



While CPA reformists lament

Labor tops back wage cut

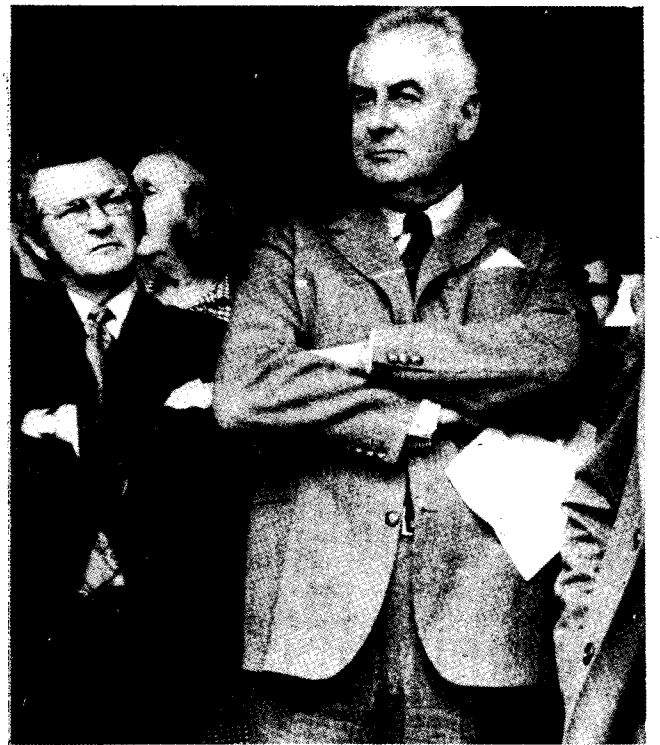
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It was primarily intended to create the illusion that the Labor Government was protecting the working class against inflation, a supplement to the "Prices Justification Tribunal" which had already been largely discredited as a sham. But this wage indexation was no more than a sop which would scarcely dent the losses incurred by the majority of workers through inflation. After the defeat in December 1973 of the prices and incomes referendum -- an attempt by Whitlam to pave the way for direct state control over wages -- wage indexation became a more and more important part of Labor's plan to hold workers in check. The key to this plan has always been the co-operation of the union bureaucracy. But the strike wave which broke out early in 1974 showed that workers were willing to fight to maintain their standard of living and the bureaucrats had to do their

best to confuse, disorient and suppress this struggle, particularly in the metal trades. In spite of this misleadership, the working class was able to obtain an average wage rise of about 25 percent during 1974, close to what was needed for most workers to break even on take-home pay (*National Times*, 27 January - 1 February 1975).

The beginning of the recession changed the significance of wage indexation for Whitlam; by July he was already saying that wages caused both inflation and growing unemployment, and making increasingly frequent pleas for wage restraint. In August came the vicious verbal attacks on workers for "anarchy" and "irresponsibility" by influential ALP and trade-union bureaucrat Jack Egerton backed up by Cameron. But because of the spontaneous high level of struggle (a record year for time lost due to industrial disputes) the union bureaucrats balked at Cameron's original scheme, and by the end of September, the ACTU and Cabinet had come to an agreement centring around a new scheme for a full percentage cost-of-living (c-o-l) adjustment on all wages up to the average wage and a flat increase based on the average wage for those with above-average earnings. And now the government is arguing for the scheme not as a concession to workers, but openly as a boon to business.

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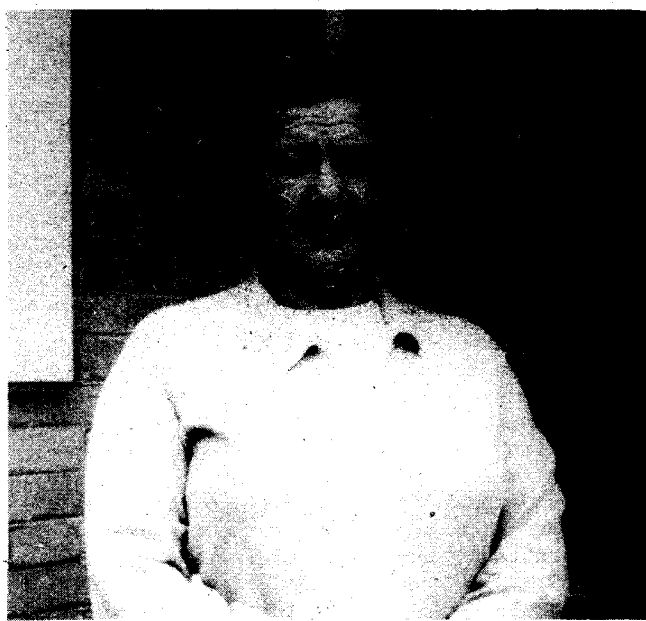
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An unemployed workers action group in Sydney has been established to work towards this goal. Active in this group are the Spartacist League, elements of the Communist Party of Australia (including the Glebe-Balmain branch), the Communist League, the Unemployed Women's Collective, unemployed members of the Builders' Labourer's Federation and a growing number of other unemployed workers. Small-scale united fronts such as this group can contribute to mobilising workers against unemployment provided that they are based on a common agreement for the organisation of concrete action. The united front must promote the widest possible unity around the immediate concrete demands while allowing each participant to present and fight for its own political program.

The group is organising a demonstration against unemployment for 20 March and calling for unions to strike that day in support of the demonstration. The group's main leaflet mobilising for this demonstration calls for "Reduction in working hours with no loss in pay". Virtually all major trade unions give lip-service to a thirty-five hour week, but it is urgently and immediately important to actually fight for a thirty-five hour week with no loss of pay, and this must be extended to a complete sliding scale of hours to maintain full employment by spreading all available work around.

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An effective fight against unemployment requires the support of the trade unions since the unemployed by themselves, isolated and cut off from the power of organised workers to stop production, are in the worst possible position to fight.

The 20 March demonstration provides an important opportunity for broad united-front action, but fighters against unemployment must not confine themselves to its limited demands. Revolutionaries see that it is also necessary to: *Build factory committees to fight layoffs and plant closures! Open the company books! Implement workers' control of industry at all levels! Occupy all factories closing down! Plan production to meet social needs! Nationalise the car-building industry without compensation! Nationalise all factories threatened with closure!*

The working class can only finally solve the problems that the capitalist system saddles it with by a revolutionary fight to smash capitalism and take state power, which is what its present leadership consistently and treacherously opposes. *Oust the Whitlam/Cairns/Hawke bureaucracy! For a revolutionary leadership of the workers movement pledged to expropriate the capitalist class!*

DEMONSTRATE: 20 March, 3.30pm
Assemble: Trades Hall, Goulburn Street, Sydney

Demonstration called by Unemployment Action Group

Australasian SPARTACIST



a monthly organ of revolutionary Marxism for the rebirth of the Fourth International published by the Central Committee of the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand, section of the international Spartacist tendency

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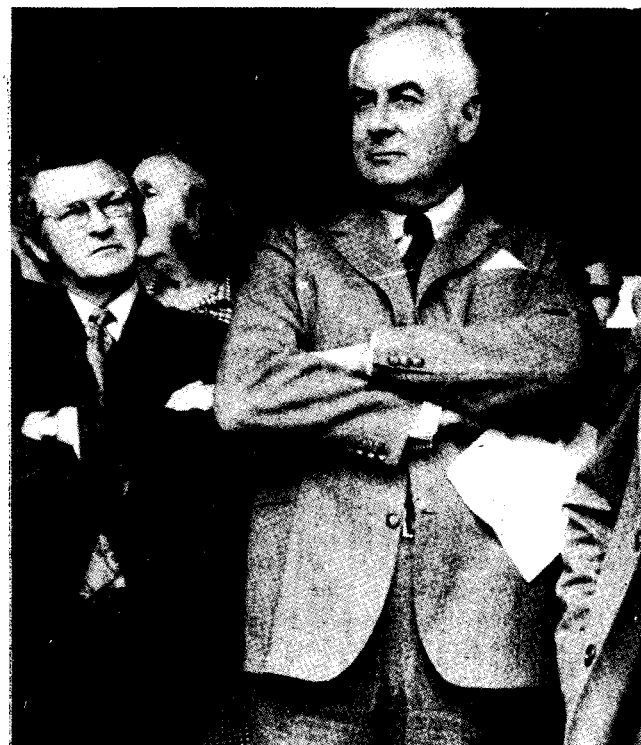
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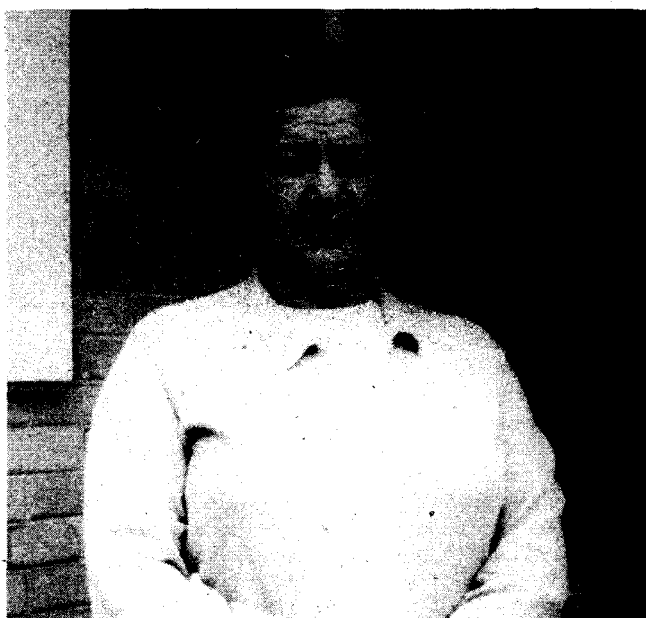
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The leaflet demands a decent standard of living for the unemployed, for "INCREASED UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS, EQUAL TO A LIVING WAGE automatically adjusted to keep abreast of inflation and price rises ... FOR THE RIGHT OF MARRIED MEN OR WOMEN TO RECEIVE THE DOLE EVEN WHEN THEIR PARTNER IS EMPLOYED" and for the "SUSPENSION OF HIRE PURCHASE, GAS AND ELECTRICITY PAYMENTS".

An effective fight against unemployment requires the support of the trade unions since the unemployed by themselves, isolated and cut off from the power of organised workers to stop production, are in the worst possible position to fight.

The 20 March demonstration provides an important opportunity for broad united-front action, but fighters against unemployment must not confine themselves to its limited demands. Revolutionaries see that it is also necessary to: *Build factory committees to fight layoffs and plant closures! Open the company books! Implement workers' control of industry at all levels! Occupy all factories closing down! Plan production to meet social needs! Nationalise the car-building industry without compensation! Nationalise all factories threatened with closure!*

The working class can only finally solve the problems that the capitalist system saddles it with by a revolutionary fight to smash capitalism and take state power, which is what its present leadership consistently and treacherously opposes. *Oust the Whitlam/Cairns/Hawke bureaucracy! For a revolutionary leadership of the workers movement pledged to expropriate the capitalist class!*

DEMONSTRATE: 20 March, 3.30pm
Assemble: Trades Hall, Goulburn Street, Sydney

Demonstration called by Unemployment Action Group

Australasian SPARTACIST



a monthly organ of revolutionary Marxism for the rebirth of the Fourth International published by the Central Committee of the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand, section of the international Spartacist tendency

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Wohlforth terminated, WRP splits

Crisis hits Healyite "International"

Week in, week out *Workers News*, organ of the Socialist Labour League (SLL), Australian section of the "International Committee of the Fourth International" (IC), rants about "The Crisis". Its readers are told that "Never before have the living standards and basic rights of the working class been under greater attack than today" (!) and that the only answer is for all workers to "immediately join the [minuscule] Socialist Labour League" (*Workers News*, 24 October 1974). These inane pronouncements are of use only to the cynical clique around Jim Mulgrew, for recruiting apolitical youth and as a talisman to ward off Marxist criticism; but there is now perhaps some objective basis for their hysterical quality. For, though their use of the term "crisis" remains devoid of scientific Marxist meaning, there is one place where it truly applies -- inside the IC itself. Both of the two largest, longest established, and most representative groups associated with the IC have recently suffered stagnation and internal turmoil, defections or splits. In August 1974 Mulgrew's American counterpart, Tim Wohlforth, was removed as National Secretary of the Healyite Workers League (WL); more recently 200 members of Healy's Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) in Britain were summarily expelled.

For twelve years Wohlforth was the chief spokesman for the IC in the US, faithfully executing Healy's every edict. His writings (including several pamphlets reproduced by the SLL) were hailed by the IC as important contributions to the struggle for dialectical materialism (at least the corrupted Healyite version). But his latest tract is a lurid 39-page account of his frameup and purge at the hands of Healy -- evidently factually accurate, but curiously empty of political understanding. During his rule as viceroy of the WL Wohlforth slavishly emulated his sovereign's organisational practices of suppression, slander, and the calculated destruction of cadre, invoking the absolute authority of the "International Committee" to intimidate any stirrings of internal opposition. Now finding himself the object of his own "method", Wohlforth can only explain it by suggesting that Healy has developed "a form of madness".

For years the Healyites have held up the IC as the direct and "legitimate" organisational continuation of the Fourth International founded by Trotsky in 1938. Even where they admitted the political rottenness of the local group, supporters would shrug off criticism by pointing to the certified "Trotskyism" of the IC, which was after all "the Fourth International" by some metaphysical right of organisational inheritance. But of course it should be no surprise that the IC, which tolerated or encouraged the opportunism, revisionism, bureaucratism, dishonesty, gangsterism and other assorted forms of political banditry of its sections, has itself been rotten all along. Here is how Wohlforth, hitherto one of the foremost proponents of the IC line, now describes this self-styled "Fourth International":

"... It never was allowed to go beyond the level of small groups basically functioning as appendages of the SLL-WRP. More precisely, the IC never went beyond an international organization around a single individual, Gerry Healy...."

"Open discussion and political struggle was discouraged by Comrade Healy's tendency to push every discussion to the most extreme point and to seek to break the person who disagreed with Comrade Healy...."

"... There are no elected bodies. The IC is, as we shall see, whatever the Workers Revolutionary Party wants it to be. It is the WRP which writes whatever statements are occasionally issued. It is the WRP which calls whatever meetings of the IC that are held and which determines what sections should attend. It is Comrade Gerry Healy who determines what the WRP determines...."

After years of defending and promoting the IC fraud, Wohlforth should know. He now confirms the international Spartacist tendency's consistent claim over the past nine years that the IC was a fake-internationalist cover for Healy's sectarian, national-parochial opportunism in Britain. It never was a democratic-centralist international. After 1966 it was a federation (codified at the IC's Third Congress in London in 1966, against the opposition of the Spartacist group) in which different blocs -- principally Healy's and that of the French Organisation Communiste Internationaliste led by Pierre Lambert -- agreed to let each pursue its own, often counterposed policies. After the departure of the OCI and its supporters in 1971, nothing was

left of the IC but Healy's own group and a handful of slavish imitations whose relationship to Healy Wohlforth accurately describes above.

In fact it seems that precisely Wohlforth's heavy-handed attempts to mimic the WRP (so unsuccessful that WL membership has significantly dropped) eventually displeased Healy, who manufactured an absurd dispute with Wohlforth over whose proletariat was the most revolutionary. In 1973 Wohlforth received a letter from the WRP's Mike Banda criticising his draft resolution on American perspectives and insisting on "the primacy of the European Revolution -- particularly in England" (as opposed to Wohlforth's emphasis, allegedly based on Healy's own remarks to a WL meeting "that the centre of the world crisis was the crisis of American capitalism"). In late June Wohlforth was peremptorily summoned to England where according to Wohlforth

"Every even potential difference was magnified to an absurd degree. I was even attacked as being an American pragmatist for purchasing an American rather than a British web offset press!"

Wohlforth was however given a reprieve provided that he would begin a "fight for the very life of the League against the centrism within it" and "drive the movement forward into the working class". This he interpreted as a directive for a wholesale purge, proceeding to drive virtually every prominent experienced cadre out of the WL (see *Workers Vanguard*, no 53, 27 September 1974



Alan Thornett.

and no 56, 8 November 1974). This carnage was probably what eventually precipitated Healy's move to eliminate Wohlforth.

Wohlforth's own account of his final removal at the 1974 Workers League summer camp describes a man prepared to capitulate time and again over any organisational or political question, including the reinstatement of all his purge victims, until confronted with the ultimate insult: Healy's charge that his close companion Fields was a CIA agent. (Fields was later cleared by commission of two leading Healyites.)

Some might be inclined to dismiss the troubles in the WL as strictly an American phenomenon; after all, Australian Healyites have always been a little ashamed of their American co-thinkers. Might not the struggle against American pragmatism have proved too much even for master dialectician Tim Wohlforth? But in fact, the IC-WRP bears full responsibility for what happened in the Workers League; it was on Healy's insistence that Wohlforth undertook a turn to the youth in the early 1970's, trying to duplicate in different American conditions the "success" of Healy's "Young Socialists" in Britain as a cynical, flashy, high-turnover operation to attract semi-lumpen working-class youth mostly on an apolitical basis of rock bands, dances, sporting events, pageants and the gospel of "The Crisis". And as late as April 1974, at an IC conference, Healy himself still upheld the WL as a "model".

And what of the WRP itself? Healy has now expelled some 200 members, including several Central Committee members and a sizeable fraction of its cadres. The dissident group is led by Alan Thornett, a WRP Central Committee member and formerly Healy's star trade-union militant, a shop steward at British Leyland's Cowley factory victimised for leading a struggle in May-June 1974. (For the WRP's own account of this struggle see WRP Pocket Book no 11, *Victimisation at Cowley*.) In leaflets distributed at a WRP Conference (re-published in *Intercontinental Press*, 13 January 1975) Thornett charges Healy with the kind of organisational abuses which typify Healy's practice, including violence and intimidation. Healy systematically expelled or suspended anyone who

gave any support to Thornett or refused to sign a statement endorsing the leadership's position. Entire local organisations were expelled. Healy, in clear violation of his own party's constitution, told Thornett that "I will not have any faction in this party before or after the Conference. I'll expel anyone who forms a faction in this party!"

It is obviously too early to make a political characterisation of the Thornett grouping from a distance, and space does not permit a thorough analysis of the main political document available (that reprinted by *Intercontinental Press*, 10 February 1975). However, it is worth noting that in this document Thornett accurately attacks several aspects of the WRP's deviation from bolshevism -- crisis mongering, bureaucratic sabotage of serious trade-union work, theories of Labour Party and TUC "corporatism" resembling the "social fascism" theories of "Third Period" Stalinism, its electoral campaigns and recruitment policies. Thornett points out that the WRP is led to "propagandizing a maximum programme on the basis that the revolutionary situation has grown so sharp that any other programme does not apply" and therefore to abandoning the Transitional Program. Referring to the WRP's use of the "crisis" as a recruiting device, Thornett observes that "This of course is insufficient, because recruitment should also be to a *programme*." This would seem obvious; but not in the WRP, where Thornett evidently had to argue that recruits should have at least "sufficient



Tim Wohlforth.

political agreement to vote for our own candidate where we were standing, which was not the case with the majority 'recruited' during the [last British election] campaign." Indeed!

Despite the accurate criticism, Thornett still seems to accept the WRP's basic objectivist method borrowed from Pabloism, from which Healy never completely broke. For example Thornett accepts WRP monetarist theories about post-war capitalism paralleling Mandel's "neo-capitalism", Pabloist "Arab Revolution" theories and Healy's one-time policy of "Making the Lefts Fight", a form of pressure politics on the left wing of the British Labour Party. The document on the whole is only a partial and ahistorical critique which implies that Healy only recently went off the rails. It is not sufficient to be partially and abstractly correct. The danger is that the Thornett group might simply invert Healy's sectarianism into some form of equally disastrous Pabloist opportunism.

Few tears will be shed for Wohlforth, whose greatest crime -- in which he was abetted by Healy -- was that in pursuit of supreme authority for himself and shortcuts to influence and numbers, he broke up the opposition to Pabloist degeneration within the American Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in the 1961-1962 period (the Revolutionary Tendency, precursor of the Spartacist League of the US), cutting it off from winning valuable older cadre and setting it up for expulsion from the SWP in a situation of weakness and isolation which almost destroyed it and certainly set it back for several years. But while Wohlforth (whose new document announces at length his exit from politics) can be dismissed, the same need not be said of those expelled from the WRP, who could move toward authentic Trotskyism. But in order to do so, they must critically examine the whole history of the IC, and assimilate especially the lessons of the struggle conducted by the Spartacist tendency against Healy's banditry, which led to the bureaucratic expulsion of the Spartacist group from the IC at its 1966 conference, and against the ensuing *programmatische* degeneration both of Healy and his sycophants and of Lambert's OCI. ■

Harsh sentences for Cey

an article by Edmund Samarakkody reprinted from Workers Vanguard No 62, 14 February 1975

EDITORS' NOTE: We reprint below an article on the recently concluded trial of militants accused of leading a 1971 uprising. The article is translated from the current issue of Vimukthi (Class Struggle), newspaper of the Revolutionary Workers Party of Ceylon. Comrade Samarakkody, the author, is a long time Trotskyist as well as a lawyer who was involved in the defense of the JVP.

COLOMBO—The outcome of the main trial of 32 young persons before the Criminal Justice Commission for their alleged participation in the April youth uprising will not be a surprise to anybody. Barring four persons, all others have been found guilty, and have been sentenced to long jail terms, while the leader of the JVP [Janata Vimukthi Peramuna—Peoples Liberation Front], Rohana Wijeweera, was sentenced to life imprisonment or 20 years.

The trial and convictions of these defendants, and the long jail sentences in the case of the leading members of the JVP, were the continuation of the savage repression of the militant youth who dared to oppose and fight against the capitalist coalition government, when it had exposed its capitalist aims and proved its bankruptcy in relation to their pressing problems. This repression of the youth was also the testing out of the machinery for the coming repression and suppression of the working class and toilers when they reach out, sooner or later, to win their own emancipation from capitalist oppression and rule.

The government achieved these convictions by the use of draconian legislation which it rushed through in Parliament with the full backing of the LSSP [Lanka Sama Samaja Party] and CP [Communist Party], two working-class based parties in the coalition alliance. This was the notorious Criminal Justice Commission Act—a special law of criminal procedure for the express purpose of trying these and other defendants alleged to have been implicated in the April 1971 youth uprising. It was when the government found that, despite the known ingenuity and ability of the police to fabricate cases, and despite its learned law officers, there was no possibility in terms of the ordinary criminal law [of convicting] these defendants [for] the offences of attempting to overthrow the government, etc., that it resorted to this device.

We have in this so-called Criminal Justice Commission Act what is called in legal language "retrospective legislation"—law passed after the commission of an act, which was not an offence at the time it was committed in terms of prevailing law. And while bourgeois justice is always class justice, this type of retrospective legislation is, even according to bourgeois norms, a negation of justice.

In a trial before a commission appointed under this act, the investigator of the alleged crime or crimes, the prosecutor in the court case and the judges are the same. It is not difficult to see that a trial of accused persons under such circumstances becomes farcical and turns into a miscarriage of justice and a crime against those very defendants.

Under the ordinary law in Sri Lanka [Ceylon] confessions of accused persons made to police officers are not admissible, because it is a notorious fact that the police in this country obtain such confessions through assault and, invariably, torture. But under the Criminal Justice Commission Act this salutary provision is thrown aside, and confessions made to police officers have been made admissible. It is precisely by such alleged confessions alone, that these defendants were found guilty. This meant that the defendants were forced to admit crimes they never committed, and it was through such confessions to police officers that most of these defendants were given long jail sentences in this case.

What is more, the rights of a defendant in a trial before a commission are severely restricted. Their lawyers

have hardly any chance of defending them, as the commissioners (the judges) could impose time limits to submissions and cross examination of witnesses. They could even decide on a secret trial—excluding the public.

However, apart from this monstrous Criminal Justice Act, which virtually made the defendants guilty of the charges before the trial was begun, these defendants received a stab in the back by their own comrades. This was the treachery of the defendants Loku Atula, T.D. Silva, Somasiri Kumarayake and W.T. Karunaratne, who pleaded guilty to the charges at the very commencement of the trial.

In all the circumstances of this case—the political nature of the trial, the purposes of the government and the disabilities arising from the notorious Criminal Justice Act (the judgment and



Rohana Wijeweera



Government troops arrest suspect during 1971 Ceylonese youth uprising.

sentences being foregone conclusions)—the defendants could gain nothing from legal defence, through legal arguments and submissions on the interpretation of the law, as [they might] in cases before the ordinary courts. What was therefore possible and necessary was a political defence. It was necessary in the real interests of the defendants, and the cause for which thousands of youth sacrificed their lives, that they develop a political defence, as against a fruitless legal battle.

And it was precisely a political defence that was launched by eight of the defending counsel, who in agreement with their clients staged a protest and walked out of the court when the commissioners (judges) refused to give a ruling on important objections raised by them in regard to the trial at its very commencement.

The defendants responded by denouncing [with] slogans the Criminal Justice Commission Act and the government. The reaction of the attorney general, the chief law officer of the government, was to immediately denounce the lawyers and their defendants for their protest action, and to make allegations that these lawyers had conspired with their defendants to insult and obstruct the Commission. And here was the opening for the political defence of those accused.

But this political defence, which was launched by a section of the defendants and their lawyers, could not be continued because the rest of the lawyers

did not join this protest. And what was worse, Bala Tampoe, who was defending some of the accused persons, having stayed at home on the day of the lawyers' protest, returned to the Commission sittings only to emphatically dissociate himself from the protest action of the lawyers. Tampoe further took the opportunity to establish very cordial relations with the attorney general who denounced the lawyers who protested, and also with the commissioners.

In this context, the defence degenerated into a competition among the defendants to prove their innocence in regard to the charges they faced; and sometimes, to win the good will of the commissioners, some defendants attacked their erstwhile comrades. Even JVP leader Wijeweera expressed confidence in the Commission.

Any attempts by leader Wijeweera and some defendants to talk in terms of Marxism in regard to the charges against them failed to change the character of the defence, which was generally a pleading of innocence of the defendants by their counsel.

Tampoe's kowtowing before the Commission and his betrayal in dissociating himself from the protest of the lawyers brought him only temporary glory. Very soon some of the defendants who understood the part Tampoe was playing dropped him as their lawyer. Tampoe was left with only two or three of his former clients. And what was worse for Tampoe, the Commission, having tolerated his antics and mock heroics, dismissed him. The commis-

but from the left, from the side of the workers and toilers. Police investigations over a long period have not been able to report anything to support the allegations of the coalition parties. The reality in this regard was that it was a just struggle of the exploited and oppressed—of the youth, largely of poor peasants and of workers who had been denied their right to proper education and employment at the hands of all governments including the coalition government.

Thus, the place of revolutionary Marxists in this struggle was the side of the oppressed youth who were being massacred by the government. And in this regard, this is what the Revolutionary Workers Party [RWP] resolution on the JVP armed struggle stated:

"...as this struggle was between the oppressed youth on the one side and the forces of capitalism on the other, the side of the revolutionary Marxists is the side of the fighting youth, meaning thereby, that they should defend the fighting youth against the actions of the capitalist state. Concretely, this meant that revolutionary Marxists should oppose and fight the government in its attempts to kill, torture, imprison and harm the fighting youth, their supporters and relatives."

But consequent to the disorientation resulting from coalition politics the working class—the organised trade unions—not only failed to come to the defence of the youth when they were being beaten and killed by the police and the armed forces, but some trade-union officials organised by the LSSP and CP rushed to the defence of the police stations!

Of the left parties and groups, only the RWP categorically denounced the massacres and called upon the working class to rally to the defence of the youth. Here are some relevant quotes from the RWP to the prime minister: "I am directed by the Bureau of our party to vehemently protest and strongly condemn the murderous campaign that your government has launched against the youth of our country." And here were some of the demands made of the government in the same letter:

- "that you stop forthwith the massacre of the youth";
- "stop the mass murder of innocent people by the armed forces";
- "that you release forthwith all persons detained without trial."

The RWP followed up by a circular letter to all trade unions, and raised with them the urgency of taking trade-union action to stop the massacre of these youth, etc., and the urgency of a trade-union conference in this regard. The RWP failed to receive any response from the trade unions. In regard to Bala Tampoe, the secretary of the CMU [Ceylon Mercantile Union], he said he did not favour a trade-union conference but informed [us] that his union was writing a letter to the prime minister in that regard.

Of the other left parties the CP (Pro-Peking), whose leader, Shanmugasanan, was himself under detention on suspicion of complicity with the uprising, did nothing in regard to the question of this murderous campaign against the youth.

With regard to the LSSP(R) [Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary)], Tampoe failed to do anything in defence of the youth against this repression. There was not even a word of protest in his letter to the prime minister. This document was an appeal to the prime minister to be merciful, and not to order a concerted action of the armed forces, which she announced would become necessary if the fighting youth did not surrender.

Subsequently the CMU, under the leadership of Tampoe, adopted a resolution in which it obliquely lined up with the prime minister and the coalition government in "their fight against imperialism."

"The general council accordingly calls upon the government...to consult all mass organisations of the people and not only those whose leaders are subservi-

Ceylonese youth rebels

ent to the government, as to all other measures that may be necessary to break Ceylon free of the stranglehold of imperialism upon it, and thereby to enable the people to set about the establishment of a genuine socialist Democracy in Ceylon." [our emphasis, E.S.]

As for the Revolutionary Communist League (the Healyite group), it failed to make any relevant intervention. Their inaction amounted to abstentionism.

While it was the duty of all those who claim to be revolutionaries to come to the defence of the JVP youth against the murderous campaign by the government, it was their imperative [task] to point out that devotion, heroism, self sacrifice alone cannot lead to success in the struggle for socialism; on the contrary, it was imperative to show that the experience of the masses in struggle both in Sri Lanka and elsewhere has proved that the struggle for the emancipation of the toilers from capitalism [and] imperialism cannot be divorced from Marxism-Leninism-Trotskyism.

However, the truth was that the leaders of the JVP movement, while claiming to be Marxist-Leninist, rejected Marxism, i.e., scientific socialism. This is why their movement ended in hopeless failure, and this is why this movement disintegrated so soon after the April uprising. Here is what the RWP stated in regard to the politics of the JVP in the resolution "Revolutionary Workers Party and the armed struggle":

"The JVP claims to be Marxist-Leninist in political orientation. They sought to decorate their politics with Maoist slogans.

"They did not accept the vanguard role of the working class and have completely discounted the Tamil Speaking plantation workers. In this regard, they have failed to publicly explain what they meant by 'Indian Expansionism,' to which they said they are opposed.... "The socialism of the JVP is petty-bourgeois socialism, meaning thereby that they are severely critical of capitalist exploitation and capitalist society, but do not call for the anti-capitalist struggle."

The resolution says this on the armed struggle:

"The rebels did not make any attempt to win the participation of the working class or any other section of the oppressed either before or after the armed struggle began. They had no plans for mass mobilisation. They relied entirely on their own forces for success in the struggle against the forces of the capitalist state....

"It was thus that the armed struggle was only a courageous but reckless undertaking, without any hope of success from the very outset."

In contrast, Tampoe (LSSP[R]) and the United Secretariat, by their uncritical support of the politics of the JVP, must bear some responsibility for the adventurist April uprising of the JVP.

Here is what Tampoe reported to the Eleventh Delegates Meeting of the CMU on 27 November 1970 regarding a joint meeting they held, to protest the shooting of an estate worker in "Keenakele" Tea Estate, with a JVP leader and another reformist, Tamil communalist trade-union leader Illangecheyan:

"A historic feature of the meeting was the coming together on the same platform of the most well-known leaders of the Dravidian Progressive Movement (DMK) and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, Illangecheyan and Rohana Wijeweera. Each has been described as a racist, the one Dravidian and the other Singhal, but both spoke in terms of Marxism-Leninism."

Nor could we dismiss all this as just Tampoe's own irresponsibility and opportunism, which cannot be [foisted] on the leaders of the United Secretariat. The statement issued by the United Secretariat when the uprising took place is no less irresponsible and no less opportunistic, and therefore anti-Marxist. Here is the relevant passage:

"The government had failed to consider even the most meagre measures for the problems of high prices and the continual erosion of the living standards of the masses. Unhappily for the co-

alition leaders, they had now to take account of another factor—the emergence of a single revolutionary front between the JVP, the LSSP(R), Ceylon Section of the Fourth International, and the Young Socialist Front, the new revolutionary nucleus formed among the plantation workers."

Thus not only Tampoe but his mentors of the United Secretariat—the Mandels and Pierre Franks—solidarised themselves politically with the petty-bourgeois Sinhalese chauvinist politics of the JVP. Thus the Tampoes and the Mandels must bear responsibility for disorienting the Sri Lanka youth and pushing the JVP movement headlong to its doom.

The killing and torturing of hundreds of youth, the long jail sentences for the leaders of the JVP movement including life imprisonment for Rohana Wijeweera are not the only outcome of this struggle.

The struggle debunked the theories of bourgeois reformists, the Stalinists

inantly Buddhists, where violence is against their tradition and culture.

However, thanks to the adventurist nature of the struggle and its failure to draw the working class and toilers behind it, and thanks to the treachery of the LSSP and CP and the reformist leaders of the trade-union movement, the capitalist state in Sri Lanka has been strengthened as never before. The capitalist ruling class led by the SLFP leader Sirima Bandaranaike has modernised and streamlined the repressive apparatus of the state, both organisationally and technically. The armed forces, the army, navy, air force and the police have been expanded and equipped with the most modern armaments for the effective suppression of the working class and toilers.

Repressive laws never before known in this country have been passed as regulations under the Public Security Act, including the notorious Criminal Justice Commission Act.

Thus the capitalist state in the hands of bourgeois leader Sirima Bandaranaike is in the process of establishing its strong state—the naked dictatorship of the capitalist class to crush the trade-union movement and the working class, and to destroy the left movement by a bloodbath as in the case of the suppression of the youth, if that becomes necessary.

But this catastrophe for the working class and the left movement is by no means inevitable. This could well be averted if only the working class, the youth, the poor peasants and exploited break from coalition politics, and those treacherous leaders of the LSSP and CP, and speedily take the road of class struggle, and at the same time take meaningful steps to build the new leadership—the revolutionary Marxist party. This is the only road that could smash all repressive legislation and the murderous apparatus of the state, free all political prisoners, end capitalist rule and open the road to socialism. ■



Ceylon Prime Minister Bandaranaike

and the reformist LSSP and petty-bourgeois politicians in Sri Lanka that no armed struggle is possible, because it is a land where people are predom-

The collage features several overlapping socialist publications. On the left is the 'INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION BULLETIN' (No. 9, July 1969) from the Socialist Workers Party, containing minutes of the Third Congress since reunification. In the center is 'SPARTACIST' (Fall 1972), featuring an article on the 'Genesis of Pabloism' and a report on the 'Case of Bala Tampoe'. On the right is 'The Struggle for Trotskyism in Ceylon' by Edmund Samarakody, which includes a portrait of a man and a report on the U.Sec covering up the Tampoe scandal. The publications are arranged in a dynamic, overlapping fashion, suggesting a rich and active socialist movement.

"... some of the actions and policies of Comrade Bala and the LSSP(R) brought to our attention by Comrade Edmund and not denied by Comrade Bala could have seriously damaged the reputation of Comrade Bala as a revolutionary leader...."

--Report of the Ceylon Commission, "Ninth World Congress" of the U.Sec, 1969. The scandalous behaviour of Tampoe is revealed in the 1969 Ceylon Commission reports, suppressed by the U.Sec, published in full in *Spartacist* no 21, Fall 1972. A rejoinder to the U.Sec's attempted falsifications in Tampoe's defence appears in *Spartacist* no 22, Winter 1973.

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Peking props up British colony

Wildcat strikes in Hong Kong

As China proceeds to build "socialism in one country" through "cultural revolutions" bureaucratically orchestrated by the Communist Party (CCP) and People's Liberation Army, Hong Kong, now the world's most populous colony, remains one of capitalism's worst sweatshops. Suffering under conditions reminiscent of those prevalent in the early nineteenth century, its working class lacks the protection of maximum-hour or meaningful child-labor laws and unemployment compensation.

These deplorable conditions are now rapidly deteriorating. Grinding inflation caused real wages to drop 11 percent in the year preceding March 1974, while unemployment has soared past the 100,000 mark. (Hong Kong has just over 4,000,000 people.)

Mass demonstrations in Hong Kong during the 1967 "Great Cultural Revolution" showed that the Maoists dominate the local left and have the power to shake the foundations of British rule at will. Yet recently they have failed to mount a single significant strike -- even in the face of the current economic catastrophe -- although they are the major force in the trade-union movement, controlling the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions. Instead, one of the major campaigns by the Maoist press during the downturn has been to call on the British Education Department to correct the errors in Chinese his-

tory and geography in textbooks used by the colony's schools!

Hong Kong workers have not been content with fighting Confucius. Tremendous economic pressures and the inertia displayed by the Maoist trade-union bureaucrats have led to hundreds of wildcat strikes by desperate workers. In virtually every case these strikes end in defeat, sold out by the "communist" union leaders (*Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 5 October 1974). In this atmosphere it is not surprising that various left tendencies have begun to mushroom, including anarchist, syndicalist and quasi-Trotskyist groupings. At times these have reportedly been able to lead strikes while defeating the bankrupt Maoist leadership.

Among the new formations is the Daily Combating Bulletin (DCB) group, which is under the influence of the majority faction of the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" (USec). The DCB claims to have a certain amount of mass support, having reportedly organized last year a May 5 demonstration against inflation which attracted 5,000 participants. It has also demonstrated against the deportation of 118 Vietnamese refugees to Saigon, a protest which received no support whatever from local representatives of the China-first Peking regime. This chauvinist attitude should be no surprise to anyone who has followed the Mao-Chou detente politicking, which was a key element in inducing the North Viet-



Ng Chung-yin of Daily Combat Bulletin group.

name to accept the 1973 Paris "peace" accords. The DCB group also organized demonstrations supporting "the Korean mass struggle", a focus which apparently stirred the Maoists' ire, since Kim Il Sung is not on Mao's list of "progressive" personalities (such as the Shah of Iran and Yahya Kahn).

It is criminal that Peking, in its efforts to seduce the bourgeois governments of the world, props up one of the last, and most lucrative, outposts of British imperialism. In its drive to line up "non-superpowers" (eg, Japan, European NATO countries, etc) against the "number one enemy" -- "Soviet social-imperialism" -- the Maoist bureaucracy deliberately supports the continuation of colonial rule. Thus the struggle of Hong Kong workers for their liberation from Britain and capitalist exploitation has as its foremost and most immediate enemy... "People's China"! It is not possible to lead these struggles forward to victory without a clear policy toward the counterrevolutionary bureaucracy of the Chinese deformed workers state. The fake Trotskyists of the USec unfortunately do not have the stomach (or the principles) for a fight against Maoism, as militants in the DCB group will soon discover.

In the 1950's the International Secretariat (now the USec majority) hoped to reform the recently triumphant CCP through friendship (rather than calling for political revolution), and so its leaders "forgot" to champion the cause of hundreds of Chinese Trotskyists languishing in Mao's jails. During the "Great Cultural Revolution" the USec supported the Mao clique in the intra-bureaucratic struggles that were going on, trying as it normally does to operate as a left pressure group on Stalinist forces. Because of the dynamics of the Hong Kong situation, the DCB group finds itself forced to confront the Maoist union bureaucracy; it nevertheless already capitulates the USec tradition. To disillusioned Maoists it explains that "the compromise policy of the Hong Kong Maoists... is a consequence of the degeneration of the Chinese Revolution" (*Imprecor*, 6 June 1974).

But the Chinese Revolution was deformed from its very inception! There were no Chinese soviets in 1949, or since; there are not even germs, let alone vestiges, of workers democracy in the land of Mao Tse-tung thought. In fact, the same elements which constituted the bureaucracy of the CCP in its supposedly "undegenerate" (ie, revolutionary) period are still, in various combinations, the leaders of the CCP today.

The very methodology of the USec is to substitute maneuver and pressure for the principled programmatic struggle of revolutionary Trotskyism. Little Hong Kong lies sandwiched between China and the sea. Historically it has been a key juncture between Western and Japanese imperialisms and China. Only a fiercely internationalist movement can have any hope of carrying out a proletarian revolution under such conditions.

A Hong Kong workers republic is unimaginable -- in the absence of revolutionary uprisings in China or Japan a Hong Kong Commune would have, at best, a few days of life before it would be smashed by one or several of these powers. At the same time, however, a revolutionary Trotskyist movement here could serve both as a catalyst and a crucial link between the powerful Chinese and Japanese proletariats. The USec has demonstrated its inability to build such parties. ■

CONTINUED FROM PAGE EIGHT

... Women's movement

is, whether it likes it or not, intersecting very real class interests and forces. Under feminist leadership the "women's movement", lacking social force and common class interests, ends up appealing to those who are influential in the world as it is, particularly the ALP bureaucrats. The struggle becomes one for reforms acceptable to and accepting the framework of this society.

The support offered to the march this year by several unions -- the Builders' Labourers' Federation (NSW branch), the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union and the Australian Postal and Telecommunications Union -- is an important development. However, the IWD committee (which includes leading CPA members) rejected the unity of men and women workers in support of women's demands, have only called for women's contingents from the trade unions, and say they "do not encourage" male workers to march. While it is the purpose of IWD to be a rallying point specifically for working women and their demands, the discouragement of male workers from supporting these demands is an obstacle to the development of class unity and to an understanding by the class of women's specific oppression.

If sections of the women's movement leadership are against any moves to unite the rank and file of the working class behind women's demands they are not averse to ingratiating themselves with the trade-union bureaucrats. In the February Sydney Women's Liberation Newsletter CPAer Aileen Beaver is full of praise for Peter Evans, a "liberal" bureaucrat from the APTU, who is "particularly concerned" about Women's Liberation ideas and who has organized a meeting of women trade unionists to get "their opinions on International Women's Year". Beaver, a supposed communist, has no intention of discussing communist politics with these women and instead argues that "we all go to this meeting to listen to the women, talk with them and nurture the powerful growth of sisterhood".

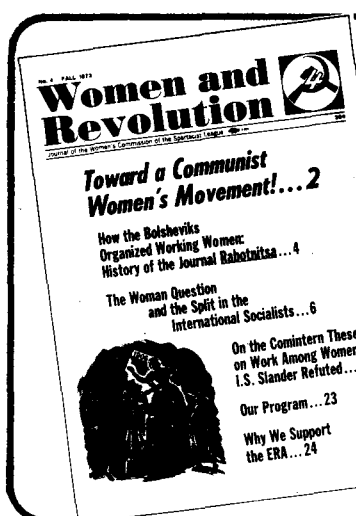
As feminism is a form of reformism it is to be expected that reformist organisations such as the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) and the Socialist Workers League (SWL) are completely

subservient to the feminist ideology dominant in the movement. They of course call the struggle of women for their own demands "revolutionary" in itself and argue that it is necessary for the women's movement to remain "autonomous" (from both the working class and the revolutionary party), ostensibly as a "safeguard" to prevent the downgrading of women's specific needs. There is no question of any organisation remaining "autonomous" or "independent" in class society -- class interests fall one way or the other. Reformism fosters a fear of the working class, and thus the CPA and the SWL do not believe that the revolutionary working class will fight for women's interests.

The Communist League (CL) and some apparently dissident elements in the CPA try to avoid these sorts of capitulations by orienting towards working-class women. But their limitations were clearly exposed when the idea of a working-class contingent for the IWD march was raised in the Sydney Unemployed Women's Collective. Against the argument of the Spartacist League for organisation of the contingent on the basis of a demand such as "For a United Working Class Defence of Women's Jobs" they insisted on such covertly feminist slogans as "Women's power is in the workplace not the home" (which suggests the continued separation of men and women within the working class and completely lacks any class thrust) and others which spread illusions about "economic independence" for women under capitalism. The failure of these groups to confront the reformism of feminist politics foreshadows a similar inability to fight the reformism of the trade union bureaucrats.

The problem of feminism is not solved merely by "orienting" to the working class, nor is the reformism currently dominating the class defeated simply by deciding it is bad. Without the building of caucuses in the unions, based on a revolutionary program and fighting to politically smash the existing reformist leadership, the "socialist feminists" of the CL etc leave the women's movement wide open to the manoeuvres and betrayals of those reformist bureaucrats. Women who seek to build a socialist women's movement must realise that this political fight is urgent but it can only be carried through to its conclusion if guided by a scientific understanding of the needs of the working class embodied in a revolutionary party. The birth of such a party -- and its scientific understanding -- requires those who wish to make a socialist revolution to engage in political struggle aimed at regroupment on the basis of agreement over principles and program. Without the birth of such a Leninist vanguard socialist revolution and the liberation of women is impossible.

In the words of Alexandra Kollontai, concluding a pamphlet on International Women's Day: "DOWN WITH THE WORLD OF PROPERTY AND THE POWER OF CAPITAL! "AWAY WITH THE INEQUALITY, LACK OF RIGHTS AND THE OPPRESSION OF WOMEN -- THE LEGACY OF THE BOURGEOIS WORLD! "FORWARD TO THE INTERNATIONAL UNITY OF WORKING WOMEN AND MEN IN THE STRUGGLE FOR THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT -- THE PROLETARIAT OF BOTH SEXES!" ■



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... metal trades struggle

Jack Pearson, both of whom support the CPA, bothered to fight for the mutual policies of the AMWU and the CPA for a 35-hour week and refusal to accept the sack (see *ASP* no 15, December 1974 for a detailed account of these events). After a later round of sackings the tradesmen at Plesseys were faced with a vote on whether apprentices finishing their time or tradesmen with fewer years in the plant should be sacked next. A close vote decided that it was the apprentices who should go, with no opposition from Pollock, who did not even put union policy! Other struggles, such as those at Austral Bronze and STC have been limited to campaigns for better severance pay and for the minimal policy of "first on, last off", although a few important exceptions -- Babcocks, CSR, Garden Islands Dockyards -- have shown that sackings *can* be defeated with militant tactics. Last year the demand for a 35-hour week was quickly forgotten in the negotiations. This time it must be central to the campaign, and linked to a sliding scale of hours without loss in pay, so that the available work can be shared among those wanting work. It is also important to fight for the nationalisation of all factories threatened with mass retrenchments.

The 15 percent wage rise claim is intended to offset inflation since September 1974 -- an admission that the Spartacist League was right after all in calling for a \$25 increase last August. (A total yearly wage rise of 24-29 percent was required to restore real wages lost in the past year alone if allowance for taxation is made (*National Times*, 27 January - 1 February 1975).) But the current 15 percent claim still does not compensate for wages lost through in-

flation never allowed for since the 1972 wage sellout. Though the unions are likely to claim another \$30 if the national wage indexation case fails, what is really needed, along with adequate wage increase covering inflation that has already occurred and in the absence of *tax* indexation, is a demand for a sliding scale of wages, an automatic monthly cost-of-living adjustment based on the highest wage in the industry.

This year's wage demand is likely to differ from those of last year in that it will call for a percentage increase rather than a flat rate increase. Jim Baird, an AMWU Commonwealth Organiser and CPA member, said in an interview with *Australasian Spartacist* that relativities have now been restored to their 1947 level and should be kept there "because the members demand that they be retained". In fact the AMWU bureaucrats have simply capitulated to backward craft consciousness among tradesmen, with whom they have their closest links. Baird himself admits that in the case of over-award struggles in individual shops divisions are created immediately if an attempt is made to fight for different rates. It is the same in a national award campaign. Since the divisions of skilled and unskilled frequently parallel the divisions between men and women, Australian-born and migrant, divisions used to split the workers, metal workers must demand a flat rate increase *for all* based on a figure sufficient to the needs of the higher paid tradesmen.

Last September the AMWU presented an amendment to the ACTU conference resolution on the economic situation calling for "a powerful nationally-co-ordinated public campaign using all the resources of union activation" including "systematic and widespread factory meetings using the full resources of the trade union movement, shop stewards and delegates rallies in all major centres" (*Tribune*, 11 February 1975). However according to Jim Baird what is a legitimate call on an ACTU conference is impossible in the metal

trades, because of the great number of shops (10,000 in NSW) of which he estimated 25 percent to be non-union and about 70 percent nominally unionised (a situation which he and the other AMWU bureaucrats have done little to rectify), and because of regional and factory-level diversity. So they're not even trying to get the membership together! The result of such deliberate inaction is to weaken the union. AMWU State secretary and CPAer John Halfpenny told the Victorian AMWU State Conference in February that the AMWU in Victoria had suffered a 50 percent increase in resignations and a 50 percent decrease in applications for membership, and faced a financial crisis.

A national campaign of not just "publicity" but strong industrial action is necessary, and requires a co-ordinated national strike run by elected shop floor committees. Baird's claim that "the majority of workers don't want to move" is largely true, due *only* to the misleadership of Baird and his fellow-bureaucrats and their refusal to mobilise the ranks. All wings of the bureaucracy are unwilling to provide the type of leadership required, and all must be thrown out right up to the Whitlam/Cairns/Hawke group at the top of the workers movement. The present recession demonstrates clearly that even the fight for simple wage demands requires more than reformist militancy, and without a struggle to end the exploitation and oppression of capitalism, any gains will be temporary. FOR A REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP OF THE WORKERS MOVEMENT PLEDGED TO EXPROPRIATE THE CAPITALIST CLASS! FOR A REAL WORKERS GOVERNMENT! ■

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

... wage cut

olutionaries should do about the ALP's retention of the allegiance of the working-class masses. This omission feeds views that the ALP is merely another liberal capitalist party, as was argued by supporters of the "Adelaide document" in CPA discussion prior to its 24th Congress last year. To conclude the capitalist character of the ALP merely from Whitlam's persistent anti-strike, wage-cutting rhetoric or from the Labor Government's protection of profits would be obviously faulty. The misleaders of the trade unions such as Hawke and Egerton say the same things. Are we therefore to conclude that the unions are not workers' organisations? It is precisely the ALP's direct ties to the unions and its development out of the class struggle (making the ALP a workers' party) which allows the bourgeoisie to use it through its agents like Whitlam and Hawke, to bind the working class politically. But while workers' faith in these traitors is based on illusion, the broad working-class support for the ALP also expresses a consciousness of the need for a political party of the working class to fight for its interests as a class. It is necessary for revolutionaries, in order to break the hold of the reformists over the working class in the struggle to forge a mass revolutionary workers' party, to use the character of the ALP as a *class* party *against* its class-collaborationist misleadership -- not as an excuse to capitulate to the existing reformist consciousness of the class, and thus contribute to that misleadership as does the CPA, but in order to concretely expose it.

It is not enough for the dissident *Tribune* correspondents to substitute for the struggle for program a new form of organisation: "We call for the Party, union officials and militants to establish a network of local/factory committees...." Factory committees can be supported -- and betrayed -- by reformist bureaucrats just as trade unions can. Without the struggle for the revolutionary party and its program, or by attempting to bypass the reformists, the effect of these syndicalist policies in practice would be the same as *Tribune's* false front of a "workers' alternative" -- a pressure group on the ALP which only makes more difficult the shattering of ALP reformism by propping up its left flank, re-validating it when the more blatant class collaboration has worn thin. ■

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

... Everhot

workers with the Everhot personnel manager and the VCM's Wilson present) and those workers on the picket outside the plant. (He has also personally taken part in physical assaults on picketers.) It was this depraved scab who obtained the defeat of a motion to support the women in a close vote at a stopwork meeting of Everhot workers following the sackings -- by counting the vote of non-union passers-by! Since that time the picket has been maintained by the women and their supporters except for a few days when fake "Communist" AMWU officials persuaded the women to lift it (enabling the company to stockpile enough supplies to last three months). Police and company harassment has been constant, ruthless and vicious, and the only effective support against it has come when it has been possible to mobilise other workers in the area. On one occasion when police threatened to arrest the strikers, they were stopped by the arrival of 250 workers from the nearby Clydemasters factory, who marched over in a group on hearing of the threats and joined the picket for the rest of the day, prompting 20 of the Everhot men to stop work and join them as well. The company resorted to moving goods and supplies at night. When the picket was extended around the clock to stop this, three of the men picketing were beaten up by goons from inside the plant and trucks were driven through the gates at high speed to break the picket by threatening to run them down. The struggle can only be won at this stage by a mass picket capable of shutting down the plant until Everhot restores the jobs of all workers sacked.

The "militant" leaders of the Victorian branch

of the AMWU, run by Communist Party of Australia (CPA) leader John Halfpenny, and including the responsible union organisers, Frank Cherry and Allan Ritter, who are also CPA members, have done their best to keep the struggle isolated and to avoid any real fight. They have not even bothered to expel scum like Gary Brain from the AMWU. Despite the evident willingness of other workers in the area to support them, it has been left to the women themselves to organise support. The backing these intrepid "Communists" gave to endless negotiations and wretched compromises (such as the offer to give three or four of the women part-time jobs) and their total, conscious refusal to mobilise the union in support of the Everhot women has resulted in demoralisation and the prospect of defeat -- eight of the women have now left.

The picket has received support from Melbourne Women's Liberation (WL), Link, the Socialist Labour League (SLL), the Spartacist League and Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL). The feminists see the problem as primarily a "women's issue", and dismiss the betrayals of the union bureaucrats by reference to the "male dominated trade-union movement" (*WL Newsletter*, January-February 1975) rather than seeing that they flow from the reformist outlook of Halfpenny and company, which accepts the limitations of capitalism. They cannot see this because feminism at bottom also accepts capitalism.

On the other hand according to the economist analysis of the SLL, it is feminist moralising to point out that "it was only women who were sacked" (*Workers News*, 20 February 1975). The SLL totally ignored the sexual divisions among the workers, and ridiculed the idea that women's oppression had anything to do with the sackings. The *Workers News* article did not even mention the blatant discrimination or the fact that *all* the women workers were sacked! The SLL's refusal to fight male-chauvinist prejudice in the working class makes it incapable of uniting the class behind the revolutionary program, and unable to offer a revolutionary alternative to the CPA labour traitors. ■

corrections


The last issue of *Australasian Spartacist* contained the following errors:

The article "Fight unemployment!" mistakenly referred to George Slater of the Postal Workers union as part of the ALP "Socialist Left"; he is just another left-talking bureaucrat.

On page nine a picture of a NSWTF stopwork meeting and one of GM-H workers were reversed due to a printer's error.

A phrase in the article "Permanent revolution and self-determination in the Near East" -- "If Israel is a nation ..." -- out of context could be taken to imply that the present state of Israel is a legitimate expression of national rights for the Hebrew-speaking nation in Palestine. As the article elsewhere repeatedly emphasises, that is not the case.

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What are the bureaucrats up to? Metal unions not prepared for struggle

On 11 April the Metal Trades Award expires. Traditionally regarded as a pacesetter, developments in the metal trades are being watched closely by both the employers and the Federal Labor government. A major struggle by the metal unions to defend their living standards and jobs could alter the course of the class struggle and be a staging point for a general class offensive; but so far the metal union bureaucrats, including the "lefts" of the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union (AMWU), have done everything to avoid this.

Since the beginning of the year a series of meetings of the Metal Trades Federation (MTF) Log Committee and the various unions at State and Federal level have prepared a log of 39 claims, to be finalised at a meeting of officials on 11 March and to be served on the employers on 12 or 13 March. There has been no direct rank-and-file involvement in this process whatever, except for a few isolated shop-floor meetings in Victoria. The bureaucrats intend to commit the metal unions to the log without any discussion of it by the membership, although a little information about the proposed log has been "leaked", not to the ranks, but to the bourgeois press. Indications are that the log will include demands for increased loading on annual leave and a wage increase of around 15 percent, with an additional \$30 if the Arbitration Commission does not grant

wage indexation. A number of demands are likely to be similar to those in last year's log: a 35-hour week, childcare centres, and the provision of English lessons for migrant workers in the employers' time.

The precondition for any successful campaign over wages and conditions is a fight against sackings and unemployment. The AMWU has a policy in favour of the 35-hour week. Recently the CPA's *Tribune* (4 February 1975) made a call to "develop workers' action to defend jobs", upholding the work-in by boilermakers employed by Babcocks in Balmain as showing "the way for the many other workers facing the sack" (*Tribune*, 28 January 1975). But what *Tribune* says and what CPA supporters have actually done have little in common. The activity of the CPA and other left officials in the AMWU is indistinguishable from the rest of the trade-union bureaucracy: acceptance of sackings and active promotion of sellout "compromises", spiced with promises of "support" in the future if the workers themselves initiate militant struggles.

But in the absence of an alternative leadership most of the resistance to sackings has been ineffectual. Before Christmas at the Plesseys Meadowbank factory in Sydney neither the AMWU convenor Roy Pollock nor AMWU state organiser

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STC workers' January stopwork over sackings.



Above: Inessa Armand (Bolshevik).

Above left: Clara Zetkin (German communist founder of International Women's Day).

Left: Rosa Luxemburg.

Below: women match workers who won a strike victory in 1888 key to development of British trade-unionism.



For a communist women's movement!

The origins of 8 March as International Working Women's Day are rooted in class struggle. On 8 March 1908, socialist women in New York City organised a demonstration of female garment workers who had been involved in long and brutal strikes for decent conditions and union recognition. From 1910 8 March was taken up by the Second International through Clara Zetkin, later a leading German communist, and established as an international day for working women. In Russia on 8 March 1917 working women took to the streets demanding bread and an end to the imperialist war, providing the initial catalyst to the February revolution that overthrew the Tsarist autocracy and went on, in October, to overthrow capitalism and establish the first workers state.

Women's oppression is founded on the material conditions and social relations of capitalism. The nuclear family, the institution central to the maintenance of women's oppression, is a bulwark of class society, necessary to the reproduction of, and inculcation of discipline in, the labour force. It follows both that women's oppression can be removed only through the destruction of class society and that the struggle for women's full social equality is crucial in any strategy for socialist revolution. It is only the working class that can lead the struggle to overthrow capitalism; and for this to occur it must be united into a force conscious of its interests as a class and its need to take state power and expropriate the bourgeoisie. But this will not happen spontaneously. The working class is fractured by all kinds of divisions, such as nationalities, and these divisions are used by the bourgeoisie to prevent workers uniting. A gross example of the constant use the bourgeoisie makes of the division between male and female workers is the case of the Everhot sackings in Melbourne (see the article on page one). The only force that can overcome these divisions among workers and crystallise the necessary class consciousness is a revolutionary party which must organise around demands that relate to immediate needs of workers and specially oppressed groupings such as women and tie that struggle into the overall perspective of class struggle and socialist revolution.

In 1975 the critical link between women's op-

pression and the class struggle is again clearly demonstrated. With the passing of a period of relative economic stability, working women (along with migrants) have taken the brunt of unemployment. As women workers are frequently unorganised and have little experience of trade unionism, and also because a large proportion of retrenched women actually return to the home camouflaging the real extent of unemployment, it is politically expedient for the bourgeoisie to have them provide the bulk of the reserve army of labour. International Women's Day, then, could have served its historic role as a focal point for rallying working women into political struggle, not only around such important issues as child care and abortion, but this year particularly unemployment, a struggle that the reformists who dominate the labour movement have refused to take up notwithstanding some empty resolutions in the councils of the more "progressive" trade unions.

In fact, however, the broadsheet brought out by the women's movement advertising the march in Sydney sees the main obstacles to women's liberation not as class society but "male dominated committees and organisations", and wants the march to merely "publicise" its demands. The main slogan for the march is "Women's right to live, to work and to love", "rights" which, if they mean anything at all (which is unclear) are certainly not going to fundamentally challenge the capitalist system from which the oppression of women flows. Indeed, not once does the broadsheet mention class society -- the obstacle to the liberation of women. Under the present leadership of the women's movement 8 March has degenerated into a promotion of reformist illusions and women's separatism.

Reformism is linked quite directly to feminism, the dominant ideology in the women's movement. Feminism is a "classless" ideology, seeing the main contradiction in society between sexes, and thus it serves the bourgeoisie. Feminism's denial of the primacy of class forces and class conflict cannot shield it from reality and when it ventures out of the psychological world of consciousness-raising into "outside" politics it

Continued on page six

International Women's Day, 1975