



Protectionist "solutions" serve only bosses

For class unity with Japanese workers!

For internationally co-ordinated strikes against shipbuilding layoffs!

Amid the horse-trading over beef quotas and fishing rights the keynote of the Australia-Japan ministerial conference in mid-January, as trumpeted by the press here, was a condemnation of Australian trade-union militancy. Japanese ship-owners, particularly, are annoyed by the numerous occupations of their ships carried out by Australian shipbuilding workers in protest against the transfer of work to Japan.

A week after the L/NCP ministers returned from Tokyo, ACTU president Bob Hawke journeyed there as well. But the purpose of Hawke's trip was not, of course, to discuss with Japanese unionists joint action against the burgeoning threat of massive unemployment and thereby undercut a dangerous nationalist rivalry for jobs. No, Hawke intended to speak with Japanese captains of industry, to ease their concern over Australian strikes and implore them to invest in mineral-rich Western Australia by offering his assurance of "good" industrial relations in the future.

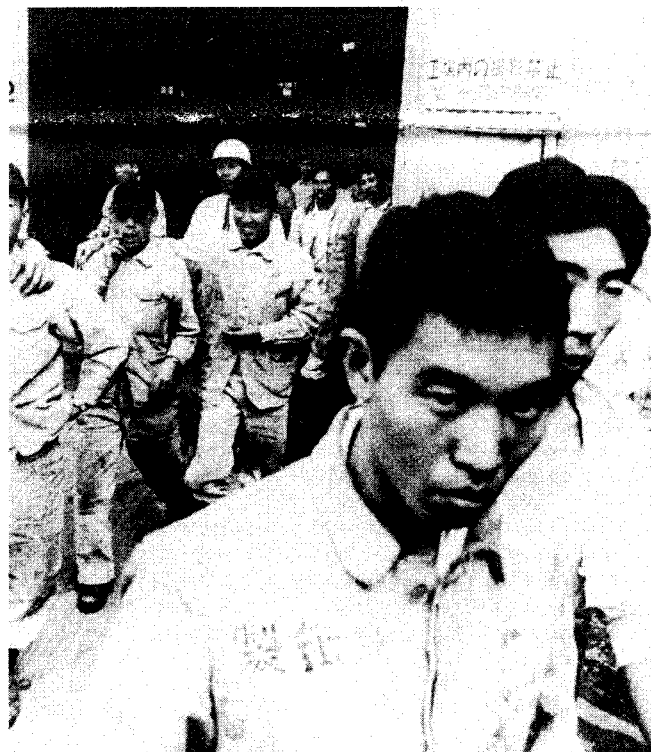
While the chauvinist protests, which have now been called to a halt by the bureaucrats, may have annoyed Japanese tycoons they did nothing to save the jobs of Australian workers. On 10 January the NSW Labor premier, Neville Wran announced the sacking of 323 Newcastle Dockyard workers. The workforce had already been cut from 2000 to 1200 in the last four months. The Wran government has made it clear that at best only a token force of a few hundred workers will remain to do repair work -- if there are union guarantees on productivity and industrial disputes.

Mass layoffs hit Japanese shipyards

Nor have Japanese dockyard workers escaped the threat of mass retrenchments. The current international recession has throttled back orders for all categories of ships, particularly the highly lucrative oil tankers. Faced with rock-bottom demand and no likelihood of improvement any time soon the government has decided to slash shipyard capacity to 65 per cent of its present level in the next year, thus maintaining its present 55 per cent share of waning world production. Twenty thousand subcontracted employees have been laid off over the last two years and thirty thousand workers are currently redundant, although most of them have apparently been offered compensation and retraining by the government. The shipping tycoons are reluctant to permanently put off workers and thereby risk shattering the carefully maintained structure of Japanese labour/management relations in which the promise of lifetime employment is an important barrier to proletarian class consciousness. However the present cutbacks are so massive that about 100,000 permanent retrenchments are projected over the next few years (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 24 December 1976).

In this context, yet a third delegation visited Japan two months earlier, sponsored by

the "left-wing" Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union (AMWSU). In a 7 December conference with the Council of Japanese Shipbuilding Unions the delegation, which included AMWSU national organiser and CPA member Jim Baird and Newcastle State Dockyard organiser Jack Kidd, shamelessly asked for assurances that the ANL ships destined for the Australian coastal trade not be built by Japanese labour -- ie, that Japanese workers should give up their jobs. The Japanese union leaders explained that while they were sympathetic they too had difficulties, having already agreed to the government's cutback with its attendant mass retrenchments. Clearly



at this conference no one needed lessons in class-collaborationist betrayal.

The union misleaders were able to agree that the proposed conference of shipbuilding unions which was to take place in August 1978 should be brought forward to an earlier date "in view of the serious situation in the industry, particularly with the developing economic challenge in shipbuilding coming from Taiwan, Korea and other similar low paid areas" (*AMWSU Monthly Journal*, January 1977).

Given the proven class-collaborationist character of the union bureaucracy this clearly does not herald the urgently necessary fight, led by Japanese and Australian shipbuilding and maritime workers, to enforce union rights, wages and conditions at the highest international level for their class brothers and sisters in Taiwan and Korea (where they earn just forty cents per hour!), but rather a wretched bloc with their respective bourgeoisies directed in the first place against the workers in those countries.

Australian and Japanese shipyard workers must not allow themselves to be played off against one another by their respective industrialists. Hawke's servile promises of class peace to the Japanese bourgeoisie and attempts to rip off Japanese jobs can only inflame a nationalistic competition for jobs. It is necessary instead to call a co-ordinated joint strike of Japanese and Australian maritime industry unions to reverse the layoffs in both countries. Such a strike



Shipbuilding unions' "solution" to Australian layoffs -- sack Japanese workers.

would include shipyard occupations supported by sympathy strikes of watersiders and seamen, and would call for a shorter work week at no loss in pay and government/employer-financed job retraining where necessary, at full pay. Given the predominant role of the Japanese shipbuilding industry in the world market, a successful campaign of this sort would have immediate repercussions for beleaguered shipbuilding workers around the world.

Class-struggle militants must above all fight unceasingly against the racist and chauvinist prejudices inherent in such rivalry -- particularly given the long and filthy history of anti-Oriental racism which pervades all layers of Australian society. Yet the Spartacist League has been the only working-class tendency to come out openly and resolutely against the protectionist menace since the shipyards crisis began last August.

Fake-lefts capitulate to nationalism

We have noted in the past the backhanded support offered by the ostensible Trotskyists of the Socialist Labour League (SLL) to the protectionist barrage through the refusal of either their press or their supporter at Cockatoo Island dockyard, AMWSU convenor Billy Haggerty to oppose it (see "Shipyard jobs on the brink", *ASp* no 38, December 1976). But now *Workers News* (20 January 1977) has taken to openly exploiting anti-Japanese sentiments under the guise of fighting Japanese government attacks on Australian unions. Commenting on the ministerial conference, the front page blares, "FRASER GETS HIS ORDERS" -- "SMASH UNIONS SAYS JAPAN GOVT.!" *Workers News* thus lines up with the attempts of the union bureaucracy to shift the blame for attacks on Australian workers from their own bourgeoisie to "foreigners". When the traitors of the Second International voted for the Kaiser's war credits in 1914, they, too, rationalised that they were

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Maoist economics
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Splits and fusions . . . without program

Communist League in limbo

Scarcely more than four years after splitting from the Socialist Workers Party (SWP -- then Socialist Workers League) to found the Communist League (CL), John McCarthy announced his return to the fold, along with two other leading CL cadre (to be followed a week later by two more). But no political changes were announced in this "fusion": McCarthy remains loyal to the SWP's factional opponent in the "United" Secretariat -- Ernest Mandel's centrist International Majority Tendency (IMT) -- and, therefore, presumably, to the politics of the CL, its Australian adherent (see *Direct Action*, 25 November 1976). Thus ended his four years as central leader of the CL.

In a "Statement by the Political Committee of the Communist League" (*Militant*, December 1976), McCarthy's ex-followers attacked his defection and subsequent "fusion" as unprincipled and asked if he now considered the 1972 split and the independent existence of the CL to have been a "mistake".

Given that *success* is the idol of Pabloism, would the crumbling remnants of the CL expect McCarthy -- or Mandel, for that matter -- to answer anything but a resounding "Yes!?" The CL is now smaller than at its founding, qualitatively weaker (having lost numerous cadre) and back to a monthly press; the SWP, larger and organisationally more competent to begin with, has moved to a weekly press and carved a niche as the "Trotskyist" variety of "radical" social democracy.

While the CL statement today claims that the 1972 split resulted from a "politically unclear fusion", both McCarthy's Brisbane-based Labour Action Group and the Socialist Review group (which became the SWL immediately prior to merging) were by then already firmly committed to their respective brands of USec revisionism. Only the year before, McCarthy had rejected a merger on the basis of deep-seated differences over their orientation to trade-union work, the ALP and the women's and anti-war movements. (For a more detailed account of the early history of the CL, see "Two roads to betrayal", *ASP* no 7, April 1974.)

The newly formed CL brushed off the SWL's disingenuous attempt to lay the burden of the split at their feet by pointing to the *political* necessity for the split:

"They reduce the fundamental questions of politics to the alleged inability of comrades to 'accept majority discipline'. Of all the questions that concerned us this was the least of our problems....

"... Do they accept responsibility for their political positions? If they do then they bear a responsibility for the split."

("Statement by the Political Committee of the Communist League on the split in S.W.L./S.Y.A.", *Information Bulletin*, 24/8/72)

The CL split to promote Mandelism, but Mandel was not about to upset the precarious factional equilibrium within the USec for a handful of Australians. According to a CL sympathiser resident in London at the time, he warned that the USec might not recognise the CL at all if "our forces were substantially lesser than SWL -- i.e. if they have an effective, numerically larger, reg-

ular newspaper" (letter to Keith Olerhead from Annette I, 10 September 1972). In another letter (30 September) the correspondent "explained":

"I hope you got the correct impression about the talk with Mandel -- he is definitely very concerned about our political (not just numerical) development *but we must be concerned about realities.*" (emphasis added)

The momentum of the split from the reformist SWL did impel one CL member to break from Pabloist opportunism entirely. Initially attracted to the Spartacist tendency's analysis of the American SWP, Keith Olerhead soon came to recognise that, "Comrades Mandel and McCarthy cannot fight the SWP and its Australian agents because both sides share a bankrupt methodology" (*Revolutionary Communist Bulletin* no 7, *The Struggle for Trotskyism in the Communist League*).

Before joining the SL Olerhead attempted to convince his comrades that the USec's "new turn to spontaneously spawned forces within the working class" was proof "merely of a *new opportunist* appetite, a new adaptation" (emphasis in original). The CL had rejected the SWL's capitulation to social democracy only itself to capitulate to militant economism in the trade unions, in the hope that an Australian version of the "new vanguard" was emerging there. But the "new vanguard" described by Mandel was only the latest in a series of Pabloist attempts to latch on to "adequate", "blunted" substitutes for the construction of a Trotskyist vanguard party, leading in practice to liquidationist "deep entries" into non-revolutionary formations.

By remaining in the same international as the SWL, the CL made clear that *its* primary motivation in splitting was certainly *not* "political positions". The sharply divergent appetites of the two tendencies could not be satisfied within the common organisation ... and the Mandelites were in the minority. Pinning its hopes on the "youth radicalisation", the majority had set the organisation's main priority as building the Socialist Youth Alliance (SYA) and recruiting students to reformism. In order to concentrate on *its* priority -- recruiting the "new vanguard" -- the minority-dominated Brisbane branch had effectively dissolved the SYA and publicly rejected SWL positions. Shortly before the opening of an "extraordinary" (ie, bureaucratically constrained) internal discussion called to keep the Mandelites under heel, they walked out. But hopes for rapid growth after the split never materialised and, wracked by centrist contradictions and factional splits, the CL lurched along from one fiasco to another in pursuit of the elusive "new mass vanguard".

The 1975 political crisis overwhelmed the impressionistic CL. Thousands of workers out on the streets, storming the stock exchange, ready for industrial action against the "Fraser dictatorship". Here was the "new vanguard" at last. "Kerr's coup" seemed to transform the bungling, anti-working-class Whitlam government into a martyred victim of a nefarious CIA-inspired conspiracy. Coming as the result of an attack *against*, not by, the ALP government, the short-lived politicisation of the workers never pierced the confines of left-ALP politics. But the CL falsely perceived that a "militant vanguard of young workers" had been radicalised by Whitlam's ouster and prepared itself for great opportunities.

Pointing to the "urgent demands of the class struggle", the tiny organisation which previously had been unable to maintain a regular fortnightly decided to launch a weekly *Militant* committed to an "agitational" campaign to "Bring down the Fraser government and return a Labor government pledged to socialist policies!" From its original ultra-left position that the ALP was essentially a bourgeois party, the CL had shifted to a line which posed the key task for the working class as returning the ALP to governmental power.

Mixed in with the CL's genuinely disoriented reaction to the political crisis was its desire to keep pace with the SWP, whose *Direct Action* had turned weekly early in 1976. But the much smaller, undisciplined CL could not keep pace and the "weekly" *Militant* folded in less than two months. Instead of consolidating and drawing back from this unmitigated fiasco, McCarthy apparently continued his hysterical scramble for success, claiming after the defection that the weekly perspective had been "sabotaged" -- presumably by the entire membership save the McCarthy clique. But McCarthy wanted a weekly and he got one -- *Direct Action*!

With the return to a saner monthly frequency for *Militant* and the loss of a demoralised leadership, the CL may well be experiencing a burst of enthusiasm. The paper has dropped its frenzied muckraking campaign and painfully explains that a new ALP government would offer the working class no real alternative to Fraser. But the politics have not changed with McCarthy's departure. The front-page banner belies the left rhetoric: "Bring Down the Fraser Government!" A "militant vanguard" is seen developing out of the Fairfax strike -- around "immediate [ie, economist] issues"; a "new wave of militancy" is seen emerging around non-"traditional" issues, like Newport and uranium (*Militant*, December 1976). And this "new wave" is apparently led by the likes of ALP Socialist Left idol Bill Hartley, whose opposition to uranium mining *Militant* reports without criticism.

The CL's continuing liquidationist outlook is clear also from *Militant's* (20 January 1977) reply to our characterisation of its "Working Women's Charter" as a "minimal reformist program" last September. In order to justify its accommodation to "all those women prepared to organise within the working class on the question of women's oppression" -- which to the CL's chagrin includes the bureaucrats who have virtually expropriated the charter campaign -- the CL explains that the charter should not be seen as "a sort of program" (in which case it is clearly reformist) but as a "vehicle" which can be made reformist or revolutionary at whim.

Nor has the CL's appetite for unprincipled growth been curtailed. Three years ago the CL, which not only defends the Stalinist states but considers some of them to be revolutionary, accepted Melbourne leftist Bob Dorning, a non-defencist, as a provisional member ... for eighteen months. When it finally moved to drop him from provisional membership, Dorning took virtually the entire Melbourne branch with him and set up the pretentious and short-lived Melbourne Revolutionary Marxists (MRM).

Now, when the old CL leadership took a section of the new Melbourne branch with them into the SWP, the new CL leadership resurrected the old Melbourne branch by re-admitting at least two ex-CLers, one ex-MRMite, Chris Slee, and the other a former(?) "revolutionary effeminist", Ken Howard, who left the CL on the basis that sex was the fundamental division in society and revolutionary men thus had "to become traitors to the class of men" and "partisans ... of a revolution opposed to ... men" (undated leaflet, "The Effeminist Manifesto"). Throughout this game of political musical chairs not one public statement has been seen repudiating the previous splits/fusions or justifying the present ones on the basis of *political* changes.

For principled politics

The unprincipled manoeuvres carried out by McCarthy and the CL over the years have taken them nowhere but toward the present shambles. The CL had little chance for organisational success in any case. It could not pose as the left alternative to the SWP's reformist "Trotskyism" because the Spartacist League, though much smaller at the time, was clearly to the left of both with an authentically Trotskyist program. "New mass vanguard" types like syndicalists and enthusiasts over "Third World" Stalinism were more likely to make their way into the de-Stalinised, "independently" reformist Communist Party, particularly its Left Tendency. And those

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The Struggle For
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Opposing Healy slanders, suppressing workers democracy:

Fake-Trotskyists hold family reunion

At a London meeting attended by some 1500 people [on 14 January], Ernest Mandel, Pierre Lambert, Michel Pablo and representatives of the American Socialist Workers Party (SWP) were to have shared the same platform for the first time in over 25 years. Behind the speakers was a banner proclaiming, "For Workers Democracy -- Against Frame-Ups and Slanders", and the ostensible purpose of this reunion of renegades from Trotskyism was to condemn the outrageous accusation by Gerry Healy that SWP leaders Joe Hansen and George Novack were "accomplices of the GPU" in Stalin's 1940 assassination of Leon Trotsky.

To be sure, Healy's disgusting slanders deserve nothing but utter contempt from revisionists as they are manifestly absurd and groundless, and, moreover, serve to fuel the Stalinist lie that Trotsky was murdered by "one of his own". But the main purpose of the meeting's organizers lay elsewhere. Planned at an October 1976 session of the "United" Secretariat (USec), at the same time as an abortive pact was worked out between the USec and the French OCI (see "No Tango in Paris", *Workers Vanguard* no 137, 10 December 1976), [the] meeting provided a forum for the chieftains of the squabbling factions of competing revisionists masquerading as Trotskyists to publicly bury the hatchet.

Much of the meeting was an orgy of indignation against Healy and his Stalinist practices, from gangster attacks against other leftists to pernicious cop-baiting and character assassination. Healy richly deserves the harshest condemnation for his venomous slanders and thug-



Fake Trotskyists, fake workers democracy -- Ernest Mandel addressing anti-Healy meeting.

gery, but the ex-Trotskyist dignitaries who use his travesty of anti-revisionism to justify their own maneuvers have little to boast about as partisans of workers democracy.

Starring in the role of "saved" sinner and prodigal son was former Healy lackey Tim Wohlforth. After a dozen years as servile Gauleiter of American Healyism, Wohlforth was blackjacked by his master (and perforce accused of harboring a suspected "CIA agent"). Wohlforth, now a book reviewer for the [US] SWP's *Militant*, appealed for sympathy because of the trials and tribulations he and his companion Nancy Fields faced after being dumped by Healy ("no one knocked on our door"). In the process he inadvertently revealed his own moral cowardice and total unfitness to be a revolutionary leader.

According to Wohlforth, the "hardest thing that I ever said in my life" was to get up in a meeting with Healy and say that he "disagreed with the proceedings". But this "disagreement" was not sufficient to prevent him from voting ("against my convictions") for his own removal as head of the Workers League. By his own testimony, then, Wohlforth demonstrates that he would have stood in the front ranks of the capitulators to Stalin in the 1920s. If he cannot stand up to Healy's blustering, how could he have resisted the onslaught of Stalin, who had the full resources of state power at his command, or the pressures exerted by the bourgeoisie?

In the chummy atmosphere of a family reunion, the meeting also celebrated the "growth and vitality of the Fourth International". Mandel put it most clearly: the meeting was not called to refute Healy's vile frame-up, but "to defend

the Fourth International through our solidarity with comrade Hansen and comrade Novack ... because it needs defending".

The intervention by Lambert of the OCI -- by far the most political of the evening -- gently chided the USec majority for refusing to discuss with the OCI so long as the latter refused to characterize the Mandelites as "revolutionaries" (after all, he pointed out, terms such as "centrist" are a legitimate part of political debate among ostensible Marxists). But at the same time he abandoned the OCI's anti-Pabloist tradition and accepted the USec's ultimatum by several times pointedly referring to this gang of revisionists as "the Fourth International".

Lambert went out of his way to imply that the OCI had never considered the Socialist Workers Party as anything but revolutionary. He claimed that in 1963 when Healy characterized the SWP as centrist the OCI had rejected this label. This bald assertion cannot alter the fact that during the late 1960s and early 1970s the OCI referred to the SWP as "revisionist". Moreover, in 1962 Healy had split the Revolutionary Tendency (RT -- predecessor of the Spartacist League/US) of the SWP when the RT majority refused to sign his dictated statement avowing that the SWP was revolutionary and *not* centrist.

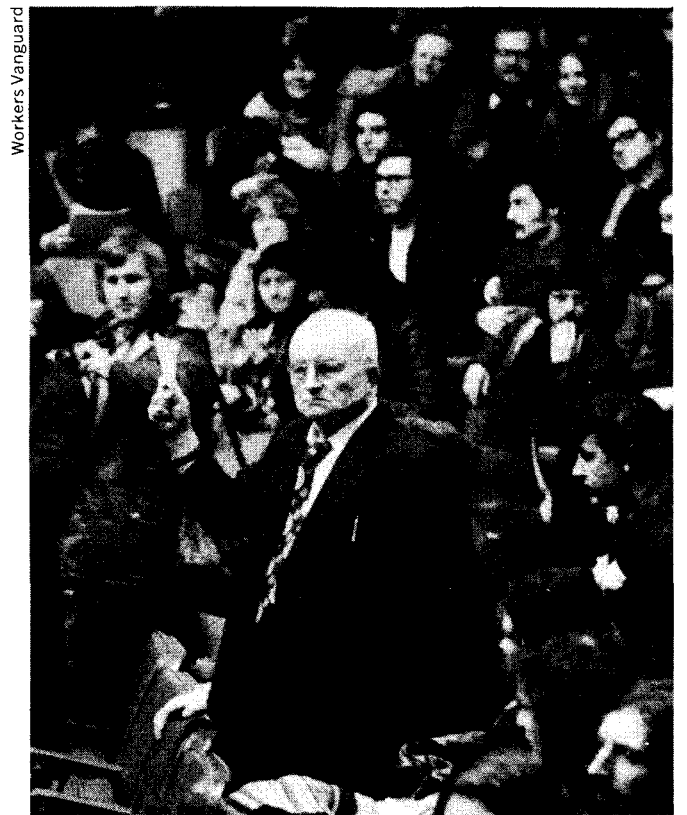
Mandel in his closing speech returned Lambert's compliment, stating that he must "give credit where credit is due" and praising the OCI for having played "an excellent, excellent leading role" in the campaign to free Leonid Plyushch and to defend other left dissidents in the Soviet Union. Referring to the liberation of Plyushch last February, Mandel assimilated the OCI to the USec by triumphantly proclaiming, "we got him out".

Michel Pablo, the dean of anti-Trotskyist revisionism, did not show up, no doubt to the secret relief of Mandel and Lambert, since Pablo no longer maintains any pretense of Trotskyism or adherence to the Fourth International and might therefore give the game away. His message read at the meeting was in many ways the frankest of all. He disparagingly referred to "this nasty quarrel" which was "symptomatic of a certain ideological decomposition in the movement of epigones, who have not succeeded in linking themselves up seriously with the natural movement of the class". But after denouncing the "exacerbated sectarianism of the sects", in the spirit of the evening he went on to propose "our common task" which was to "search with the utmost determination for what can unite us and not to divide ourselves". All that was necessary, said Pablo, was a "common program which corresponds to the current necessities".

The speakers wholeheartedly took up Pablo's admonition. Lambert declared that he did not wish to discuss "who was correct" in 1953, when Pablo caused the split and destruction of the Fourth International with his liquidationist program of "deep entrism" in the Stalinist and social-democratic mass reformist parties. Mandel, recalling Pablo's 1950s talk of a "new world reality" in which the Stalinists could no longer betray, discerned that "Euro-communism" has introduced "new and tremendously vulnerable elements of division" into world Stalinism, which can have "fairly big effects in favor of Trotskyism". He therefore proposed that "all comrades present here, of all different tendencies, factions and organizations", undertake a "common political campaign" to "ask" the European Stalinists to "immediately, openly and publicly rehabilitate all the victims of Stalin, all the victims of the Moscow trials", and to call on the Spanish Communist Party to expel Trotsky's assassin! After all, "It can't hurt to ask!"

Following hard on the USec's prostration before a new wave of popular-frontism in Europe and Latin America, Mandel is proposing a "broad front" of the "family of Trotskyism" to fight "what remains [his emphasis] of the poison of Stalinism today in the working-class movement, in the Communist parties and the trade-union organizations" in Europe. As the Stalinists seek to prove their reliability to the imperialist bourgeoisies, in the classic Pabloist fashion Mandel capitulates to their talk of classless "democracy" rather than exposing its pro-capitalist essence. Is he preparing for entrism in the "Euro-communist" parties?

Any remaining doubts concerning the real purpose of the meeting were dispelled after the scheduled speakers had finished. As chairman Tariq Ali was announcing the end of the proceedings, Gerry Healy rose from the audience and demanded speaking time to answer the chorus of



Gerry Healy attempting to speak at London meeting.

attackers. All serious defenders of workers democracy -- purportedly the central theme of the meeting -- would have wanted Healy to speak, but Ali, with the practised sleight-of-hand of union bureaucrats and shell game operators, called for an immediate vote amidst the uproar, then declared that "workers democracy" had upheld him. As Healy continued to protest, with considerable support among the audience, the chair demagogically silenced him by bursting into the *Internationale* to close the meeting.

This outrageous violation of elementary workers democracy -- at a meeting allegedly called precisely in order to defend it -- again exposes the USec's rotten bureaucratic maneuvers. Moreover, it is only because the decomposition of the "United" Secretariat has reached such a point that it barely exists that this meeting was held at all. Today Mandel and Lambert exchange compliments on the podium and defend the integrity of Hansen and Novack; but when the SWP first sought statements denouncing Healy's slanders a year and a half ago, it took Mandel and company quite a while before coming up with a statement.

None of the organizers of this meeting are true defenders of workers democracy or of the Fourth International. The OCI systematically uses thug violence against its ostensibly Trotskyist opponents on the left. Pablo and his acolytes (today the Mandelite USec majority) refused to defend the Chinese Trotskyists jailed by Mao in 1949-51, slandering them as "refugees from a revolution" for their courageous defense of proletarian democracy against the bureaucratic Stalinist regime. As for the SWP, it responded to Castro's jailing of the Cuban Trotskyists by remarking, in the words of Barry Sheppard, now SWP national secretary, "There are Trotskyists and there are Trotskyists. But if I were in Cuba, I wouldn't be arrested".

While the USec and OCI use Healy's despicable slanders as a convenient excuse for a reunion of the "family" of ex-Trotskyists, the international Spartacist tendency insisted that a genuine and principled programmatic regroupment of authentic Trotskyists can come about only through hard, open debate. A leaflet distributed at the meeting by the London Spartacist Group -- co-signed by the iSt, the Organizacion Trotskista Revolucionaria of Chile and the Trotskyist Faction (expelled) of the German Spartacusbund -- pointed out that "The real political issues which place all these squabbling, slander-mongering, violence-prone elements at one pole and the iSt at the other are currently posed by two decisive considerations: the popular front and the Fourth International".

Exposing the speakers' false pretensions to defending workers democracy, the leaflet explained that behind this lay their capitulation to reformist programs of class collaboration. It concluded, "without the struggle to create a programmatically united and disciplined Fourth International the workers are left to wander into the new traps of capital ... with the assistance of their revisionist would-be 'leaders'". Forward to the rebirth of the Fourth International! ■

(reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 141, 21 January 1977)

The poverty of Maoist economics

by Joseph Seymour

Maoists justify China's increasingly open and all-sided alliance with US imperialism against the Soviet Union -- manifested in Peking's continual warnings to strengthen NATO and in its support to the American-inspired, South African-led invasion of Angola last [Northern Hemisphere] winter -- by raising the assertion that capitalism has been restored in the USSR, which has allegedly become an "aggressive, expanding social-imperialist" state. More importantly, Western Maoist support for China's counterrevolutionary line derives from the belief that China is uniquely socialist, representing an even higher form of socialism than did Russia under Stalin. Thus the seemingly abstract question of what constitutes progress toward communism is an important factional bone of contention among Stalinists, with Maoist apologists dismissing any hesitations about Chinese foreign policy by invoking China's supposedly unparalleled rapid progress toward so-called communism.

The Soviet Stalinist concept of "socialism in one country" always involved a large element of technological dynamism: a faith that backward Russia, through its planned economy, could catch up with the advanced capitalist countries in a generation or less. Stalin's *Problems of Leninism* (1933) asserts: "We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this lag in ten years."

Maoist China is qualitatively even more economically backward than was Russia in the 1930s. The gulf between the productive capacity of the Chinese and American economies is so vast that bridging it in any politically meaningful time period is inconceivable. When the Maoist regime broke with the Soviet bloc in the late 1950s, it was therefore forced to radically alter traditional Stalinist concepts. "Socialism" was re-

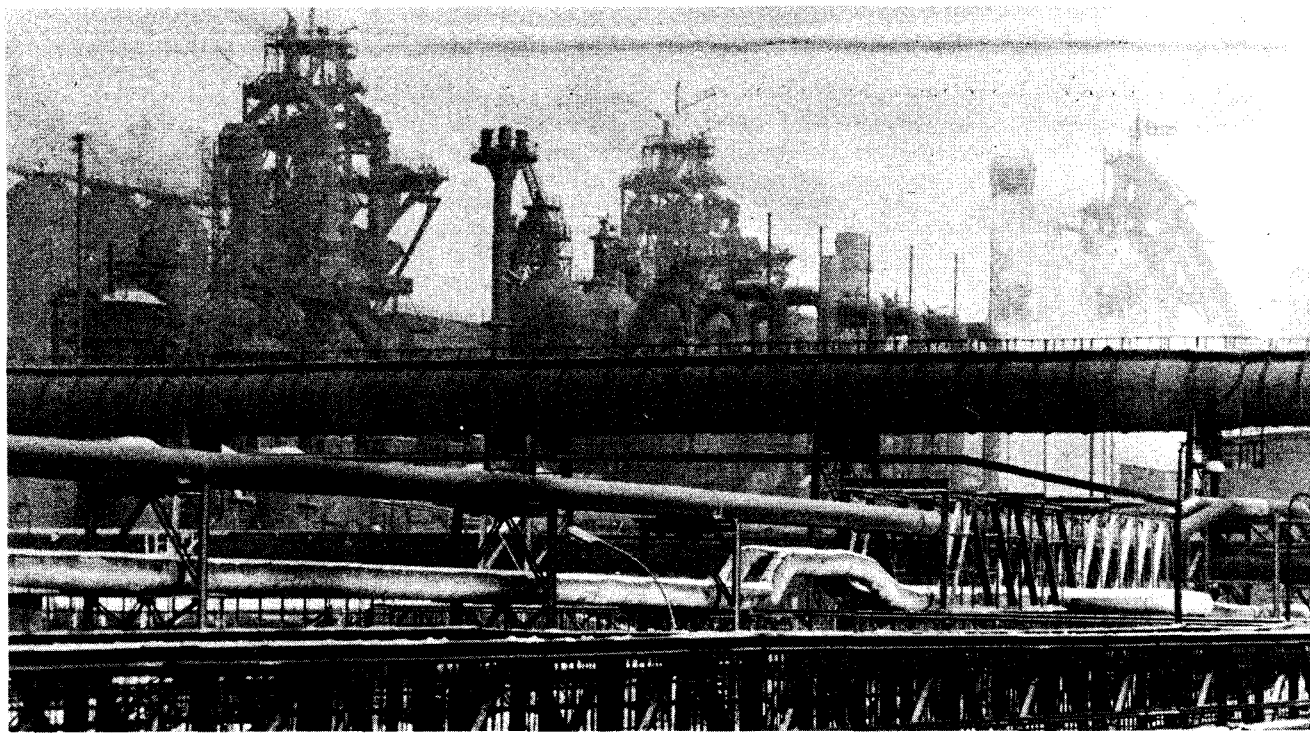
"Third World" Stalinist regimes such as Castro's Cuba or Ho's Vietnam.

Of course, the realities of Chinese economic life are very distant from the idealizations of Western Maoist apologists like Charles Bettelheim, Paul Sweezy and William Hinton. China today is as stratified and as rife with bureaucratic corruption and black-marketeering as Brezhnev's Russia. The economic policies of the Chinese and Soviet bureaucratically deformed workers states have far more in common with one another than either would have with the economic program of a genuinely revolutionary, democratic workers government.

In particular, Chinese economic policy rather closely resembles the regional decentralization of the later Khrushchev period (1958-64). In both cases decentralization resulted from an intra-bureaucratic conflict followed by an attempt to transfer control of economic resources from the centralized administrative/technical apparatus to the local party chiefs. However, the purpose of this article is not to counterpose China's venal, bureaucratic reality to the "radical" Maoist ideal presented by its Western sycophants. Rather it is to expose and attack the reactionary utopian nature of the Maoist ideal itself.

Marx against primitive egalitarianism

Running through Maoist apologetics is an identification of concern for technical progress with "capitalist roadism". Bettelheim, for example, exhorts backward countries to follow China's policy of "self-reliance" and not to base development on importing advanced technology, which he regards as intrinsically capitalistic (!):



Stalin held that "socialism in one country" could be achieved through concentration on heavy industry to the exclusion of consumer goods.

defined so as to be imminently achievable in one of the most impoverished nations on earth.

Far more so than Moscow-line Stalinism, therefore, Maoist ideology is a sustained attack on the fundamental Marxist premise that socialism requires material superabundance through a level of labor productivity far higher than that of the most advanced capitalism. Maoist ideology rests on a *subjectivist* redefinition of class society. Thus socialist relations are achieved through a "cultural revolution", and the process which supposedly restored capitalism in the Soviet Union was located mainly inside the head of Nikita Khrushchev.

Maoism's primitivism and extreme voluntarism -- particularly as presented during the "Cultural Revolution" period -- have had great appeal for petty-bourgeois radicals in the West. It was the promise of an end to alienated labor here and now, without the whole historical period needed to raise the technological and cultural level of mankind, that enabled many of the followers of Marcuse to transfer their loyalty to Maoist China in the late 1960s. It is the belief that China has broken with Soviet-style "economism" to create a veritable "socialist man" that gives Maoism a mystique and appeal not shared by other

"Take, for example, the growth in the technical composition of capital, the apparently 'necessary' growth in the size of units of production in order to obtain a reduction in cost.... Far from being modalities of 'natural laws of technique,' are these not, quite simply, *social laws* -- an effect of the domination of capitalist relations of production over the productive forces, quite concretely, an effect of the *laws of capitalist concentration and centralization*? There are many reasons for thinking that this is the case." (Charles Bettelheim, *Economic Calculation and Forms of Property*, 1975; emphasis in original)

The contrast between a supposedly egalitarian, voluntarist "Chinese road to socialism" and Soviet-style "economism" is clearly stated by Paul Sweezy, who is less concerned than Bettelheim to claim Maoism for orthodox Marxism:

"... the experience of the Chinese Revolution ... has shown that a low level of development of productive forces is not an insuperable obstacle to the socialist transformation of social relations and does not necessarily entail a process of 'primitive accumulation' and the aggravation of inequalities; that it is self-defeating to try to build the material

bases of socialism first, while putting off until later the task of developing compatible social relations...." ("The Nature of Soviet Society, Part 1", *Monthly Review*, November 1974)

And Sweezy goes on to emphasize what he believes to be the unique contribution to Marxism of the "Chinese road":

"It was only in China, where of all countries in the world conditions were most favorable for revolution, that Marxism could finally be purged of its (essentially bourgeois) economic taint." (The Nature of Soviet Society, Part 11", *Monthly Review*, January 1975)

It is the fate of revisionism to rediscover the very doctrines and ideas *against* which Marxism developed. In the case of Maoism we see a clear reversion to pre-Marxian petty-bourgeois conceptions of socialism. The programmatic models constructed by the first socialists -- Babeuf, Owen, Weitling, Cabet -- were moneyless, marketless, self-sufficient productive units where labor was allocated and goods distributed by a central political authority. In short, they were pure versions of the "people's communes" of the Chinese Great Leap Forward period, which Bettelheim claims as a higher form of socialism than the state property of the Soviet Union.

To do historic justice to Babeuf and the other early communists, their model of a just society was necessarily limited and conditioned by the pre-industrial technology prevalent in continental Europe. Marx was able to transcend primitive egalitarian notions of socialism only by assimilating the significance of the industrial revolution in Britain (in large part through his association with Engels).

Virtually from the day he became a communist in Paris in 1843, Marx vehemently attacked the doctrines of "barracks socialism" prevalent among contemporary communists like Weitling and Cabet:

"This type of communism -- since it negates the *personality* of man in every sphere -- is but the logical expression of private property, which is this negation.... Crude communism is only the culmination of this envy and of this levelling-down proceeding from the *preconceived* minimum. It has a *definite, limited* standard. How little this annulment of private property is really an appropriation is in fact proved by the abstract negation of the entire world of culture and civilization, the regression to the *unnatural* simplicity of the *poor* and crude man who has not only failed to go beyond private property, but has not yet even reached it." (Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*; emphasis in original)

And when the Communist League published the first and only issue of its journal, the *Kommunistische Zeitschrift*, in September 1847, it began with an editorial differentiating the League from other contemporary communist tendencies (as well as its own origins in the primitive egalitarian League of the Just):

"We are not among those communists who are out to destroy personal liberty, who wish to turn the world into one huge barrack or into a gigantic work-house. There certainly are some communists who ... refuse to countenance personal liberty and would like to shuffle it out of the world because they consider that it is a hindrance to complete harmony. But we have no desire to exchange freedom for equality. We are convinced ... that in no social order will personal freedom be so assured as in a society based upon communal ownership." (reproduced in David Ryazanov (ed), *The Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels*, 1928)

There is no better proof of the reactionary nature of the Maoist concept of socialism than that it was rejected by the vanguard of the European artisan-proletariat -- the first Marxists -- 130 years ago!

The similarity between pre-Marxian models of socialism and the "radical" Maoist ideal arises because both are ideological expressions of social groups *doomed by historic progress*. Primitive egalitarianism -- "barracks socialism" -- was the response of artisans driven into destitution by the beginnings of the industrial revolution. It was the ideological expression of

an impulse to *escape* from the hostile capitalist environment through the voluntary creation of self-sufficient producers' cooperatives.

The voluntarist Maoist version of "socialism in one country" expresses the false consciousness of a Stalinist bureaucracy in an economically backward deformed workers state isolated in a world dominated by the advanced capitalist powers. The overthrow of world capitalism through international proletarian revolution would sweep away the Chinese Stalinist regime. Therefore the Maoist bureaucracy instinctively rejects international proletarian revolution as the key to a socialist future and projects communism as the *idealization of existing Chinese reality*.

Like Marx in the 1840s, his successors today, the Trotskyists, insist that socialism can only be based on the revolutionary appropriation of the productive forces of the advanced capitalist nations.

Obscurantism in the service of Maoist subjectivism

The most ambitious effort to give the crude, even embarrassing, subjectivism of *Peking Review* editorials the appearance of Marxism is that of Charles Bettelheim, a long-time orthodox French Stalinist won to Maoism in the late 1960s. Bettelheim's works are a lengthy exercise in obscurantism. After tortuous terminological harangues and casuistic logic-chopping, Bettelheim arrives at the predictable conclusion that the class nature of society depends on the attitude of its ruling group. Bettelheim's assertion that capitalism has been restored in the USSR is as distant from scientific socialism as is his Chinese mentors' successive claims that Liu Shao-chi, then Lin Piao and now Chiang Ching were "capitalist roaders" (and long-time double-dealing "capitalist roaders" at that).

Of course, Bettelheim rejects the Marxist understanding of capitalism as a system of generalized commodity production associated with and requiring private ownership of the means of production. He chooses instead to define capitalism as "the separation of the direct producers from the means of production", a vague formulation

"Question 2: What is the aim of the Communists?"

Answer: To organize society in such a way that every member of it can develop and use all his capabilities and powers in complete freedom and without thereby infringing the basic conditions of this society."

—Friedrich Engels, "Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith", 1847

* * * * *

"Only through the interaction of these three elements, state planning, the market, and Soviet democracy, can the correct direction of the economy of the transitional epoch be attained."

—Leon Trotsky, "The Soviet Economy in Danger", October 1932

smacking of New Left libertarianism and anarcho-syndicalism. Bettelheim sees wage labor as the essential element of capitalism:

"The point to be particularly emphasized ... is that it is *the wage-labor relation*, intervening in *commodity production* ... that constitutes a capitalist social relation of production." (*Economic Calculation and Forms of Property*; emphasis in original)

Like everyone else who uses the term "state capitalism" to describe the USSR, Bettelheim gives to it his own, unique definition. Actually he has two fundamentally *different* definitions. State capitalism, for Bettelheim, is *either* the complex of commodity relations *within* the dictatorship of the proletariat, *or* a new *bourgeois* mode of production. This highly confusing terminological dualism is very important for Bettelheim's purpose as an apologist for Chinese Stalinism against the Kremlin.

This becomes clear, or at least clearer, if we contrast genuine anarcho-syndicalism to Bettelheim's Maoism. For an anarcho-syndicalist an economy characterized by wage labor is capitalism, and that's that. But Bettelheim is not a syndicalist -- he is a Stalinist. He firmly believes in the uncontrolled rule of a bureaucratic elite, masquerading as a Leninist vanguard party, which maintains itself in power through violence and terror against opposition arising from the working masses.

In Bettelheim's theoretical schema, if a genuine proletarian vanguard is in power, then "state capitalism" is "subordinated" to the construction of socialism (the case of Maoist China). But if power is not in the hands of a genuine vanguard, then "state capitalism" becomes dominant (as in Brezhnev's Russia):

"In brief, if the state apparatus which owns the means of production (as a result of state control) exists *apart* from the masses, and if, moreover, this apparatus is *not subject to control by a party which is linked to the masses and which helps the masses to struggle to gain control over the use made of the means*

Maoists assert that classes can be abolished in one of the most impoverished economies of the world. Marx, Lenin and Trotsky held that socialism could be achieved only on a world scale, based on the highest level of productive forces.



of production, we are then faced with relations constituting a structure which reproduces the *separation of the direct producers from their means of production*. If under these conditions the relationship between labor power and means of production is expressed through a *wage relationship*, this means that the relations of production are *capitalist relations*, and that those who occupy leading posts in the central state apparatus and associated apparatuses are, *collectively, a capitalist -- a state -- bourgeoisie....*"

"For there can be no dictatorship of the proletariat if the ruling party is not the party of the working class." (Charles Bettelheim [with Paul Sweezy], *On the Transition to Socialism*, 1972; emphasis in original)

Since Bettelheim maintains that the vanguard party can be corrupted and lose its class character by a peaceful organic process, capitalism can be restored without a violent counterrevolution. Thus inherent in Maoism is a fundamental rejection of the Leninist theory of the state in favor of subjectivist voluntarism.

Does Bettelheim provide us with an objective measure -- like the nature and extent of economic planning -- of whether commodity relations are dominant or subordinate in a given collectivized economy? No, he denies that such an objective measure exists. Isn't it true that the market plays a far larger role in China, and that enterprises have greater autonomy there than in Brezhnev's Russia? Illusions! cries Bettelheim. The power of economic planning is bestowed only upon the true disciples. And since the masters of the Kremlin are no longer among the faithful, they have lost the power to plan. Economic planning in the USSR does not exist!

"If such a vanguard does not exist, and, in particular, if the ruling workers' party does not have, or no longer has, the characteristics which make it a vanguard of the working class, then the *political and ideological conditions* which enable planned relations to be dominant over market relations *do not exist*. When this is the case, it is, indeed, possible to *formally* have a document that bears the name 'plan,' but this only conceals the absence of real planning." (*Economic Calculation and Forms of Property*; emphasis in original)

At this point, Bettelheim reunites with the undisguised subjectivism of *Peking Review*. Classes no longer arise from objective economic relations but depend on the attitudes of those wielding political power at any given time. How are we to know if it is a "real" proletarian vanguard engaged in "real" economic planning? On this key question, Bettelheim and his Maoist co-thinkers can only claim revelation by faith -- and the latest purge. We wonder if Bettelheim's own faith that the Chinese Communist Party is a "real vanguard" has been shaken by the purge of Chiang Ching and the other Cultural Revolution "radicals". After all, Bettelheim's theorizing was originally inspired by the Cultural Revolution, all of whose leaders are now either dead or imprisoned as "capitalist roaders".

Bettelheim's assertion that wage labor as it exists in the Soviet Union (and China) is a capitalist relation of production requires further investigation. Running through Bettelheim is a fixation with the money *form* as intrinsically capitalist. A central theme of *Economic Calculation and Forms of Property* is the counterposition of monetary (capitalist) to economic (socialist) calculation in heterogeneous physical units, including different types of labor inputs.

Under capitalism wage labor is the exchange of money-capital for labor time. Money is not any piece of paper which can sometimes be exchanged for commodities. A ration ticket is not money. Money is the *generalized* embodiment of exchange value; according to Marx, money exists as "the universal medium of payment, as the universal means of purchase, and as the universal embodiment of wealth" (*Capital*, vol I, ch 3). What distinguishes money from all other forms of finance is precisely its generalized exchange value. That is why Marx insisted that money could not be ultimately based on government fiat, but only on precious metals which had intrinsic value as the product of labor.

In a capitalist economy, the sale of a consumer good directly and immediately adds to the money-capital of the particular capitalists who produced and distributed it. In contrast, in the Soviet Union there is a rigid separation between the financial flow associated with wages and consumption and that associated with inter-enterprise transactions. This empirical fact is recognized by everyone from Joseph Stalin himself (in his *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*) to every bourgeois expert on the Soviet economy. Only Bettelheim and his Maoist co-thinkers believe that money-capital circulates in the Soviet economy.

The sale of a consumer good in the USSR affects the bank balance of the enterprise which produced it very indirectly through the mediation of higher economic authorities. Furthermore the bank accounts of Soviet enterprises are not money-capital either. Enterprise managers cannot use "their" funds to purchase whatever they want, but only goods specified in the supply plan or subsequently approved by higher-ups. Using capitalist categories to describe the Soviet financial system, one can say that labor is paid in generalized ration tickets and enterprises buy and sell among themselves through the extension and contraction of trade credit, not the circulation of money capital.

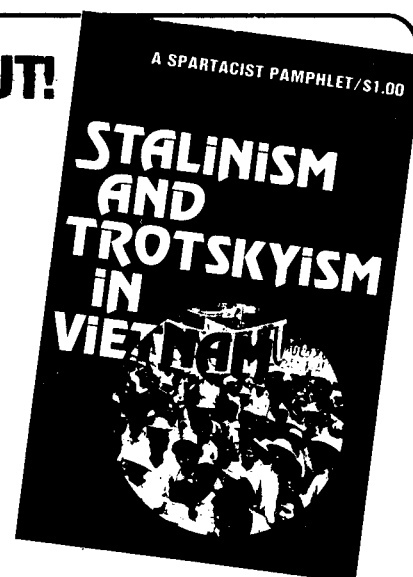
In this respect, the Soviet economy conforms to Marx's own explicit projection of the financial mechanisms of a socialized economy under scarcity:

"In the case of socialized production the money-capital is eliminated. Society distributes labor-power and the means of production to the different branches of production. The producers may eventually receive paper vouchers, by means of which they withdraw from the social supply of the means of consumption a share corresponding to their labor time. These vouchers are *not* money. *They do not circulate.*" (Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol II, ch 18; our emphasis)

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Maoist . . .

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Predictably Bettelheim regards the elimination of commodity forms in production as the goal of socialism. And he sees progress toward this end primarily through "ideological revolutionization":

"Unity among socialist workers must develop on the basis of politics and ideology. Such a unity makes it possible to envisage the eventual elimination of the surviving market relations and the emergence of new socialist social relations, an outcome that is directly related to the *ideological revolutionization achieved by the class struggle unfolding under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party.*" (Charles Bettelheim, *Cultural Revolution and Industrial Organization in China*, 1974; our emphasis)

That Marx regarded differential wage labor as a necessary characteristic of the transition to communism is well-known, being explicitly stated in both the *Critique of the Gotha Program* and *Anti-Duhring*. Only when labor absorbs an insignificant amount of time and energy will individuals freely grant it to the social collective. Marx would have savagely ridiculed as subjective idealism the notion that the elimination of wage labor could be achieved through "ideological revolutionization". In reality, the Chinese bureaucracy's claim to favor "moral" over "material incentives" is a cover for the allocation of labor by *state coercion*, which is both more oppressive and economically less effective than wage labor.

The Chinese bureaucracy's use of state coercion masquerading as "ideological revolutionization" is apparent in the practice of transferring urban student youth to the countryside for indefinite periods. This practice not only generates enormous social discontent, but is probably a net drain on the Chinese economy. The transplanted youth are indifferent, negligent farmers, and the peasants justifiably resent having to partly support and socialize with recalcitrant, labor-shirking youth, who behave as if they were in a prison camp.

Bettelheim's biases also lead him to favor rationing or socialized distribution as opposed to the individual purchase of consumables. However, the aim of socialism is not to impose a uniform way of life, but exactly the opposite: the full development of individual capacity. This development is not primarily spiritual, but requires the individual appropriation of material wealth. Painting and sculpture, for example, require a wide variety of ingredients available in subtle gradations. Within the limits imposed by overall availability, a socialist economic policy seeks to maximize individual choice of consumables.

Rationing subverts this aim, as does "free" distribution of scarce consumables on a first come, first served basis. In the early 1960s, when Fidel Castro and Che Guevara wanted to establish socialism in Cuba overnight, they eliminated charges on telephone calls. The result was that one had to wait hours to make a phone call! Even under the fullest, most perfect workers democracy, rationing, discriminatory pricing and socialized distribution entail an element of administrative arbitrariness and subjectivity. This subjective arbitrariness is magnified many times over in China where the

administrators are an irrational, clique-ridden bureaucracy.

Of course, in times of war or natural disaster administrative control must be rigidly imposed on all sectors of the economy. But as a norm in the dictatorship of the proletariat, and assuming the wage structure is optimal, the market is the most efficient, sensitive and democratic mechanism for adjusting scarce consumer goods and services to individual needs and desires. The extension of socialized distribution should be an exception to be justified by particular merits. For example, a workers government might use free or subsidized distribution to make available sports facilities. It also makes sense to supply free of individual charge necessary services where demand is little affected by price, like mass intra-city transit. However, unless it expresses the elimination of scarcity, the extension of socialized distribution restricts individual choice and so impoverishes social life.

Here again Marx is in explicit opposition to Bettelheim's "Chinese road to socialism". Marx considered that in a collectivized economy under conditions of scarcity, consumables would be priced and sold at their cost of production. In fact, he believed that one of the advantages of economic planning would be the elimination of random market fluctuations and that consumables would be available at their true value and equilibrium quantity:

"(It is *only* where production is under the actual, *predetermining control* of society that the latter establishes a relation between the volume of social labor-time applied in producing definite articles, and the volume of social want to be satisfied by these articles.) ... But if the quantity of social labor expended in the production of a certain article corresponds to the social demand for it, so that the produced quantity corresponds to the usual scale of reproduction and the demand remains unchanged, then the article is sold at its market-value. The exchange, or sale, of commodities at their value is the *rational state of affairs*, i.e., the natural law of their equilibrium." (Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol III, ch 10; our emphasis)

Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the market should be the normal mechanism for distributing the *existing* supply of scarce goods and services destined for individual consumption. However, the *extension* of productive capacity for particular consumables should be determined through the centralized investment plan. Major investment in particular consumer goods industries (like the establishment of an automobile industry) should be governed not only by projected market demand, but by a collective (ie, political) decision concerning general social desirability.

The Marxist path from scarcity to communism

The crass anti-Marxism of the Maoist ideologues is, in a sense, more revealed by what they do not say than by what they do say. Virtually every time Marx and Engels wrote about communist society and progress toward it, they focused on the radical reduction in necessary labor time and its replacement by creative, scientific work. For Marx the reduction in labor time required to produce necessities was not only the central measure of human progress, but reducing the workday was the object of much of his political agitation, particularly in the early years of the First International.

In the writings of Bettelheim, Sweezy, et al, the reduction of labor time as a precondition for socialism is nowhere to be found. Commodity relations are to be eliminated on the basis of existing technology with little change in the quantity and quality of labor. Sweezy provides this capsule description of communism:

"... under communism, classes have disappeared; the state has withered away; crippling forms of the division of labor have been overcome; distinctions between city and country and between mental and manual labor have been abolished; distribution is according to need, etc." (*On the Transition to Socialism*)

What makes this possible, or why it could not have been accomplished at the time of the Pharaohs, is not mentioned by this Maoist ideologue in his efforts to combat "economistic" Marxism.

In order to focus on questions of labor and economics, we have not discussed the *nationalist* deviation inherent in the Stalinist concept of "socialism in one country". But Sweezy's description of communism cries out for refutation on this point, too. Sweezy's Stalinist ideology is so deep-rooted he doesn't even realize that the Marxist conception of communism contains as one of its central elements the *disappearance of national affiliation*.

For those whose "Marxist education" is derived from the *Monthly Review* circle or even more vulgar Stalinist ideologues, the original Marxist vision of communist society will come as a shocking revelation. Writing the first draft of what became the *Communist Manifesto*, Engels asserted:

"The nationalities of the peoples who join together according to the principle of community will be just as much compelled by this union to merge with one another and thereby supersede themselves as the various differences between estates and classes disappear through the superseding of their basis -- private property." ("Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith", June 1847)

To return to the main theme of this article, Sweezy's phrase that under communism the differences between "mental and manual labor have been abolished" is vague and consequently misleading. For Marxists, that "abolition" occurs precisely through the *elimination* of arduous, mechanical manual labor and its replacement by creative, scientific work. Marx regarded the most progressive tendency of capitalist industrialization as the elimination of direct manual labor from the process of production and its replacement by the supervision of machinery:

"Real wealth develops much more (as is disclosed by heavy industry) in the enormous disproportion between labor time utilized and its product, and also the qualitative disproportion between labor that has been reduced to a mere abstraction, and the power of the production process that it supervises. Labor does not seem any longer to be an essential part of the process of production. The human factor is restricted to watching and supervising the production process....

"The worker no longer inserts transformed natural objects as the intermediaries between the material and himself; he now inserts the natural process that he has transformed into an industrial one between himself and inorganic nature, over which he has achieved mastery. He is no longer the principal agent of the production process: he exists alongside it." (Karl Marx, *The Grundrisse*)

In other words, Marx conceived of communism as what would today be called a fully automated society. His opposition to capitalism as a system of production was that it *arrested* technical progress because the expansion of the means of production generated a historically declining rate of profit.

The revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist state permits the expropriation and centralized control of the existing means of production. The full, rational utilization of economic resources, particularly investment embodying the most advanced technology, produces a quantum leap in labor productivity. The increased productivity is partly expended on raising the level of consumption but mainly on a significant reduction in labor time. The additional free time is used for re-education of the working masses which raises their cultural level and technical capacity. When these workers re-enter the process of production, they further stimulate increases in productivity. Thus increases in labor productivity become a self-perpetuating, self-reinforcing process:

"Real economy -- savings -- consists in the saving of working time (the minimum, and reduction to the minimum, of production costs); but this saving is identical with the development of productivity. Economizing, therefore, does not mean the giving up of pleasure, but the development of power and productive capacity, and thus both the capacity for and the means of enjoyment.... Free time -- which includes leisure as well as time for higher activities -- naturally transforms anyone who enjoys it into a *different* person, and it is this different person who *then enters* the direct process of production. The man who is being formed finds discipline in this process, while for the man who is already formed it is practice, experimental science, materially creative and self-objectifying knowledge, and he contains within his own head the accumulated wisdom of society." (Ibid; our emphasis)

The end of this process occurs when necessary labor absorbs such an insignificant share of time and energy that the individual freely grants it to the social collective. In turn, the level of productivity is then so great that individual material appropriation can be given unrestricted play: "From each according to his abilities; to each according to his needs".

Wage labor and commodity distribution are simply the characteristic forms of scarcity and labor coercion under the capitalist mode of production. The true goal of communism is to eliminate the *reality* of scarcity and labor coercion.

Independently of its contribution to the eventual transcendence of scarcity, the elimination of commodity relations has no progressive character at all. A program to eliminate wage-labor and commodity distribution under conditions of material backwardness is reactionary utopianism. Attempts to carry out such a program will lead to economic collapse, as following the Chinese Great Leap Forward in 1960-61, and will create conditions of life more oppressive than those associated with wage labor in the deformed workers states. ■

(reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 134, 19 November 1976)

Defend Spanish militants

As we go to press newspaper accounts report the arrests of over 160 leftist militants by the reactionary Francoist dictatorship in Spain (*Australian*, 1 February). According to the reports, the arrested militants are all supporters of organisations to the left of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE), including the Partido de Trabajo de Espana (PTE - Spanish Labour Party), Organizacion Revolucionaria de los Trabajadores (ORT - Revolutionary Workers Organisation), Movimiento Comunista (MC - Communist Movement) - all Maoist groups - and the Red Youth Guard.

The arrests come in the wake of massive strikes and demonstrations triggered by the brutal slaughter of five PCE lawyers in Madrid on 24 January, at the hands of an ultra-rightist death squad. In addition the government has banned all public rallies and strengthened police powers to search and arrest without warrant. The wave of repressive measures and rightist terror has been orchestrated in an atmosphere of police and right-wing provocation against working-class opponents of the hated regime. Free the arrested militants! Free all class-war prisoners in Spain! Smash the Phalangist dictatorship - For a Spanish workers republic! For a Trotskyist party in Spain - Forward to the rebirth of the Fourth International!

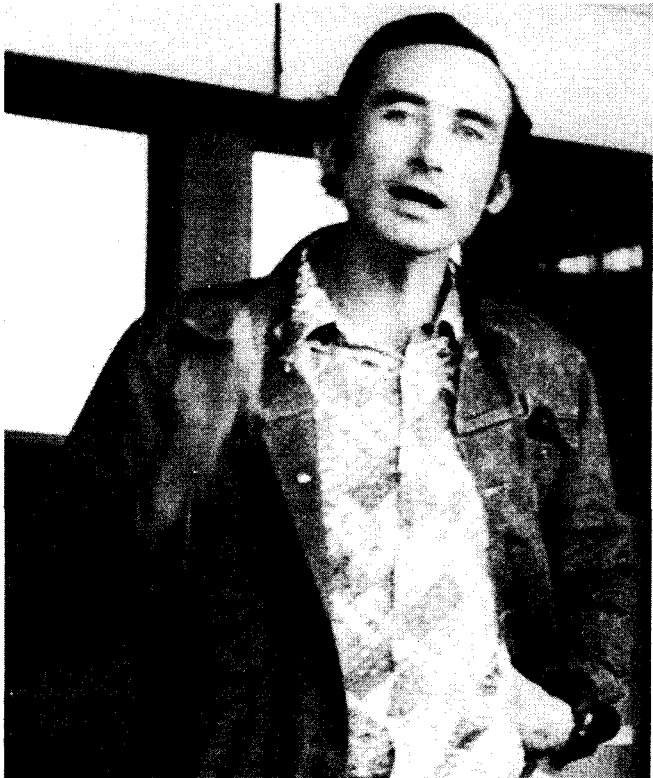
CL . . .

Continued from page two

attracted to the USec as the main standard-bearer of ostensible Trotskyism had a better chance of being intersected by the larger, more effective SWL.

Organisations grounded in the revolutionary program can suffer setbacks and defeats as well. But because that program represents the historic interests of the working class, even defeats provide lessons which will further the consciousness of the class.

The numerous "fusions" and "regroupments" carried out by the Pabloists are actually unprincipled blocs which deceive and confuse the class by submerging programmatic differences and thus act as a barrier to class consciousness. The CL statement correctly points out that McCarthy's most recent "fusion" can only promote cynical "suspicions ... that ... political questions were opportunely discarded" -- to say the least! But its answer to such cynicism is to repudiate the Leninist conception of the party



John McCarthy, former CL leader.

altogether. It is perfectly all right indeed "principled", says the CL, to have a fusion despite "differences of a tactical and *even of a strategic nature*" (emphasis added) -- as long as the counterposed strategies are not "hidden from the vanguard"! By talking of the need to involve some non-Leninist "militant vanguard" in the internal life of the revolutionary party; and by asserting that the revolutionary program -- the "program of the Fourth International" -- can accommodate counterposed strategies for revolution, the CL embraces again the same opportunist, liquidationist USec manoeuvrism which justifies McCarthy's move.

McCarthy's return to the SWP represents more than simply his personal ambitions. The exigencies of USec diplomacy and the general rightward shift in the radical milieu which the IMT tailed in pursuit of the "new mass vanguards", and therefore in the IMT as well, have resulted in a warming of relations between split sections of the USec elsewhere. The stagnant Revolutionary Marxist Group in Canada now openly questions whether its split from the pro-SWP League for Socialist Action in 1973 was not a "mistake" and has proposed opening a "political dialogue" with the LSA. The RMG now repudiates many of its formative political criticisms of the reformist LSA (criticisms which were by and large correct and impelled many of the RMG's founding cadre into the international Spartacist tendency) as "ultra-left".

Meanwhile, Mandel's desire to placate the American SWP's increasingly open affinity with the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste in their common accommodation with international social democracy nearly culminated in a three-way *grande bloc* several months ago. The project was rapidly vetoed by the IMT's star section, the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, whose members the OCI regularly assaults, because the LCR refused to have its own project of "fusing" with the left-social-democratic Parti Socialiste Unifie hampered.

McCarthy's shenanigans are certainly small-time compared to the manoeuvres arranged behind closed doors in Europe, but they are no less unprincipled. For subjectively revolutionary members of the Communist League who have been shaken up by McCarthy's open cynicism, the road to principled, Trotskyist politics remains what it was for Keith Olerhead four years ago -- toward the Spartacist League and the struggle for the rebirth of the Fourth International! ■

Fairfax . . .

Continued from page eight

weakness of the strike was *its failure to stop scabs from putting out the Fairfax papers*. Had they been organised by a militant leadership, the pickets, which at times numbered several hundred, could certainly have prevented the passage of scabs and supplies through Fairfax's gates. Far from provoking the police, as instances of militant but misdirected action by individual, frustrated strikers might, such mass action is a notice that the strike is not so weak as to allow individuals to be victimised by the cops. But militant unionists, much less communists, do not determine tactics solely on the basis of threatened bourgeois repression. A police onslaught against mass pickets would have necessitated a militant response backed up by the entire trade-union movement. In arguing against calling on the union to organise such necessary action, the SLL was left with the choice of complete passivity or individual adventurism.

The equally fake-"Trotskyist" Communist League (CL), which to its credit was the only political group besides the SL to join regularly in the picketing, attempted, on the other hand, to conjure up a substitute for the indigenous revolutionary strike leadership that was absent -- on a far-from-revolutionary basis. In its "Fairfax Dossier", the CL pretentiously accused the SL and others of succumbing to "the limitations of propagandism" and counterposed "activities and organisation which begin to alter the relationship of forces inside the working class, through building a fighting alternative leadership in relation to the *immediate issues* of the class struggle" (*Militant*, December 1976; emphasis added).

In counterposing "activity and organisation" to "propaganda" the CL obscured the programmatic gulf separating militant unionism -- the program of "immediate issues", with its inevitable adaptation to the bureaucracy -- from the difficult struggle to develop an alternative communist leadership. Thus, the CL's proposed "alternative leadership" is a reformist one: father of the PKIU chapel at Fairfax, Don Paget. While he opposed the sellout, Paget did not even argue for solid pickets to prevent scabbing, much less the revolutionary politics of the Transitional Program.

Strike support work offers a small communist organisation the opportunity to express its solidarity with the class struggle in concrete practice and to intersect workers in struggle with the revolutionary program. In no case can non-striking supporters *determine* tactics and strategy for the strikers, though occasionally the relationship of forces in a particular strike can be altered, as, for example, when a subjectively militant but inexperienced strike leadership is won to the class-struggle policies being advanced by communist supporters. In this way individual militants can be recruited to communist politics. But such work *cannot* substitute for the long and arduous task of building an authoritative and programmatically solid revolutionary core of opposition to the bureaucracy within the unions. ■

Protectionism . . .

Continued from page one

mobilising the German workers in a struggle against the Russian autocracy!

But the "vanguard" role in this onslaught of social-patriotism unquestionably belongs to the CPA. After returning from Japan Baird announced that the AMWSU and the other metal-trades unions will mount a major "Buy Australian" campaign in the national media, centring on the slogan, "Buy Australian -- the job you save may be your own" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 January)! Any Communist Party militants with a shred of internationalism should recognise that it will be a short hop from the present "Buy Australian" pitch

to waving the Eureka flag and urging "our boys" on to fight for "Australia's honour" against the "yellow peril". During World War II, CPs everywhere conducted "struggle against fascism" by adopting reactionary, patriotic support for the "democratic" imperialist side. In the US, the CP expelled its members of Japanese descent and refused to defend them from incarceration in concentration camps.

The crisis in the shipbuilding industry is an important focus for the developing trade war between the advanced capitalist countries. While inter-imperialist conflicts are always in essence a case of "our nation against the rest" there is currently a distinct tendency for the US and Europe -- itself deeply divided -- to focus much of their attention on throwing up barriers to the vigorous export drive of Japanese capital. Thus, at the same time as the European Economic Community bloc demanded drastic cutbacks in Japanese shipbuilding capacity under threat of stringent import restrictions, the US Congress moved against Japanese textile and rubber exports (*Financial Review*, 4 January).

In response to this concerted anti-Japanese barrage from his "allies" the new Japanese prime minister Fukuda and his cabinet colleagues have proclaimed their intention of resisting the EEC demands. There has been a perceptible shift to the right in the Japanese government perhaps best epitomised by the elevation to the cabinet of Shintaro Ishihara, the leader of the ultra-rightist Seirankian (the Blue Storm Society). Ishihara is a fervent admirer of the imperial military "tradition" and advocate of a Japanese nuclear military capacity.

It would be false to believe that the new government is, at this point, hell-bent on rapid militarisation. Fukuda's brief from the bourgeoisie is rather to batter down the living standards of the working class in the name of "competitiveness" so that Japan can adopt a more aggressive posture in the international economic horse-trading. After all, Ishihara, the latter day samurai, got the environment post, not the defence ministry.

Yet the present intensifying economic conflicts of capitalism in its death agony are laying the basis for the next imperialist war, which bodes nuclear catastrophe for all humanity. It is pertinent that Fukuda on being elected prime minister opined that "the economic situation was very similar to that in the 1930s or just before World War II" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 December). This is a clear if muted warning to Europe and the US not to drive Japan's export-oriented economy to the wall ... or face the consequences.

The economic nationalism and protectionist fervour of the trade-union bureaucracy and its hangers-on are the indispensable allies of the capitalist class in convincing the workers that they can only avoid impoverishment by supporting the imperialist ambitions of their respective bourgeoisies. By attempting to lock the workers into ultimately suicidal support for "their" national rulers, they invariably drive overseas workers into the arms of "their" capitalists at the same time. The fight against capitalism demands the ousting of the entire chauvinist union bureaucracy -- from Hawke to Halfpenny -- from the leadership of the labour movement. One and all they stand as the tested servants of capitalism.

The shipbuilding crisis shows very clearly why a revolutionary organisation must be internationalist and why an international vanguard party is needed. Against the chauvinist strategy of the labour bureaucrats and the fake "Fourth International" of the SLL which capitulates to it we raise the banner of international class solidarity:

*No to protectionist schemes!
For a coordinated Australia-Japan strike
against shipbuilding layoffs!
For international union organisation and
wage parity in shipbuilding and maritime!
For the rebirth of the Fourth International!*

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Why Fairfax workers lost

Mass pickets could have won

In voting by a five-to-one majority to return to work on 16 December, striking workers at the Fairfax papers in Sydney were clearly accepting a defeat. They had gone out nine weeks earlier against the threat of mass "automation" retrenchments and for a shorter work week, a wage increase and employer payment of the Medibank levy. All they "won" was Fairfax's promise that there would be no retrenchments at this time. The elimination of hundreds of printing jobs through the use of new equipment was reclassified as a "demarcation issue" -- concerning only whether printers, clerks or journalists (the latter two being unions which scabbed on the strike) get to operate the new equipment -- in order to shunt it off into arbitration along with the other strike demands. The defeat was however far from inevitable.

With unemployment and inflation climbing, a victory by the Fairfax workers would have opened the way to a generalised working-class response to the Fraser government's cost-cutting, union-bashing campaign. Throughout the strike the workers maintained a high degree of militancy, self-sacrifice, and unity. (The formation of a Combined Unions Committee [CUC] composed of representatives of the nine striking unions was an important step toward cutting across the craft divisions rampant in the Australian union movement.) Fairfax responded with open scabberding, court orders, police attacks on the picket lines and threats of deregistration against the Printing and Kindred Industries Union (PKIU), which represented 1100 of the 1400 strikers. The suspension of postal workers involved in a ban of Fairfax mail almost led to a national postal strike and a "collision of national scope", as the scab Fairfax *Sydney Morning Herald* (13 November 1976) put it, between the unions and the government.

When the strike first began, the PKIU leadership had promised that Fairfax would be quickly "starved out" by heavy losses in circulation as a result of the CUC's call for a consumer boycott and by union bans on mail and supplies. Now, two months later, PKIU state secretary Frank Kelly cynically warned the strikers that the unions were being starved out and that Fairfax was prepared to last as long as necessary if the settlement was again rejected. Of the nine unions represented in the CUC, only the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union refused to endorse the settlement (which the strikers had rejected in almost identical form the previous week). Outraged opponents of the sellout could offer no

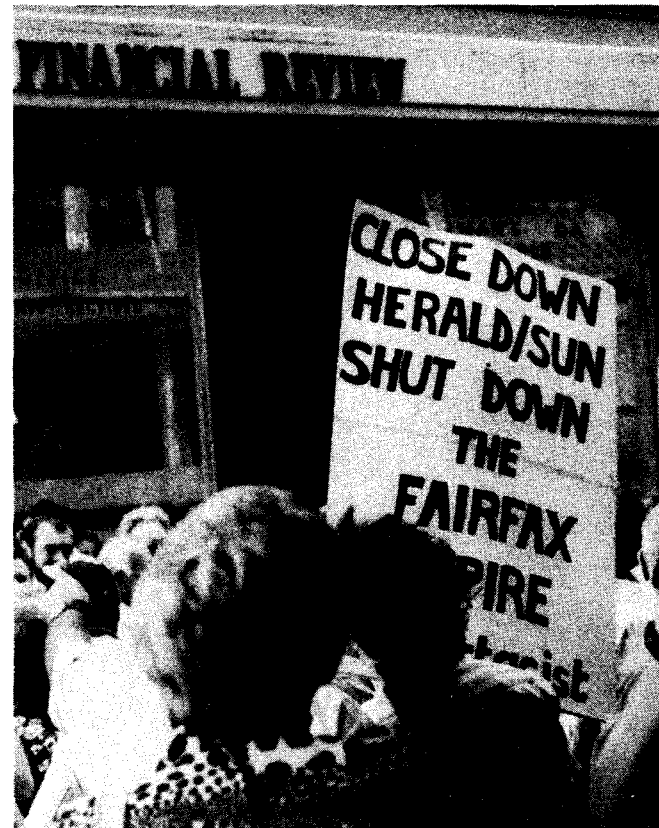
alternative but simply to stay out and call for a complete black ban on Fairfax which, lamented John Ducker from the NSW Labor Council, was just not on one week before Christmas.

Through their treacherous behaviour, Ducker and Kelly had seen to it that their defeatist arguments would have some substance to them. More concerned with bourgeois law and "public opinion" than a strike victory, they had arm-twisted the CUC into "requesting" that the postal ban be dropped and observing outrageous police restrictions (even yelling "scab" was prohibited!) which left the picketers hamstrung in the face of scab deliveries and pick-ups. But while dropping the postal ban represented a turning point in that it demonstrated the CUC's readiness to acquiesce in betrayals of the strikers' interests, the bans were secondary in importance to the basic need to completely shut down production at Fairfax itself.

The alternative to the defeatist strategy implemented by the CUC was posed by a Spartacist League supporter in the PKIU in criticising the leadership's role in the strike at the 15 December PKIU branch meeting in Sydney. Printers applauded when she noted that a successful strike strategy required restoring the bans, spreading the strike (particularly to printers at News Limited, who were being dissuaded from striking simultaneously over their own grievances by the PKIU tops) and organising solid mass pickets to prevent scabs and trucks from entering and leaving.

The Spartacist League extended its active support to the strike throughout. Spartacist supporters regularly joined the picket lines; student members explained the issues of the strike on campus; SL supporters in the PKIU collected funds for the strikers; and a representative of the CUC addressed an SL public forum to build support for the strike and raise money. With every action of solidarity, however, SL supporters made it clear to the strikers themselves that victory hinged on stopping production of the scab Fairfax papers.

Despite the presence of several long-time supporters in the PKIU, the ostensibly Trotskyist Socialist Labour League (SLL), on the other hand, played a role which was organisationally abstentionist and politically liquidationist. SLL activity consisted largely of taking photographs for its Potemkin-village newspaper and apologising for the CUC's losing strategy. According to



ASP photo

Spartacist supporter at strikers' demonstration.

the 22 December issue of *Workers News*, the strikers "only went back to work because of the refusal of the NSW Labor Council officials to carry out the elementary task of organising a total black ban on the newspaper group". Even many strike militants recognised the need to keep out the clerks, journo and other scabs in order to ensure a solid strike, but not a word from these ostensible communists of the CUC's failure to organise a shut-down of the scab papers.

Moreover, at the PKIU meeting mentioned above, not only did neither SLL supporter present endorse the class struggle strategy put forward by the SL supporter, but afterward one of them angrily accosted another PKIU Spartacist supporter with the incredible charge that calling on the union to organise mass, militant picket lines was a "provocation" which invited the cops to attack the pickets and smash the strike. Not even the bureaucrats resorted to such cowardly and legalistic arguments in excusing their treachery.

The social power of the proletariat lies in its ability to stop production. Thus, well-organised, mass picketing is a fundamental weapon in the arsenal of the class struggle, necessary to repulse the gangs of scabs and strikebreakers which the bosses will mobilise in every instance of heightened class conflict. The entrenched craft structure of Australian unionism and the institutionalised class collaboration of the arbitration system combined with the presence of a mass reformist party militate against the frequent occurrence of bloody picket-line clashes. But in the course of the class struggle, such clashes will inevitably occur. "Strike pickets are the basic nuclei of the proletarian army", noted Trotsky in the Transitional Program. "That is our point of departure."

Picket lines are battle lines in the class war. Their role has been obscured both by the comparative wealth of Australian capitalism and by decades of bureaucratic betrayal; but this does not change the fact that to cross a workers' picket line is to help smash it, ie, strikebreaking. Those who crossed the Fairfax picket lines -- from unfortunate apprentices under threat of losing their job and their apprenticeship, to those like feminist journalist Anne Summers who true to her role as a bourgeois opinion-maker consistently crossed the lines with apparent contempt for the workers' struggle -- are scabs, whatever their reasons might be.

With the high degree of cross-craft unity and employer intransigence present in the Fairfax strike, it was glaringly apparent that the main

Continued on page seven



Cops guard scab truck passing through Fairfax picket line.