



## As MFA moves right — Portuguese workers demand arms



Goncalves (top) and Melo Antunes.

For 16 months a pre-revolutionary situation has been churning in Portugal. Until a few weeks ago, at the major crisis points the political constellation of forces each time lurched to the left: 9 July 1974 -- rightist premier Palma Carlos dismissed; 28 September 1974 -- General Spinoza ousted; 11 March 1975 -- reactionary coup frustrated. In December 1974 a proposed economic plan calls for integration of private industry; in April 1975 the banks are nationalized; in July 1975 the remaining major trusts are taken over. Workers commissions spread, vigilance committees appear, ("advisory") democratic assemblies are instituted in the military units.

But revolutions have a certain rhythm and such a gradual leftward shift cannot continue forever. As the fundamental limits of capitalism are endangered, the reactionaries begin to mobilize, using every means at their disposal: economic boycott and sabotage, mobilizing petty-bourgeois and obscurantist elements against the workers, military conspiracy, imperialist threats. So it has been in Portugal also. As the rightists stepped up their drive for a showdown the pendulum's left swing slowed down, then appeared to stop in mid-air, and now, with the removal of premier General Vasco Goncalves and his supporters from the "Supreme Revolutionary Council", leading body of the Armed Forces Movement (MFA), it appears to be swinging sharply back to the right.

The 5 September ouster of the "left-wing" Goncalves, although it involved little more than some "lapel-pulling", was prepared by large anti-Communist demonstrations in July, the burning of scores of Communist Party (CP) offices and open threats of a putsch from the rightist commanders. The intentions of the rightist officers were made clear by the "Document of the Nine" which focuses on the need to combat "the anarchy and populism

which inevitably lead to the catastrophic dissolution of the state..." The document and its authors' actions have made clear that their aims can be accomplished only by a far-reaching purge in the military, abolishing soldiers committees, eliminating the "advisory" unit assemblies in the armed forces, crushing the incipient workers councils, banning numerous left groups and (at least) totally regimenting the unions.

At the first meeting of the "restructured" Supreme Revolutionary Council the new top officers moved to "tighten military discipline". A decree was issued forbidding news media to publish political statements by individuals or units in the military except for members of the Council and the chiefs of staff. Partly intended to silence General Goncalves, its main aim was to impose a blackout on any information about unrest among the soldiers and sailors.

But as the MFA has turned right, preparing a sharp crackdown against leftist soldiers, the false unity of the "MFA-People Alliance" has begun to break down. Illusions of a socialist revolution carried out by the officer corps of the capitalist army are being dashed. For the first time, soldiers are organizing on a mass scale independently of the MFA and against the military command structure. And from workers up and down the country comes the demand, "Give us guns to defend the revolution!"

But the Lisbon press has unanimously rejected the censorship decree and the soldiers and sailors continue to organize. The most dramatic evidence of unrest in the ranks came at a demonstration against the new military rulers held in Porto on the night of September 10. At the head of a march of thousands were 1500 uniformed soldiers in military formation behind a red banner with the slogan "Soldiers United Will Win".

Among the marchers were troops from as far away as Tancos and Coimbra in the central military region, and even a delegation from the Light Artillery Regiment No 1 (RAL-1), which guards the approach to the capital against a "March on Lisbon" by reactionaries from the conservative northern region.

The soldiers demonstrated in silence, occasionally broken by the whistled refrain of the *Internationale*. A mobile squad of monitors circled the formation to prevent pictures from being taken, since most of the soldiers came without permission and even against orders. Those at Viana de Castelo were locked in and had to crawl over the barracks wall in order to get to the demonstration. The marchers occasionally yelled out slogans against the rightist officers: "Get the fascists out of the barracks!", "Down with Charais [rightist general who heads the central region], apprentice Pinochet!"; and "Portugal will not be the Chile of Europe!" When a note from Army Chief of Staff General Carlos Fabiao condemning the demonstration as "counter-revolutionary" was read to the crowd, the soldiers shouted back "Down with Fabiao!"

That same evening a group of leftist officers met with workers in Barjeiro, an industrial suburb across the Tagus River from Lisbon. "Workers chanted that they wanted arms to 'defend the revolution'. Communist-controlled neighborhood committees in the southern Algarve region also issued statements requesting guns from the government" said a UPI dispatch (11 September). It added, "officers did not respond to workers' demands for weapons, however." At the Porto demonstration one speaker reportedly said that leftist military units would start giving guns to civilians. Two days later, the Lisbon paper *A Luta* reported that in recent weeks 1000 automatic rifles had disappeared from armories controlled by left-wing troops. However, instead of mobilizing the masses against the right-wing threat, the Communist Party (CP) leadership is desperately grasping at the last threads of influence, and has accepted a post in the new cabinet set up by the AFM "moderates" on 19 September -- alongside the bourgeois Popular Democrats and reformist Socialists who fronted for the anti-Communist terror!

At the end of August the Spartacist tendency warned that

"If Portugal is to avoid becoming another

Continued on page two



Anti-Communist riots were the prelude to a rightward shift in the AFM.

**Fascism:**

**How not to  
fight it**

**see page 4**

## Portuguese workers

Chile (or another Spain, or another Indonesia), no confidence can be placed in the MFA or any sector of the bourgeois officer corps to defend the working masses. It is necessary to organize democratically elected workers councils, recallable at any time, in order to mobilize the entire working class in defense of its organizations. Also necessary is the arming of the proletariat and the formation of workers militias, as well as the splitting of the army by forming soldiers committees in opposition to the command structure of the bourgeois military.

"A command center, too, is needed for such a proletarian resistance and must be formed by unifying the workers councils, soldiers councils, self-defense groups into a national soviet, the basis for a workers government." (*Workers Vanguard* no 75, 29 August 1975)

The struggle for soviets is inseparable from the struggle to break the working class from its illusions in the MFA and the reformist workers parties who have tied the proletariat to the class enemy in repeated popular-front coalitions. But at present a Marxist vanguard would also seek a temporary military bloc with the Stalinists, other workers parties and even officers of the MFA who are prepared to fight against the rightist officers' attempt to consolidate power. Although pro-NATO elements in the officer corps have landed an important blow and the current is clearly running against the left, it is by no means clear that troops would today obey orders to crush militant workers. And neighbouring Spain has for months been a state of barely contained social turmoil which could explode from a spark in Lisbon. Militant resistance to the reactionary officers in Portugal today is most definitely not hopeless.

A military bloc for common action against the reactionary mobilization, however, is something quite different from a coalition giving political support to the Goncalves government. Such a class-collaborationist formation was set up in late August as the then-premier and his CP backers were flailing around for any support they could find to stave off the anti-Communist of-

fensive unleashed by the SP and the nine "moderate" officers headed by Melo Antunes. With its name shifting between "United Revolutionary Front" and "United Popular Front" depending on whether it is the "far left" or the CP that is speaking, this pact was signed by the CP, the Popular Socialist Front (FSP), the anarcho-Castroist LUAR, the left social-democratic MES, the CP's petty-bourgeois electoral front MDP, the syndicalist-Castroist Proletarian Revolutionary Party (PRP), the semi-Maoist May 1 group, and the ostensibly Trotskyist Internationalist Communist League (LCI), Portuguese sympathising section of the United Secretariat (USec) headed by Ernest Mandel.

The August 25 communique signed by the various parties of the front calls for support to Goncalves' government program (including a call for an austerity program aimed at suppressing the workers' economic struggles), to the so-called "COPCON document" (calling for local workers councils "recognized" by the MFA, and for strengthening the "MFA-People Alliance"), to the Goncalves government (since ousted) and to the formation of a future coalition including the Armed Forces Movement ("The creation of a front including the parties and other revolutionary political organizations, revolutionary militants, the MFA and autonomous organs of people's power..." -- emphasis added). The LCI will no doubt seek to excuse this alliance on the grounds that it does not actually include a bourgeois party. After signing the communique it disingenuously issued a separate statement disagreeing with "some points", and in particular with the call for "integration of the MFA in a front of the organs of workers and people's power" since the MFA is not revolutionary (*Diario de Noticias*, 26 August).

Aside from the obvious dishonesty of signing a document one of whose key points is rejected, the "revolutionary/popular united front" is not so free of direct participation by the military as would seem from the list of signers. The introduction to the August 25 communique notes the presence, at the meeting to form the front, of "representatives of the MFA, who acted simply as elements of cohesion...". According to a news account, these unity brokers included representatives of the Fifth Division, COPCON, the Coordinating Committee of Air Force Sergeants, the Navy MFA and the Revolutionary Supreme Council. Moreover, it was officers of the COPCON who took the

initiative to form the bloc. Thus both its origins and program unambiguously confirm the class-collaborationist character of this unprincipled bloc.

As to the participation of the ostensibly Trotskyist LCI, this is directly opposed to the whole struggle of the Fourth Internationalists in the 1930s against Stalinist popular frontism. It is the identical capitulation that led the Spanish POUM to enter the popular front in 1936, explaining all the while that the pact was only for the purpose of elections and that the Catalan nationalist Esquerra was really "petty-bourgeois" rather than a bourgeois political formation (just as the LCI maintains that the MFA is not bourgeois but petty-bourgeois!).

This betrayal of the Portuguese workers and of Trotskyism -- for that is what joining the "revolutionary/popular united front" amounts to -- is not simply an unfortunate error of the young and inexperienced LCI. Far from it. The same identical "error" was made by the USec's section in Bolivia, the POR (*Combate*), when it joined the "Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Front" (FRA) in 1971, where it cohabited with former President General Torres. Thus the USec's Pabloist liquidationism is the origin of the LCI's betrayal. Only by struggling for the rebirth of the Fourth International, in opposition to the USec's revisionist policies, can an authentically revolutionary Trotskyist party be built in Portugal.

[Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* nos 76 and 77, 12 and 19 September 1975] ■

## CL ducks Vietnam debate

Sydney.

30 April 1975

To: Political Committee  
Communist League

Dear comrades,

The recent Spartacist League-sponsored public meeting at Sydney University which was attended by a number of your comrades demonstrated again the differences between our organisations over the nature of the Vietnamese Revolution. The great successes of the PRG/NLF/North Vietnamese forces in their recent struggles only make revolutionary clarity more urgent than ever, particularly for the new and potentially revolutionary individuals awakened by the events.

We will consider any arrangements you suggest for a debate between our organisations. We suggest the debate be held on the Sydney University campus.

Awaiting your early reply.

fraternally,

Joel Salinger  
for the Spartacist League

Sydney.

17 September 1975

Political Committee,  
Communist League,  
Sydney.

Dear Comrades,

On 24 April members of the Spartacist League orally proposed a debate with the Communist League on the nature of the Indochinese revolutions, and you suggested we put our proposal in writing. On 30 April a number of your comrades, including Mike Keenan, taunted us for our slowness in sending out a written challenge which we did that day. We have still not received a reply to that letter.

We reaffirm our belief that a debate on the question of the Indochinese revolutions, which encapsulates a number of the central differences between our organisations, could substantially aid the process of achieving political and theoretical clarity which is so necessary for militants. We cannot understand your complete failure to reply, for more than four months, except as evidence of your organisation's lack of confidence in its ability to defend its liquidationist tailing of Stalinism in Vietnam.

As we stated in our 30 April proposal we will consider any arrangements you suggest.

We eagerly await your reply.

Fraternally,

Joel Salinger  
for the Spartacist League

### Australasian

## SPARTACIST



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## correction

Due to a technical error in production of *ASP* no 22, August 1975, in one paragraph of the reprinted leaflet "Maoist gangster attack causes serious injury" sentences have been jumbled so as to make the paragraph nonsensical and misleading. The affected section of the paragraph -- page seven, top of column two, beginning line three -- should read as follows:

"The Spartacist Club moved a motion which condemned RSM's use of violence, but vigorously opposed and voted against the move to disaffiliate the Maoists, pointing out that violence and intimidation in the workers and left movement must be dealt with [with]in the workers and left movement by both political exposure and the formation of defence guards for workers' democracy. The disaffiliation of the RSM for violence will provide the University administration with a convenient precedent for future attacks on the left groups [when], for example, defending picket lines against cop attacks or preventing Fascists from spreading their filth." ■

## Workers Vanguard now weekly!

SL/US

Welcome to the weekly *Workers Vanguard*!!

Congratulations to the comrades of the Spartacist League of the United States who have made it possible!!

The Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand, which has always used *Workers Vanguard* as a vital supplement to its own press, looks forward to the more effective revolutionary tool that will be available to us in a weekly. But *Workers Vanguard*'s primary purpose is in consolidating the United States section of the international Spartacist tendency as the nucleus of a Leninist vanguard party. It is as a crucial step in the development of the United States section that the commencement of weekly publication is a contribution towards the establishment of the International Trotskyist League and towards the re-forging of the Fourth International.

Spartacist League of  
Australia and New Zealand.

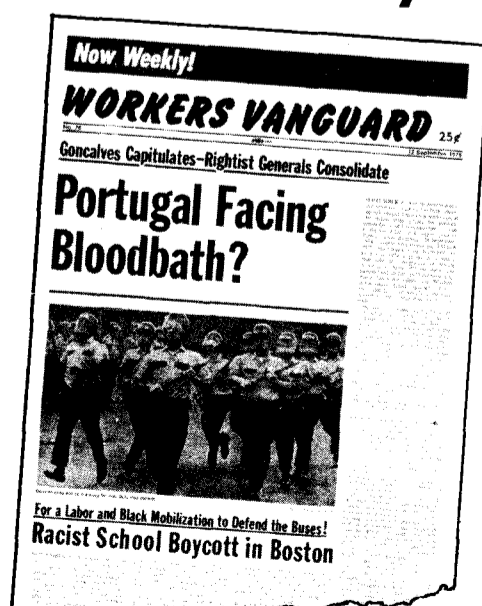
2 September 1975

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## IC grovels before Vietnamese Stalinists

# Healy's Pabloism exposed

The political bandits of the Australian Socialist Labour League (SLL) (affiliated to the "International Committee" (IC) led by Gerry Healy of the British Workers Revolutionary Party), apart from simple enthusing about the revolutions that have rocked Indochina, have said nothing about their political lessons. They have not even mentioned one word about the pamphlet "In Defence of the Vietnamese Revolution -- Against its 'Trotskyist' detractors" put out by the CPA's Denis Freney where he "proves" the revolutionary credentials of the Vietnamese Stalinists -- a strange silence for the "anti-Stalinist" SLL. While this may seem very puzzling the explanation is really quite simple -- the "Trotskyist" SLL agrees with the "Stalinist" Freney!

In reply to other fake Trotskyists ("Pabloism and Stalinism in Vietnam", *Australasian Spartacist* no 23, September 1975) we explained how the overthrow of capitalist rule and the establishment of collectivised property forms in Yugoslavia, China, North Korea, Cuba and Indochina since WW II as a result of guerrilla struggle based on the peasantry and under the leadership of Stalinists (or, in Cuba's case, petty-bourgeois nationalists), produced only the same sort of bureaucratically deformed workers state which resulted from the degeneration of the Russian Revolution. For the last thirty years the Trotskyist movement, isolated as a political force but alone in upholding the internationalist communist program of working-class power, has faced tremendous pressures to accommodate in some way to the popularity of the forces that led these new revolutions, pressure expressed within the Fourth International in the revisionist theories of Michel Pablo that the "new world realities" and the objective "revolutionary dynamic" would force non-proletarian leaderships (Stalinist or Social-Democratic) to carry through successful proletarian revolutions. Pabloism subordinates the struggle for independent revolutionary workers' parties to the futile attempt to "pressure" non-revolutionary leaderships to the left, and its development split the Fourth International apart in 1953.

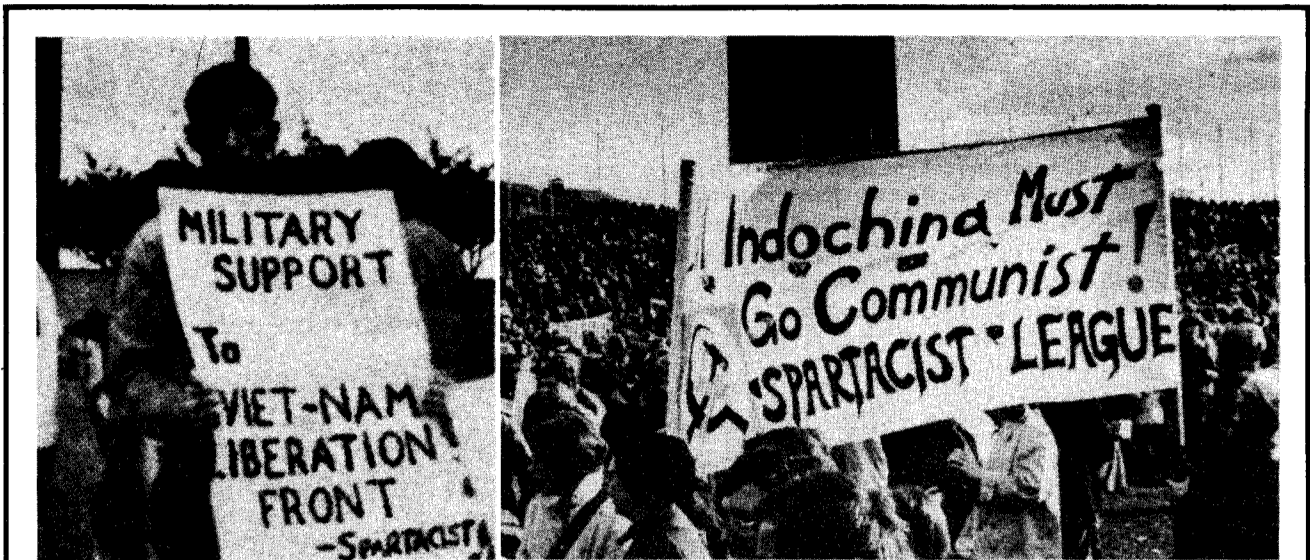
Healy was part of the international tendency which defended basic Trotskyist principles against Pabloism in the 1950s. But its rejection of Pabloism was flawed and incomplete. Thus, when the Cuban Revolution occurred Healy opposed the liquidationist conclusions of Pabloism, but could do so only by denying reality. Castro's July 26 Movement was not a revolutionary leadership. Therefore for Healy no revolution had occurred; Cuba was still capitalist! As the Spartacist delegation pointed out at the 1966 IC Conference, before our bureaucratic expulsion over a supposed breach of protocol,

"The Pabloites have been strengthened against us, in our opinion, by this simplistic reflex of the IC, which must deny the possibility of a social transformation led by the petty bourgeoisie, in order to defend the validity and necessity of the revolutionary Marxist movement. This is a bad method: at bottom it equates the deformed workers state with the road to socialism; it is the Pabloite error turned inside out, and a profound denial of

"But the inclusion of these points [on the peasantry in the RSDLP's program] does not mean we would call active revolutionary forces from the towns into the villages. Such a thing is out of the question. There can be no doubt that all the militant elements of the Party must concentrate on work in the towns and industrial centres; that only the industrial proletariat is capable of conducting a steadfast and mass struggle against the autocracy...." (VI Lenin, "The Workers Party and the Peasantry" (1901), *Collected Works* vol 4, p 427)

"The fact that individual Communists are in the leadership of the present [Chinese Red] armies does not at all transform the social character of these armies, even if their Communist leaders bear a definite proletarian stamp. And how do matters stand in China?"

"Among the Communist leaders of Red detachments there indubitably are many declassed intellectuals and semi-intellectuals who have not gone through the school of proletarian struggle. For two or three years they live the lives of partisan commanders and commissars; they wage battles, seize territories, etc. They absorb the spirit of their environment. Meanwhile the majority of the rank-and-file Communists in the Red detachments unquestionably consists of peasants, who assume the name Communist in all honesty and sincerity but who in actuality remain revolutionary paupers or revolutionary petty proprietors. In politics he who judges by denominations and labels and not by social facts is lost. All the more so when the politics concerned is carried out arms in hand." (emphasis added) (Leon Trotsky, "Peasant War in China and the Proletariat", *Writings*, 1932, pp 194-195)



*Workers Press* (8 August 1975) accuses the "anti-communist American group, the Spartacist League" of "giving objective support to the imperialist butchers in Vietnam" by not calling for "Victory to the National Liberation Front". Above photos (from *Spartacist* (journal of the SLUS) November/December 1965 (left) and *Workers Vanguard*, (right)), show the SLUS has always fought for

this demand. In sharp contrast is the wretched opportunist record of Healy's US proteges in the Workers League. In 1965 WL leader Wohlforth signed a social-pacifist statement which said "the war in Vietnam is not necessary for national security". In 1971 the WL joined in the defence of bourgeois politician Senator Hartke against opponents of antiwar popular frontism.

the Trotskyist understanding that the bureaucratic ruling caste is an obstacle which must be overthrown by the workers if they are to move forward."

The Healyites' "Pabloite error turned inside out" has since been turned rightside out with the IC's support to Mao and the Red Guards in the Cultural Revolution, their discovery of the Pabloist "Arab Revolution" led by sheiks and colonels and their critical support to the Indian army's predatory intervention into Bangladesh. But now the response of these renegades to the Indochinese revolutions has completely shattered any remaining pretences to Trotskyism. In chorus with the Pabloists and Stalinists (and also Denis Freney) the IC has embraced the Vietnamese Stalinists as a "revolutionary leadership", proclaimed peasant guerrilla war as the "way" in the colonial world and liquidated the need for a politically conscious working class. This full-fledged lurch into the revisionist camp was recently codified in a four-part series in the WRP's *Workers Press* ("Stalinism and the Liberation of Vietnam" by Stephen Johns, 5-8 August 1975).

Johns' basic argument is simple -- merely the "inverted Pabloism" of Cuba turned right side up! The social revolution in Indochina occurred under the undoubted political hegemony of the Stalinist Vietnamese Workers Party (VWP). Like the Pabloists on both Cuba and Vietnam, Healyism makes absolute the premise that a capitalist state can only be smashed by a revolutionary leadership, in order to draw from that Aristotelean premise the opportunist "only possible" conclusion -- the Vietnamese Stalinists cannot be Stalinists, they must be a revolutionary leadership! But analysing and

"Already Pablo, with whom Hansen wants to unite, has been working out a theoretical line to justify Ben Bella's insistence that in Algeria the peasants are more important than the workers." (National Committee of the British SLL (led by Gerry Healy), "Opportunism and Empiricism", 25 March 1963; in *Trotskyism Versus Revisionism* vol 4, p 100)

\* \* \* \* \*

"The Vietnamese Trotskyists themselves appear however to have had a grave weakness. They had never been able to build a base among the peasantry [not strictly true] and totally underestimated the role of the revolutionary guerrilla war based on the countryside...."

"... the victorious People's Army was primarily made up of hundreds of thousands of peasant youth. The Vietnamese Trotskyists appeared instead to have confined much of their political work to the cities.... They talked for example of transitional demands that would bring the peasant struggles 'under the leadership of the urban proletariat'. But the leadership of the proletariat is not an abstract thing.... Proletarian leadership is expressed through the vanguard role of a party that bases itself on the advances of the working class on a world scale -- principally the lessons of the Russian revolution and the nationalised property relations of the Soviet Union." (*Workers Press*, 5 August 1975)

changing the real world requires the science of dialectical materialism, not a worship of the accomplished fact and the application of logical syllogisms. In Indochina, as in Cuba, China, Yugoslavia, etc the military victories of the guerrilla forces occurred in exceptional circumstances of the disintegration of the national bourgeoisie and its state apparatus and decisive limitations on the ability of imperialism to intervene at crucial moments. But the crucial characteristic of all these revolutions was the absence of any intervention by the working class acting consciously in its own interests. Such an intervention would have polarised the Stalinist and petty-bourgeois nationalist forces, driving their misleaders into the camp of the ruling class. In Vietnam it was the political disintegration of the national bourgeoisie, the hostility of imperialism, the pressure from their peasant base and the need to consolidate their own rule that forced the Stalinists to collectivise the economy and join the "socialist" camp. It was the absence of a conscious working class led by a Trotskyist party that allowed them the necessary independence to do so and that ensured that the resulting workers state would be burdened by a parasitic bureaucracy from birth.

Johns attempts to explain the Vietnamese Revolution not in terms of the actual role of the proletariat but solely on the basis of the bonapartist activities of petty-bourgeois Stalinists, using the classically empiricist excuse that Vietnam is "different" from other places. Evidently the theory of permanent revolution does not apply: "it is completely idealist to transpose the whole Russian experience," says Johns (*Workers Press* 5 August 1975), because the Vietnamese proletariat was so small. This is pure claptrap. There is no qualitative difference between the relative weight of the peasantry to the proletariat in Russia and that in China or Vietnam. The Vietnamese Trotskyists following Lenin's advice (see box) concentrated on the working class in the cities; this Leninism, says Johns (echoing traditional Stalinist slanders of the theory of permanent revolution), constituted a "grave weakness", "totally underestimat[ing] the role of the revolutionary guerrilla war based on the countryside!"

Now the Vietnamese Trotskyists did make mistakes. For example, the centrist "Struggle" group led by Ta Thu Thau actually entered a popular front along with the Stalinists in 1945, and both the International Communist League (ICL) and the "Struggle" group "totally underestimated" the murderous capacity of the Stalinists, a weakness which they paid for in blood. But it was the Trotskyists and not the Stalinists who supported the poor peasantry and the proletariat. In the spontaneous outbreaks after the Japanese surrender in 1945 the ICL raised the slogans: "Down with Imperialism! ... People's Committees Everywhere! ... Land to the Peasants! ... Toward the Workers and Peasants Government!", while the Stalinists warned that "whoever encourages the peasants to take over the landed properties will be severely and pitilessly punished.... our government is a democratic and bourgeois government, even though the Communists are in power!" (Both quotes are reported in *Quatrieme Internationale*, September-October 1947; see Sharpe,

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# Fascism: How not to fight it

reprinted from Workers Vanguard no 70, 6 June 1975

On 15 June 1974 London's Red Lion Square witnessed one of the bloodiest confrontations between police and left-wing forces in recent British history. Countless demonstrators were beaten with police truncheons, a number were trampled under mounted patrols, and one young man, Kevin Gately, was killed by the cops, his head so brutally battered that he died of a cerebral hemorrhage. The occasion was a protest against a rally scheduled by the fascist-inspired National Front.

The NF is one of many extreme-rightist organizations that have been surfacing and spreading in Europe during recent months. Their breeding ground is the fear of economic ruin, in particular an intensified competition for jobs in the wake of a worldwide capitalist economic slump.

As in the past, one of the common fascist themes is race hatred against Jews, blacks and now immigrant workers. Former National Front fuhrer John Tyndall was quoted in 1969 as saying: "the Jew is a poisonous maggot feeding on a body in an advanced state of decay" (*Sunday Times*, 30 March 1969). Along with NF national organizer Martin Webster and others in the group's leadership, Tyndall was during the early 1960's a member of the now-defunct British National Socialist Movement, which called for "deportation of all non-Aryans" from Britain.

While many of these groups seek to put on respectable airs, their aim is to recruit enraged petty-bourgeois and lumpen elements for the purpose of brutally smashing "the reds" and organized labor. As the history of the rise of Nazism tragically demonstrated, it is literally a life-and-death matter for the workers movement to crush such reactionary paramilitary organizations while they are still weak.

With the growth of the NF in recent years (it polled 113,000 votes in last October's parliamentary elections), many leftists and labor militants have understood the need to stop this racist anti-communist outfit. The occasion for their protest last June was a National Front meeting against the Labour Party government's decision to grant amnesty to persons deemed "illegal immigrants" under the discriminatory 1971 Immigration Act.

On the day of the rally, the 1,500 NF marchers drew up in military formation, drums beating and Union Jacks flying. Many of the flags were mounted on steel-pointed poles, some of the marchers were dressed in black shirts while others wore army surplus uniforms. A counter-demonstration of about 1,000 was organized by the Communist Party (CP) and Liberation, with contingents of the International Socialists (IS) and International Marxist Group (IMG).

Trouble began as the anti-fascist demonstrators approached Red Lion Square, occupied (according to the IS account) by about 500 police including mounted patrols. The bourgeois press and police claim the marchers were told in advance to make a right turn as they entered the square, moving away from the meeting hall where the NF rally was to take place. The left organizations say they were told no such thing. In any case it is clear that a section of the march, with the IMG toward the front, sought to break through the police lines to get to Conway Hall.

The police thereupon launched a baton charge, kicking and punching their way into the crowd. As the momentum of the march carried more people into the square, units of the elite Special Pa-

trol Group, notorious for smashing workers' picket lines, were brought in. They formed a wedge and drove through the crowd, splitting it in two.

The fighting intensified as they cornered one section of the marchers in a side street. Then the arrests began. Blood-soaked demonstrators were dragged by their hair to waiting police vans and several bodies were left lying in the square, among them Kevin Gately. Some of the remaining protesters regrouped on the side street and jeered the NF marchers, who were now approaching from a different direction. After a pause of about ten minutes, the police suddenly launched a mounted charge against the leftists, a savage and totally unprovoked attack. The National Front column looked on jubilantly, then paraded triumphantly into Red Lion Square cheering the police and chanting, "We got to get the reds!"

The cops' vicious attack, including an unprovoked horse charge and the death of Kevin Gately, are the responsibility of the Wilson government. Gately's funeral drew thousands of angry marchers and the wanton police assault has been vigorously condemned by numerous socialist and union organizations. Yet, incredibly, the government has sought to blame the left, and in particular the IMG, for the violence! The recently published Scarman Tribunal report rejected most charges of police brutality and denied any responsibility of the cops in Gately's death. This is in spite of the fact that the demonstrators used no weapons, only the police had instruments which could have caused the head wounds (truncheons and horses' hooves), and there were witnesses to the beating. This "report" is a shameful whitewash of what was in fact a police riot.

However, our proletarian solidarity with the victims of bourgeois "law and order" must not be an excuse to cover up serious errors committed by some leaders of the anti-fascist demonstration at Red Lion Square. It is not enough to want to fight fascists -- one must know how to do it. A New Left policy of confrontation with police who obviously intended to defend the National Front is not the way.

There is no doubt that the IMG sought to break through police lines in order to arrive in front of the meeting hall. Jackie Stevens, a member of the IMG, gave this report: "We came across a line of police, and behind them were mounted police. When we tried to get through to Conway Hall, the police drew their batons and charged..." (*Intercontinental Press*, 24 June 1974).

It is less clear why the IMG took this dangerously mistaken step. But whatever the prior arrangements with the police; whether demonstrators had made plans beforehand or simply fell into a police trap; if it was bravado or confusion -- in any case, the decision to try to push through the police lines was a disastrous move. The fact that the demonstrators lacked any means to defend themselves from the cops' murderous onslaught, while it refutes police theories of a conspiracy to attack the police, only makes this move all the more grievously wrong.

Marxists do not uphold a spurious "right" of fascists to freedom of speech; we call on the labor movement to mobilize to prevent the reactionary terror gangs from spewing out their race-hate poison in mass rallies and by provocations such as their marches in military uniform. But to prevent them from speaking through militant

mass action requires a favorable balance of forces -- something that was obviously not present in Red Lion Square.

Yes, 20,000 workers could, and should, have prevented the NF from holding its racist meeting. The failure of the unions to mobilize against these anti-labor scum is criminal. But this betrayal cannot be corrected by false heroics, sending several score demonstrators against well-equipped riot police. Not only was one militant killed and many injured, but the National Front



Well-armed police units await left-wing demonstrators in Paris, 21 June 1973.

scored a significant publicity victory as a result.

Unfortunately, such confrontationism is not an isolated phenomenon. In France, while the Stalinists and social democrats systematically abstain from mobilizing the working class against the fascists, the fake "Trotskyists" of the United Secretariat (of which the IMG is the British affiliate) have taken a different approach: adventurist clashes with police protecting the fascists. The classic case of this substitutionism occurred on 21 June 1973.

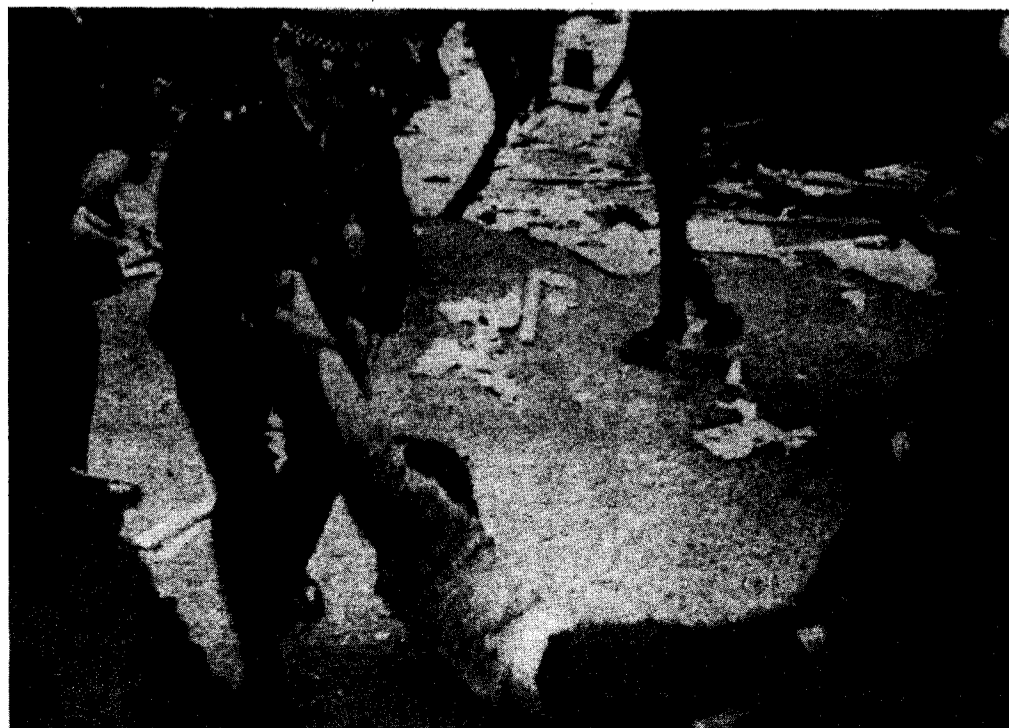
On that date the Ligue Communiste (now Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire), French section of the USec, organized a counterdemonstration against a rally by the fascist Ordre Nouveau ("New Order"). The ON had for some time been campaigning against "wildcat immigration" with virulently racist rhetoric, and had succeeded in provoking assaults on immigrant workers. They planned to highlight this campaign nationally with a mass rally at the Mutualite meeting hall in Paris.

While traditionally the Paris police had not mobilized heavily in conflicts between the right and left, this time they clearly were preparing to defend Ordre Nouveau. First they looked on as the ON turned the meeting hall into an armed camp, moving in van loads of iron pipes, clubs and other assorted weaponry. Then, by the Ligue Communiste's own report, the Mutualite was surrounded by 2,000 police, a veritable army to protect the fascists, waiting for the "far left" demonstrators to make the slightest move.

The LC, which early in the day realized that the police were ready to break up the anti-fascist demonstration, encouraged people to come to the march prepared for a confrontation. The leftists were heavily armed with clubs and molotov cocktails. Thus it was clear from the beginning that the Ligue fully expected a bash with the cops -- a battle which, however, they could not possibly win without massive contingents of workers and left militants from all quarters.

When the police cordoned off the area around the hall they were bombarded by incendiaries. The anti-fascist demonstrators then broke up into small groups and long into the night isolated clashes continued throughout the area. While there was no clear military defeat of the leftists, they were unable to do more than harass the cops and did not stop the fascists. The next day, Ligue headquarters were occupied by the police, 25 of its supporters were arrested and the organization was outlawed.

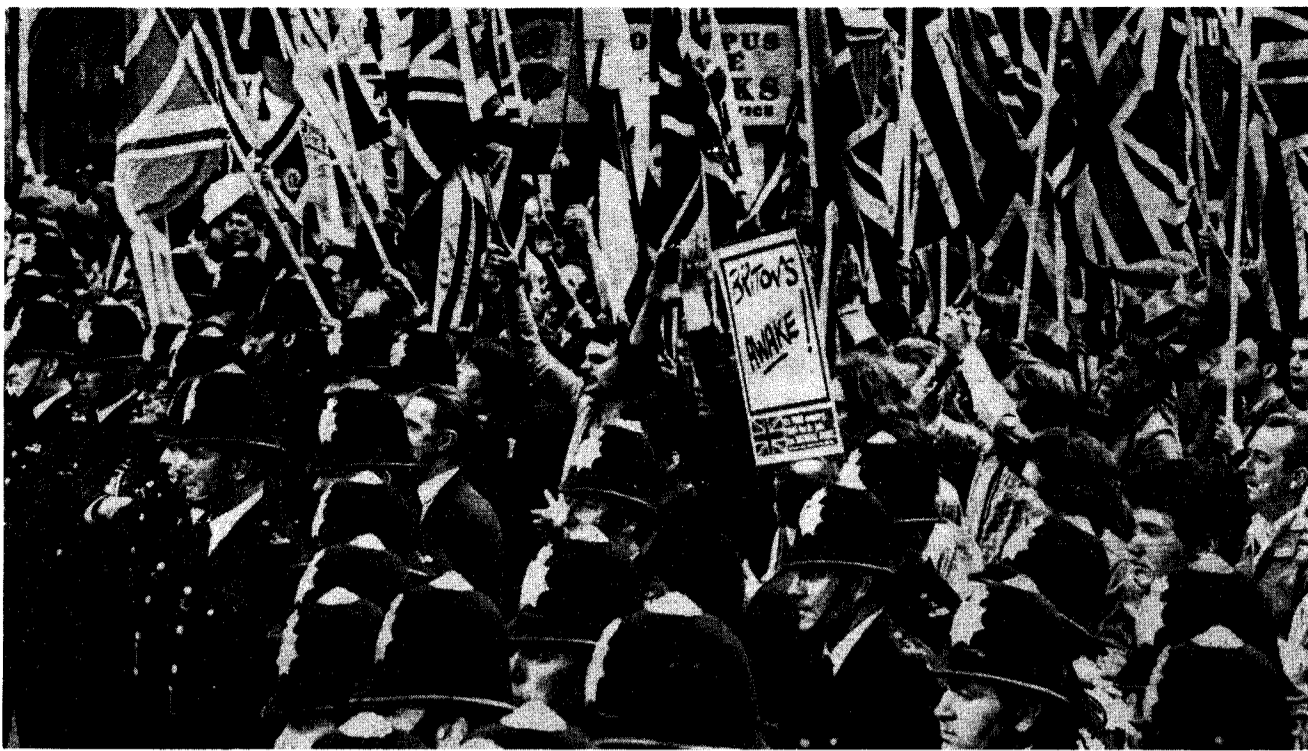
The Spartacist League immediately and vigorously protested this viciously anti-democratic government attack and called for united defense



Socialist Worker

The body of dying Kevin Gately being dragged from London's Red Lion Square.





Workers Press

Red Lion Square: police form protective cordon around fascist National Front demonstration.

of the Ligue. But we also criticized its adventurist tactics:

"The Trotskyist movement has a long history of resistance to fascist groups, including attacking and dispersing fascist meetings... In this case, however, the presence of massive police force made the relation of forces unfavorable to the left. It would appear that the Ligue Communiste recklessly entered into an adventurist confrontation by attempting to take on the armed power of the state under circumstances which could lead only to the defeat of the left. The correct tactic, given the government's authorization of the meeting, was to mount a campaign calling on the mass workers organizations ... to mobilize tens of thousands of their members to prevent the fascist meeting. In their absence, the Ligue could certainly have organized a mass protest demonstration. This is not the same thing, however, as a futile attempt to overwhelm the police with 1,000 youths." ("Repeal the Ban on the French Ligue Communiste", *Workers Vanguard* no 25, 20 July 1973)

Another instance of stupid guerrillaist confrontation tactics occurred earlier this year in Portugal, where it could easily have had disastrous consequences in an explosive pre-revolutionary situation. On the night of January 25-26 several thousand youth and workers in the northern city of Porto surrounded a meeting hall where the rightist Social Democratic Center (CDS) was holding its national congress. This party's leaders include numerous former officials of the Salazar-Caetano dictatorship.

Four leftist organizations -- LUAR, MES, PRP, and LCI -- called a demonstration in front of the meeting hall. Their joint communique merely announced a protest action. After an hour, however, a second demonstration arrived on the scene, this one led by the OCMLP (Portuguese Communist Organization Marxist-Leninist, a left-Maoist group), which in an attempt to stop the congress proceedings attacked the paramilitary police who were protecting the building (*Esquerda Socialista*, 28 January).

This infantile "heroic" gesture led to baton charges by the special police and a tear gas barrage followed by shots, leaving a dozen demonstrators injured, some seriously. The leftists' only means of defense was to hurl bricks. Then beginning around 8 pm the regional military commander sent in several army units. The officer in charge asked the CDS to end the meeting (which it did), while the ranks outside fraternized with the demonstrators.

Due to the hostile attitude of the troops, rightist politicians in the Crystal Palace were afraid to leave the building, however, and during the early morning hours a second paramilitary police unit attacked on horse and in personnel carriers. Soldiers reportedly resisted the police assault. Finally, at 7 am parachutists from a base commanded by conservative officers managed to extract the besieged reactionaries (*Luta Popular*, 2 February; *Revolucao*, 7 February).

A demonstration against the CDS congress, particularly if attended by large numbers of workers, could have been useful in exposing the viciously anti-working class and anti-democratic character of this ostensibly moderate party, which is in reality a front for Salazarist forces. Massive militant action by the labor movement in response to open counterrevolutionary activity by such a group could put it out of business.

But the attempt to stop the congress by

launching a chaotic unarmed crowd against police guards was perilously dangerous adventurism. Although the CDS did call off its meeting, this was due to the attitude taken by the troop commanders, not to a few hundred demonstrators. And the armed forces' action could very easily have been the opposite, leading to a bloodbath of the anti-fascist militants.

(Although there is great ferment in the army and navy, most of the ranks still have confidence in the "progressive" officers of the Armed Forces Movement. It was by no means assured, or even probable, that the soldiers would have fraternized with anti-CDS demonstrators if explicitly ordered not to. On November 4 of last year, troops commanded by the most leftist officers of the Armed Forces Movement arrested the top leadership of another Maoist group, the MRPP, for attacking a CDS local office.)

A strong show of force against the "far leftists" on January 25-26 would have greatly strengthened reactionary elements in the military who at the time were trying to oust the more leftist top officers, in order to then crush the organized workers movement. The action initiated by the OCMLP-led demonstrators could have sparked a counterrevolutionary mobilization.

It was characteristic of the complacent reformism of the Stalinists and social democrats in the mid and late 1930's that they sought to pressure the bourgeois state into checking the

## Leon Trotsky on fighting fascists:

"In this period it is very important to distinguish between the fascists and the state. The state is not yet ready to subordinate itself to the fascists; it wants to 'arbitrate'... Our strategic task is to increase these hesitations and apprehensions on the part of the 'arbiter,' its army and its police. How? By showing that we are stronger than the fascists, that is, by giving them a good beating in full view of this arbiter without, as long as we are not absolutely forced to, directly taking on the state itself. That is the whole point."

—reprinted in *Intercontinental Press*,  
2 December 1974

fascists. The workers paid for this criminal passivity with rivers of blood as the jackbooted legions strode to power over the corpse of the organized labor movement.

Today an international capitalist depression is once again generating a host of ultra-right and overtly fascist formations. It would be a serious mistake to pretend, as do some New Left/anarchist elements (along with Gerry Healy), that fascism is "just around the corner". But the reactionary terror gangs are an important weapon in the capitalist arsenal and it is essential for the labor movement to know how to crush them. This is particularly true for the young generation of workers who have never seen the unions smashed, labor leaders jailed and killed, the socialist press banned and the entire proletariat brought to its knees by a bourgeoisie desperate to maintain at all costs its brutal class dictatorship.

The reformists' democratic illusions in the ability and willingness of the bourgeoisie to "control" reactionary ultras are by no means dead and buried, nor restricted to overtly Stalinist and social-democratic organizations. In Boston today it is the ostensibly Trotskyist

Socialist Workers Party which leads the liberal/reformist chorus pleading for *federal troops* to protect black school children and communities from racist night riders and lynch mobs.

The centrist European majority of the USec also expresses confidence in the class enemy. The French LCR supports the SWP call for federal troops to Boston (*Rouge*, 5 January). Moreover, after fighting the police all night in the June 1973 Paris anti-fascist demonstration, the Ligue Communiste sent an appeal to "working-class elements" in the Autonomous Federation of Police Unions, asking: "Do you consider it natural [!] for you to be used to protect fascists and to intervene against strikers struggling to improve their wages and working conditions?" (*Rouge*, 27 June 1973). What Marxist would expect anything else of the hired guns of the capitalist class?!

As for those "workers in police uniforms," Trotsky wrote in "What Next?" (1932) that "The worker who becomes a policeman in the service of the capitalist state is a bourgeois cop, not a worker." Revolutionaries do not appeal to the cops but to the workers movement to smash the reactionary gangs, and demand the expulsion of police from the unions.

The Ligue also called on the French government to ban the Ordre Nouveau meeting, just as the IMG in Britain called on the Labour government to ban the National Front rally. Not only does this foster the dangerous illusion that the bourgeois state can or will stop the fascists (in fact, cops and military officers are often closely connected with fascist groups), but the laws under which it would ban a fascist meeting will be used tomorrow to cancel demonstrations by the "extremist left". The French government's "impartial" banning of both Ordre Nouveau and the Ligue Communiste following the June 1973 clash is a classic example.

The Marxist policy on how to fight the fascists was stated unambiguously by Leon Trotsky during the 1930's, and directly contradicts the policy of both wings of the United Secretariat. "Only armed workers' detachments, who feel the support of tens of millions of toilers behind them, can successfully prevail against the fascist bands," states the Transitional Program. And in "War and the Fourth International", Trotsky writes: "To turn to the state, that is, to capital, with the demand to disarm the fascists means to sow the worst democratic illusions, to lull the vigilance of the proletariat, to demoralize its will."

Trotsky was quite explicit that the task of defense of the workers movement from the reactionary terror gangs was not the job of small groups, but requires united action by the workers and their mass organizations. Our movement has not been passive in the face of fascists, and in 1939 the then-revolutionary SWP called a demonstration to protest a fascist rally at Madison Square Garden in New York. When 50,000 anti-fascist demonstrators arrived, they did not hesitate to break through police lines. Many of the fascists received a good thrashing from the protesters as they left the meeting.

But the perspective of the USec majority is a different one, of "minority violence" by the vanguard as a stimulant to "excite" the workers to follow its example. D Bensaïd, a leader of the LCR, writes that "... acts of minority violence, presently lumped together under the general heading of terrorism, can play their role as a tactical recourse among others within a strategy of conquest of power by the masses" ("Terrorism and Class Struggle"). They may excite Bensaïd, but the history of the last century, from the Russian Narodniks to the Tupamaros, has demonstrated the utter impotence of such a policy.

The incidents reported above show clearly that "minority vanguard violence" against police who are protecting fascist and ultra-rightist meetings either has had or easily could have had the most disastrous consequences. It serves to drive the state and the fascists together, precisely the opposite of what revolutionaries seek to achieve. When they are defeated (as usually happens) by the superior force of the state military apparatus such confrontations greatly embolden the reactionaries.

Marxists call for no confidence in the bourgeois state and warn the working people that they must rely on their own forces to protect against the vicious attacks of capitalist reaction. It is possible even for small groups to play a decisive role in sparking organized workers self-defense actions. But this will not take place through New Left confrontationism but by providing political leadership within the mass organizations of the exploited and oppressed and by building the revolutionary vanguard party capable of leading the workers forward to the conquest of power. Not voluntaristic militarism but a struggle to resolve the crisis of proletarian leadership -- this is the only road to victory over fascism!

# For militant class defence of Brisbane 3

The reactionary Queensland government has escalated its political frame-up case against anti-racist militants Denis Walker, John Garcia and Lionel Fogarty (now known as the Brisbane Three). With their trial due to begin in mid-October, after a year of legal wranglings, the earlier charges of "attempting to obtain money with menaces" (against Walker) and "conspiracy" (against Fogarty and Garcia) have been replaced with the common charge of "intention to extort", which ups the possible sentence to fourteen years imprisonment. The severity of the charges signifies that the case is a trial run for a broad repressive campaign against blacks, leftists and the workers movement. If the Queensland government is allowed to impose these outrageous sentences based on a transparent frame-up it will be greatly encouraged to unleash a torrent of intimidation, including its proposed anti-trade-union legislation for compulsory secret ballots and banning union pickets. Thus it is urgent that the whole workers movement defend these three militants and demand that the charges be dropped immediately.

The Spartacist League has been active in the defence of the Brisbane Three since Walker's arrest in Sydney in September 1974. In Sydney through the Queensland Act Confrontation Committee (QACC) and then its successor, the Black Defence Committee, the SL has consistently fought for a broadly based united-front campaign of all who were willing to take a stand against their persecution. It was the SL which took the initiative in reconstituting the Sydney QACC in October 1974, and participated heavily in defence pickets and rallies against Walker's extradition to Queensland (which finally occurred in June 1975). On the other hand the Communist League (CL), of which Garcia is a supporter and which claims Fogarty and Walker as "sympathisers", has been spotty in this defence work, not even sending representatives to some defence committee meetings and occasionally turning up very late at defence pickets. Its recent claim, in its newspaper the *Militant* (11 September 1975), that "we have been the only paper to take up the defence of the Brisbane Three from the start until the present international campaign", consequently rings a little hollow.

In response to the new charges and the impending trial the defence campaign for the Brisbane Three has been reactivated. During a speaking tour in late August by one of the defendants, John Garcia, sponsored by the CL and the Socialist Workers League (SWL), new Emergency Committees to defend the Brisbane Three were estab-

lished in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide (such a committee had already been established in Brisbane). The reconstituted defence effort has already attracted broader support than the earlier campaign. Among its endorsers are the Queensland Trades and Labour Council, leading black public servant Charles Perkins, the NSW Young Labor Council, the Victorian YLA State executive, the National Conference of Secondary Students, the Aboriginal Medical Service, ACTU President Bob Hawke, the AUS National Executive, ALP Senators Georges and Keith, the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, Communist Party of Australia (CPA), Communist League, Socialist Workers League, Socialist Labour League, Spartacist League and Socialist Workers Action Group (SWAG).

After doing virtually nothing for a year the CPA has now decided to take up the defence of the Brisbane Three as an "urgent priority" (*Tribune*, 9 September 1975). However, the reformist CPA would prefer a respectable appeal to liberal bourgeois "public opinion", rather than any attempt to mobilise its own trade-union base for action, which would discomfit its servile union bureaucrats. Another newcomer is the Socialist Labour League (SLL), who last year when approached by the Spartacist League, refused to have anything to do with the defence of Walker. However their line seems to have changed since *Gerry Healy's* paper *Workers Press* in Britain ran a piece on the case (15 August 1975)! Only in its 4 September issue did the SLL's *Workers News* dutifully come out clearly in defence of the Brisbane Three -- in words. Their new-found solidarity is in fact mostly empty bombast as the SLL has so far done nothing concrete for the defence, not even attending meetings, while proclaiming piously from their newspaper office that "the campaign is at present limited to militant protest. What is posed to the working class in this and every other struggle is the challenge of state power and the necessity to construct the revolutionary party..." -- a "revolutionary" cover for disgusting sectarian abstention from concrete struggle.

The reformist SWL, scenting the possibility of a "mass movement", has dominated the organising of the defence effort in Sydney. Since the Emergency Committee began they have sought to direct all the committee's efforts into building a public forum, hopeful of attracting big-name liberals and reformists and determined to restrict any alternative forms of militant action and the exercise of workers' democracy that might undercut such a perspective.

The SL has consistently argued for a principled united-front defence where all tendencies supporting the defence can do so without any question of their being bureaucratically gagged so that differing strategies of how best to fight state repression and end the oppression of blacks can be fought out. But for the planned 17 October forum the SWL has done its bureaucratic best to ensure, in the name of the "mass movement", that workers' democracy is suppressed. An SL proposal for an open platform, and even a proposal to allot time for short statements of solidarity by individuals and tendencies supporting the defence (originally put forward by an SWL member!) were rejected by the SWL. A proposal at a subsequent committee meeting for four main speakers followed by a discussion period was similarly voted down. Yet again, at the September 29 committee meeting SWLer Steve Painter moved a "time permitting" amendment to a motion



John Garcia at 26 August Sydney public meeting.

of the campaign's Steering Committee to allot a period for discussion or questions, gutting the motion of its content. The amendment was passed, it should be noted, with the 15 SWL members present voting for, while the representatives from the CPA, CL and SL who accounted for almost all the rest of the meeting of about 22 voted against.

The SL has refused to accept this bureaucratic subordination of workers' democracy to the appetites of those who want to build not a militant class defence but a submissive audience for the perfectly orchestrated pronouncements of reformist "celebrities". The success of any strike depends on the rank and file's ability to struggle against the reformist misleaders' attempts to stifle its voice. This is all the more true of a public meeting, the only value of which, besides a certain publicity, is as a forum on the issues raised by the state repression. The SWL wants to ensure that what is said is confined to reformism, but the success of this defence requires breaking the political monopoly of the reformists. To gain broad support a united front must allow *all* who stand by its limited, immediate aims to be heard. Most importantly, the best defence of the Brisbane Three is a *revolutionary* defence, pointing out the true nature of class "justice" under bourgeois law, tying both this defence case and the struggle against black oppression into the need for a united, politically conscious working class armed with a program for workers' state power, not conciliating the capitalist state. So long as the committee gives no guarantee of an open platform or provision for democratic discussion the SL will have no part in building this forum for reformism.

An SL proposal for a picket outside the Queensland Tourist Bureau on October 13, the day the trial is scheduled to begin (coinciding with similar actions in Brisbane and Melbourne), has also been adopted by the Sydney committee (supported by the CPA and CL and accepted by the SWL). Unlike the SWL's tame and respectable variety of public meeting, the picket can be both a device to publicise the defence and a demonstration of concrete active support, and if in a small and limited way, still an example of the type of militant class action needed to defend the Brisbane Three.

In Melbourne the SWL has combined with SWAG, AUS bureaucrats and Campaign Against Racial Exploitation (CARE) liberals to prevent an open platform at the demonstration being organised on October 13. The defence committee decided that there would be four to six speakers and that any further speakers would be decided by the blacks present. Here bureaucratic exclusionism is blended with a nauseating, patronising liberalism. The SL is not willing to join the work of the committee to build and organise a closed platform, though we still support the demonstration as a concrete action in defence of the Brisbane Three.

An undemocratic defence campaign prevents the independent mobilisation of the full strength of the working class. In willingly suppressing workers' democracy the SWL (and those like the CPA, SWAG, CL which have gone along with the SWL's plans) show that they have no interest in mobilising and educating the working class in communist politics, the central task of a revolutionary party to advance in every concrete struggle in order to advance the class struggle as a whole. ■

## DEFEND WALKER, GARCIA AND FOGARTY!

### DROP THE CHARGES!

The vicious frame-up trial of anti-racist militants Denis Walker, John Garcia and Lionel Fogarty opens in Brisbane on Monday, 13 October. They face up to 14 years for alleged extortion.

**PICKET:** Queensland Tourist Bureau, Sydney.  
Monday 13 October 4.30 pm

Called by the Emergency Committee to defend the Brisbane 3.

## Defend printers' strike pickets!

Following the Melbourne printers' strike in August the Spartacist League initiated a Committee to Defend the *Age/Herald-Sun* pickets around the demands "Defend the arrested *Age/Herald-Sun* pickets!" and "Drop the charges!", pointing out that the prosecution of these militants is an attack on workers' right to picket and the whole labour movement.

Endorsers of the committee include Ted Bull (Secretary, Waterside Workers Union)\*; Jack Cambourne (FEDFA)\*; Communist League; Barry Egan (AWU)\*; Jennie George, Col Rennie (NSW Teachers Federation)\*; LaTrobe Communist Club; LaTrobe Socialist Youth Alliance; LaTrobe Spartacist Club; LaTrobe University SRC; Merv Nixon (South Coast TLC)\*; Mick O'Grady (organiser, Storemen and Packers Union)\*; N O'Reilly (Australian Journalists Association)\*; Plumbers and Gasfitters Union; Australian Meat Industry Employees Union; Dick Scott (AMWU)\*; G Slater (Australian Postal and

Telecommunications Union)\*; Socialist Workers Action Group; Spartacist League; Keith Wilson (Newcastle Trades and Labour Council)\*.

Pickets have been held at each of the hearings with supporters of the Spartacist League, Socialist Workers Action Group, arrested picketer and CL member David Armstrong and members of the Printing and Kindred Industries Union present (the Socialist Workers League refused to join the picket, describing it as a "sectarian manoeuvre"). Convicted so far have been David Armstrong (fined \$200), Michael Sheridan (fined \$40), Tony Peck (fined \$25), Michael O'Donald (fined \$25), John Campbell (\$100 bond for one year). The cases against Clive Pringle and LaTrobe Spartacist Club member Bruno Mascitelli were dismissed.

Further pickets will be held at City Court, Russell St, Melbourne on October 29 and November 11.

For information telephone (03) 429 1597.

\* Affiliation listed for identification purposes only.

## ... Defend Fretilin

(quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 September 1975)! Clearly, FRETILIN hopes to avoid provoking Indonesia; but it is obvious that Jakarta has no intentions of seriously negotiating anything but the terms of FRETILIN's surrender. Only the Indonesian working class -- which workers in East Timor itself must identify their future with -- has both the potential power and the objective need to stop the generals' plots.

The independence of East Timor is important to the working class for a number of reasons. There could be no gains by the oppressed or economic development under the intolerable colonialism of Portugal, which imposed brutal, repressive and exploitative conditions in East Timor. At the same time 400 years of Portuguese domination have set it off from Indonesian Timor sufficiently to provide the basis for its development as a distinct nation. The oppression of minority nationalities throughout Indonesia by the dominant Javanese-centred Indonesian nation's ruling class is a key obstacle to the unity of the Indonesian proletariat, and thus East Timor's right to remain independent from Indonesia *must* be scrupulously upheld by the working class. Furthermore it is clear that there would be no real progress for East Timor as part of a *capitalist* Indonesia which would press down the Timorese masses under the weight of capitalist exploitation, Indonesian chauvinism and political repression, and US and Japanese imperialism.

But it is equally clear that in independence East Timor faces insurmountable difficulties. Weak and in need of massive aid, if it repels Indonesia it will quickly become an arena for neo-colonialist imperialist exploitation. Moreover, in East Timor the struggle for national independence is *not* directly linked with the struggle of an oppressed peasantry for agrarian reform. Class society in the rural areas is too rudimentary to have produced the feudal or semi-feudal Asiatic systems of land tenure which prevail in more advanced under-developed nations, and class development in the towns is correspondingly marginal. Timor is not Vietnam. The tasks of the bourgeois revolution in East Timor only

CONTINUED FROM PAGE EIGHT

## Civil war . . .

trained and supplied by Zaire, with substantial assistance by the Chinese Stalinists, who are willing to support these vile anti-Communists against the Russians' MPLA. Zaire also is the headquarters for the Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda Enclave (FLEC), which declared Cabinda "independent" on August 1 and named one Luis Ranque Franque president of its emigre government. This FLEC, which should be called the Gulf Oil Liberation Front, is bankrolled by foreign interests, and its leader, Ranque Franque, is a former high official of the French oil imperialists. Through the FNLA and FLEC Mobutu aspires to pounce on Cabinda and establish Angola as a client state of Zaire, or at least annex its northern territories.

The UNITA, led by Jonas Savimbi, has the support of the apartheid government of South Africa and Zambia. Courting the Portuguese landowners and business elite, Savimbi has opposed any nationalizations and favors increased imperialist investment in Angola. As a result, the Portuguese as well as the South African white regimes have been "flocking to UNITA" (*Le Monde*, 21 April). The *Johannesburg Star* in one issue alone (3 May) carried four articles on Savimbi, each overflowing with effusive praise; one article, entitled "Savimbi: Man of the Hour", hailed Savimbi as "the hope of thousands of Angola whites". Similarly, *Newsweek* (23 June) reported: "West European businessmen are lining up behind Savimbi, who shuttles around the country in a Hawker Siddeley executive jet that belongs to Lonrho, Ltd., a giant British mining and industrial empire."...

Like Zaire, South Africa also is eyeing Angola for annexations or establishment of a client state carved out of the territory presently held by UNITA. Already the South African army is reported to have invaded Angola and occupied the strategic Cunene Dam in the south (*Economist*, 16 August).

In Angola, where the native bourgeoisie is non-existent as a class, where the proletariat is weak and lacking developed class-consciousness, and where the vast rural population is divided by myriad tribal and ethnic differences, any of the petty-bourgeois nationalist formations which might come to power through military means will establish a regime of a bonapartist character, becoming the new middlemen for continued imperialist exploitation. The Angolan nationalists will follow in the steps of Nkrumah, who banned strikes and imprisoned labor militants; Nyerere, who outlawed working-class organizations; and Sekou Toure, who instituted forced labor. ■

have meaning in the context of the permanent revolution in Indonesia as a whole. It is only as part of a socialist federation of the Indo-Malay archipelago, key to which is an Indonesian workers state, that East Timor can progress.

The realities of the permanent revolution are lost on opportunists such as the Healyite Socialist Labour League (SLL), which has nearly equaled the most sycophantic left liberals in its "unconditional support" for FRETILIN. The 28 August issue of its paper *Workers News* published a page-length interview with Horta without a peep of criticism for his frankly nationalist, anti-Marxist views. It further demanded that the *bourgeois* Australian Labor government, among other things, "defend the Timorese revolution"(!) and "oppose any attempts at [Indonesian] invasion".

This is, of course, ridiculous. Australia remains a firm ally of Indonesia. Whitlam's rotten policy of fronting for the generals is the most rational policy for the Australian bourgeoisie. However, Australia's obvious military inability to stop an Indonesian invasion if it wanted to is galling to the mini-imperialist ambitions which lie behind the fraudulent "concern" of the bosses' parties for East Timor's self-determination and the demagoguery of Country Party leader Doug Anthony in calling for an Australian intervention. The SLL's demands are a gross capitulation to this chauvinism, an open call for the Australian bosses to go to war against their Indonesian counterparts, only to impose their own domination on East Timor by spilling the blood of Australian and Indonesian workers. In contrast, the September *Australasian Spartacist* demanded: "Keep Australian bosses and their state out of East Timor!"

The 11 September *Workers News* attempts to cover up by launching an absurd attack on the Spartacist League. Aside from a pathetic lie

CONTINUED FROM PAGE THREE

## Healy's Pabloism . . .

"Stalinism and Trotskyism in Vietnam", *Workers Vanguard* no 20, 11 May 1973.)

To justify its abandonment of the proletariat, revisionism must systematically falsify history. Perhaps the most disgusting example in Johns' series is his account of the smashing of the proletarian insurrection in Saigon in 1945 and the murders of the Trotskyists who led it (notably the ICL). At that time when the imperialists moved against the Vietminh spontaneous resistance broke out, channelled mainly through the Trotskyist-led People's Committees. Before they eventually fled, the Vietminh, desperate to negotiate with the "democratic imperialists", rounded up and butchered the Trotskyists and militants leading the struggle. Johns argues in chorus with the Vietminh, Denis Freney and Pierre Rousset that the odds were too great and "to risk all on a hasty and ill-prepared uprising, against a large and well-armed army would have thrown away everything".

This is a political bloc with the Vietminh, an apology for its smashing of the insurrection. Of course Johns decries these murders -- because "it deprived them [the VWP] of a clear understanding of the permanent revolution [and] therefore disarmed them in the face of imperialism and Stalinism" (*Workers Press*, 7 August 1975). The program and actions of the victims was wrong, but their "understanding" was valuable to the struggle?! It was, comrades of the IC, their valuable *understanding* of the *permanent revolution*, which led these militants *in practice*, contrary to *your* program for Vietnam, to organise the *proletariat*. But now at least the real motive becomes clear for Johns' call for a "section of the IC" in Vietnam -- a mere figleaf for tailing the Stalinists. It is not to organise the proletariat and poor in political revolution against the bureaucracy, but to give the bureaucracy some "understanding"! Gerry Healy will soon straighten out a few of these questions with the VWP leadership. After all, Stalinism, deformed workers states,

that the SL is guilty of "refusal to give support to the national liberation struggle and their support for their 'own' bourgeoisie [!]", the "Editorial Board of Workers News" condemns the SL because it "calls for independence, but raises no demand for the recognition of FRETILIN. In fact they repeat the arguments used by Whitlam that an independent Timor would not be a viable state." We explained, with facts the SLL has not refuted, the *bitter truth* that East Timor's independence in an imperialist world is unviable, not from Whitlam's bourgeois standpoint but for the *proletariat* -- that East Timor's rights and its development can only be advanced by workers' revolution throughout Indonesia. And we explained why immediate independence for East Timor is *all the same a necessity*. Apparently the SLL thinks the need for independence *guarantees* that independence will be viable. *Only a bourgeois nationalist could believe this*. As for the "recognition" of FRETILIN, the Healyites typically have fetishised this diplomatic formalism, a form of parliamentary cretinism -- as if the SLL really expects the Australian government's "recognition" to decisively aid the revolution!

Although by 11 September the SLL evidently had discovered the "danger" of "the petty-bourgeois nationalist policies of the FRETILIN leaders" the SLL continues to wholeheartedly endorse FRETILIN's petty-bourgeois nationalist illusions in East Timor self-sufficiency -- the real content of which is its eager appeals to be taken under the wing of Australian capitalism, the Portuguese generals and the UN. The SLL totally ignores the Indonesian proletariat. It makes no mention of the need for the political independence of the working class from the FRETILIN nationalists. It refuses to call on Timorese workers to *break* from FRETILIN, to call for an independent revolutionary vanguard of the working class. This liquidationism is a complete abandonment of Trotskyism. ■

the crushing of the working class and international betrayal are just a matter of the VWP leadership's "bad ideas"! And this degenerate idealism and opportunist groveling from the loudest self-proclaimed "experts" on the struggle for dialectical materialism! Ideas are based in material reality, comrades of the IC!

Most amazing is that *nowhere in Johns' whole series is there any mention that nothing even resembling soviets is in existence in Indochina!* Why is it that a "revolutionary leadership" should establish a state lacking any organs of workers' democracy, just as did Stalin by smashing soviet democracy in the Soviet Union? Johns calls Saigon and Hanoi "deformed workers states" but attacks as "petty bourgeois" anyone who openly and honestly calls these regimes Stalinist. Indeed, Johns calls openly for "critical support" to the VWP! Healy's own past words condemn him. Notwithstanding his confusion on Castro's regime, in 1963 he argued against the Pabloists who gave Castro "critical support":

"If Cuba is an 'uncorrupted workers' regime' how do we explain the absence of workers' councils? What explanation is there other than the preservation of the independence of the State power by Castro and his movement, *against* the working class as well as against imperialism?" (emphasis in original) (National Committee of the (British) SLL (precursor of the WRP), "Opportunism and Empiricism", 23 March 1963; published in *Trotskyism versus Revisionism*, vol 4, p 100)

The *Workers Press* "analysis" of Indochina demonstrates why, their rhetoric aside, the Healyites stand in the same camp as the Pabloites, renegades from Marxism -- an obstacle to political revolution in Indochina, to the forging of a revolutionary Trotskyist leadership that can oust the nationalist bureaucrats and lead the working class to political power. The IC fake "Fourth International" rejects the path of Trotsky, consistently represented today only by the international Spartacist tendency. Forward to the reforging of the Fourth International! ■

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## Civil war in Angola

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In Angola the fierce fratricidal feuding between the three rival independence movements -- the radical-nationalist Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the anti-Communist National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and the pro-imperialist National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) -- has exploded the fragile June truce and with it the dysfunctional transitional coalition government established by the Portuguese last February, plunging the country into the holocaust of civil war.

In the past several weeks alone thousands of Angolans have perished as the nationalist forces, each contending for hegemony, collide again and again in bloody clashes along shifting battle lines. In the recent eruption of fighting the MPLA has driven the FNLA out of the Angolan capital, Luanda, while the FNLA and UNITA together have battled their way into the major harbor city of Lobito.

While not yet the direct victims of the carnage, most of Angola's 500,000 whites are stampeding to flee the country. With the 24,000 Portuguese troops in Angola rebelling against further involvement in colonial wars, the pronouncement by the Portuguese High Commissioner that Portugal was resuming executive control of

Angola on August 14 was brusquely dismissed by everyone.

The fighting still rages and Angola may continue to be carved up by the three nationalist movements. The MPLA controls a central zone stretching from Luanda eastward to Henrique near the Zaire border, as well as the fabulously oil-rich enclave of Cabinda. The FNLA holds sway over the northern territory and has pockets south of Luanda. The UNITA commands the city of Nova Lisboa and the entire southern slice of the country.

The regional strongholds of each of the nationalist forces are by no means accidental, but correspond to the different tribal and social groups upon which each is based. While in the past having support among some eastern tribes, the MPLA at present draws the core of its support from the working class and plebeian masses of the major cities, including the petroleum complex in Cabinda. The FNLA and UNITA remain tribalist organizations. The FNLA represents the Bakongo tribes of the north, and its leader, Holden Roberto, actually is the worshipped head of the Bakongo dynasty. UNITA is based on the Ovibundu and Chokwe tribes of the south.

The long-standing antagonisms between the three groups are rooted in historic tribal wars and ethnic hostilities. Since each group lacks the social base sufficient to enable it to emerge



MPLA soldiers in Luanda.

as the preponderant power to rule and exploit black labor in an "independent" Angola, each nationalist force feels the compulsion to destroy the social base of the rival movements.

The conflagration in Angola has sparked panic on tribal lines, and already population transfers are underway. Many Ovibundu who worked the coffee plantations and diamond mines in the FNLA-held north have fled to the UNITA territories in the south. During the battle for Luanda, Cape Verdians, many of whom are sympathetic to the MPLA, were attacked by the FNLA, while thousands of Bakongo fled to the north after being subjected to reprisals by the victorious MPLA.

Communists demand the immediate and unconditional independence of Angola and all other Portuguese colonial possessions. Despite the treacherous and compromising petty-bourgeois leaderships of the MPLA, FNLA and UNITA, we extend military support (as distinguished from political support) to these nationalist forces when they are struggling against or are attacked by the imperialists. While both the MPLA and the FNLA in the past have fought the Portuguese, the MPLA, it should be recognized, generally has opposed Portuguese colonial rule more decisively and battled the Portuguese forces more consistently than the FNLA.

But in the present highly unstable situation, where the Portuguese colonial apparatus is disintegrating and its army for the moment remains peripheral to the conflict, and where the civil war poses the possibility of tribalist genocide, we cannot categorically call for the military victory of one force over the others.

However, unlike the FNLA and UNITA, the MPLA draws its present support from the masses of urban dispossessed, semi-proletarians and working-class elements. For the FNLA and UNITA to defeat the MPLA, the FNLA and UNITA would have to conduct wholesale slaughter and terrorism, decimating, demoralizing and dispersing the plebeian mass which can form the basis for a future independent movement of the working people.

In specific confrontations between the MPLA and FNLA and/or UNITA, most important in the battles for Luanda and Lobito, communists in Angola, while never ceasing to attack politically the treacherous MPLA leadership, might pursue the tactic of proposing episodic, concrete fighting agreements, military blocs, with the MPLA forces to defend the proletariat and poor. We recognize, however, that should communists in the course of this struggle begin to rally around their program and leadership MPLA supporters or especially to split a section of the MPLA ranks away from their bourgeois leaders, then the MPLA would turn on and savagely attack not only the communists but also its own ranks. The task of a military bloc thus could abruptly shift to defending an independent proletarian formation from the MPLA, not to mention the FNLA and UNITA.

Given their weak social bases, none of these nationalist formations who aspire to exploit the Angolan masses can hope to rule without a foreign sponsor or overlord. The MPLA receives substantial military and material aid from the Soviet Union and may well establish a self-proclaimed "socialist" (but in fact capitalist) state diplomatically aligned with Russia, not unlike Congo-Brazzaville or Somalia.

The FNLA is subservient to imperialist stooge Mobutu of Zaire (Holden Roberto is Mobutu's brother-in-law). The FNLA military units are

Continued on page seven

### Indonesian workers must smash generals' plot

## Defend FRETILIN!

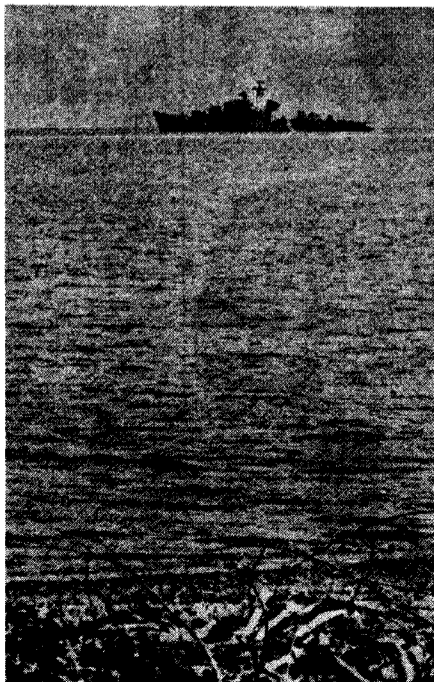
The civil war in East Timor has resulted in a military victory of the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (FRETILIN) over the reactionary Timor Democratic Union (UDT). By the end of August, FRETILIN, largely because it gained the support of the oppressed, was able to recapture the capital, Dili, from the UDT which, representing the most privileged Timorese and Portuguese settlers, had staged a coup on 11 August. By 7 September Baucau, the other important centre, had been retaken; a week later FRETILIN was in full control except for a tiny area on the border of Indonesian Timor. The UDT, most of its indigenous supporters having fled to Darwin or West Timor, has apparently split, with some elements joining FRETILIN and its main leadership joining with APODETI (the established pro-Indonesian Timorese party) to conduct a guerrilla campaign against FRETILIN under Indonesian sponsorship and with the direct intervention of some Indonesian forces across the border into East Timor.

The Jakarta generals have been eager to gobble up East Timor since the opening of the Portuguese Revolution in April 1974. Suharto has held in check the Indonesian military's sentiment for an open invasion in order to pursue a more sophisticated strategy of propaganda, intimidation and sabotage, and now guerrilla warfare against the de facto independent state set up by FRETILIN in the wake of its victories and the

Portuguese departure. But ominously, Jakarta has also sent a naval taskforce to blockade East Timor, cutting off FRETILIN from any aid (while the UDT and APODETI receive full Indonesian backing). FRETILIN's position is precarious, its military supplies severely limited and facing food shortages resulting from the disruption of East Timor's subsistence agriculture and food imports.

With the now openly pro-Indonesian UDT driven into Suharto's embrace the conflict is no longer one essentially between two wings of an indigenous nationalist movement. The defence of East Timor's national rights now means the military defence of FRETILIN. FRETILIN itself remains an essentially bourgeois-nationalist party resting on a petty-bourgeois layer, with support from the masses but absolutely no perspective capable of truly advancing the interests of the masses or of successfully defending East Timor. During the struggle against the UDT they emphasised a radical line of immediate independence; now they have returned to their previous accommodationism. The bonapartist Portuguese military is incapable of governing East Timor and has been striving merely to maintain some shreds of influence through attempted negotiations. Yet FRETILIN leader Jose Ramos-Horta announced on 8 September: "FRETILIN recognises the Portuguese Government as the only authority in East Timor"

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Right: Indonesian destroyer off East Timor.

Left: FRETILIN troops in Dili.