn copies of Worker's Vanguard. However, the fragile needs of workers' democracy, never a strong point with Stalinism, received quite a beating.

The democratic tradition in the workers movement, allowing the debate necessary for the struggle for the correct programme, has been overthrown by Stalinist and social-democratic bureaucrats and needs to be strongly re-asserted.

Everyone pays lip-service to democracy -- even the bourgeoisie grants communists the "right" to criticise, though in times of open class warfare the "rights" granted by the ruling class are very quickly withdrawn.

THE NECESSITY FOR DEMOCRACY

Democracy within the worker's movement insures against the arbitrary imposition of one tendency's point of view. However much any group may feel that it is correct, it must fight with its programme in order actually to win leadership of the class. To pretend leadership of the working class and then to use tactics of slander, rumour, demogogy or outright violence to intimidate other tendencies is to use bureaucratic methods to impose one's politics on the working class, and it attacks the principle that the scientific consciousness of the class is the necessary prerequisite for socialist revolution.

The working class consists of many layers of different consciousness. The differences between parties, where they are real and not imagined (based on personalities or organisational disputes) express these different levels of consciousness. Democracy cannot be granted only to those in the workers movement of high consciousness, because revolution involves the whole of the working class. Thus the highest expression of worker's democracy will be in the organs of working class power and unity, the soviets, where all tendencies will compete on an equal basis.

The clarification and strengthening of theory and programme, and the building of the revolutionary party requires the repudiation of gangsterism -- the replacement of slander, accusations of subjective counter-revolutionary intent, and physical confrontation for the necessary genuine political struggle. This is not to devalue the importance of the fight against bad politics, but to assert the need to use political methods in that fight.

TARIQ ALI: FRONT MAN FOR CENTRISM

Tariq Ali is a leading member of the British International Marxist Group and of the executive of the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International". While the Socialist Workers League/Socialist Youth Alliance are the officially recognised sympathising section of the United Secretariat in Australia, they are in a minority faction led by the American Socialist Workers Party and comrade Ali, (who supports the majority European-based faction) is touring Australia as a sponsor of their rival, the Communist League, a non-official ally of the majority.

The factional basis for comrade Ali's tour (shown by the sponsorship given the Communist League and the small mention it's had in the SYA's organ, Direct Action) merely represents the disintegration of this fake international.

The shattering "United Secretariat" encompasses political shades from centrism to downright reformism. The SWP and their Australian allies, the SWL/SYA, have abandoned even the pretence of struggling for proletarian revolutionary consciousness. Instead they build non-class, single-issue "mass" movements on the basis of blocs with liberals, social democrats and anything else not identifiably communist.

ULTRA-LEFTISM

Unlike the SWL/SYA, the Communist League and the International Marxist Group have not yet been drawn into the camp of explicit reformism. Their form of unstable centrism sometimes serves as a cover for reformism, as advisors to the Communist Party-led reformist workers control movement or the Stalinist Vietnamese Communist Party. But more often they leap leftwards completely over the top of the Marxist position, denying the reality of the present-day consciousness of the working class. A good example of this is comrade Ali's assessment in his book, The Coming British Revolution, of the working class's attitude towards the British Labour Party. According to him militancy in the working class is bypassing its bureaucratised structures as "most militant workers have, for the time being at any rate, no illusions regarding the Labour Party and its parliamentary leadership...". In comrade Ali's view "a reflection of the struggles taking place in British society" could not develop in the Labour Party because it is "totally bureaucratized". Comrade Ali makes this argument in order to justify revolutionaries' turning their backs on the Labour Party, ignoring it. In May the continuing crisis of British capitalism and the upsurge of working class struggle was reflected in the Labour Party. A very large, militant-sounding, left social-democratic wing calling for the nationalisation of 25 basic industries appeared. If comrade Ali was correct, this just could not have happened.

The Australian Communist League's position, based on the same argument as Ali's is also that the ALP must be ignored, because "Organisationally, the Australian Labor Party does not have a tremendous hold over the Australian workers..." (Militant 27 October, 1972). In fact, if the upsurges in the class struggle are to be intersected politically, revolutionary organisations must not turn their backs on the mass social-democratic parties, but must develop a strategy for cutting through them.

More serious is the uncritical capitulation of the Communist League and the IMG to the Stalinist-led Vietnamese revolution. They are blind to the qualitative distinction -- a conscious proletariat -- between the deformed workers state now emerging in the National Liberation Front areas of South Vietnam, and the healthy workers state of Lenin's Russia.

The political views of the Communist League, following Ali and the majority of the United Secretariat, lead to worship of spontaneous militancy, now on the rise within the working class, and avoids the central task of combatting the misleadership of the class -- Stalinists and social democrats -- through struggle around a transitional programme that will lead it to break from its false consciousness.

The Communist League, unguided by revolutionary Trotskyism, is condemned to oscillate between ultra-leftism and thinly-veiled reformism.

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