



March for military victory to Salvadoran leftists!

A bloody civil war is raging in El Salvador. Nicaragua is threatened with counterrevolutionary invasion. Reagan has proclaimed Central America the front line of his anti-Soviet Cold War. Which side are you on?

The US sends Huey helicopters and Green Beret "advisers" to prop up the junta, threatens military blockade of Cuba, rattles nuclear missiles over Poland. But seeking to placate imperialist liberals like Teddy Kennedy or Don Chipp, reformist organisers of El Salvador protests — from the US to Aus-

tralia — refuse to side with the Salvadoran rebels.

A militant protest is needed NOW against the imperialist war drive! The Spartacist League is calling for an Anti-Imperialist Contingent to march on June 13 (Sydney) and June 20 (Melbourne) for the demands: **Down with the junta! For military victory to leftist insurgents in El Salvador! Stop all aid, military or economic, to the Salvadoran junta! US/OAS hands off Central America! Defence of Cuba and the USSR begins in El Salvador!**

Ronald Reagan, his secretary of state

General Haig and their jackal imperialist ally, Malcolm Fraser, have a side. They back the murderous junta and anti-communist death squads who slaughtered more than 12,000 Salvadorans last year. Haig even excuses the murder of four American nuns in order to justify US support to a gang of blood-crazed despots. All in the service of the imperialist crusade against "Soviet terrorism". **Reagan & Co stand by their butchers.**

We must take a side, too. It is not enough to demand no American intervention. Self-determination, the slogan

of the liberals and reformists, is not the issue. We want the leftist insurgents to win the civil war, to defeat the military junta and its imperialist godfathers. **Anti-imperialist militants must back to the hilt the struggle of the Salvadoran workers and peasants against their oppressors.**

Reagan/Haig have targeted Central America for a "showdown" in their anti-Soviet war drive. The US imperialists have their own hit list: from Nicaragua and Afghanistan to Cuba, Poland, the USSR. Their ultimate aim is to reverse

Continued on page two

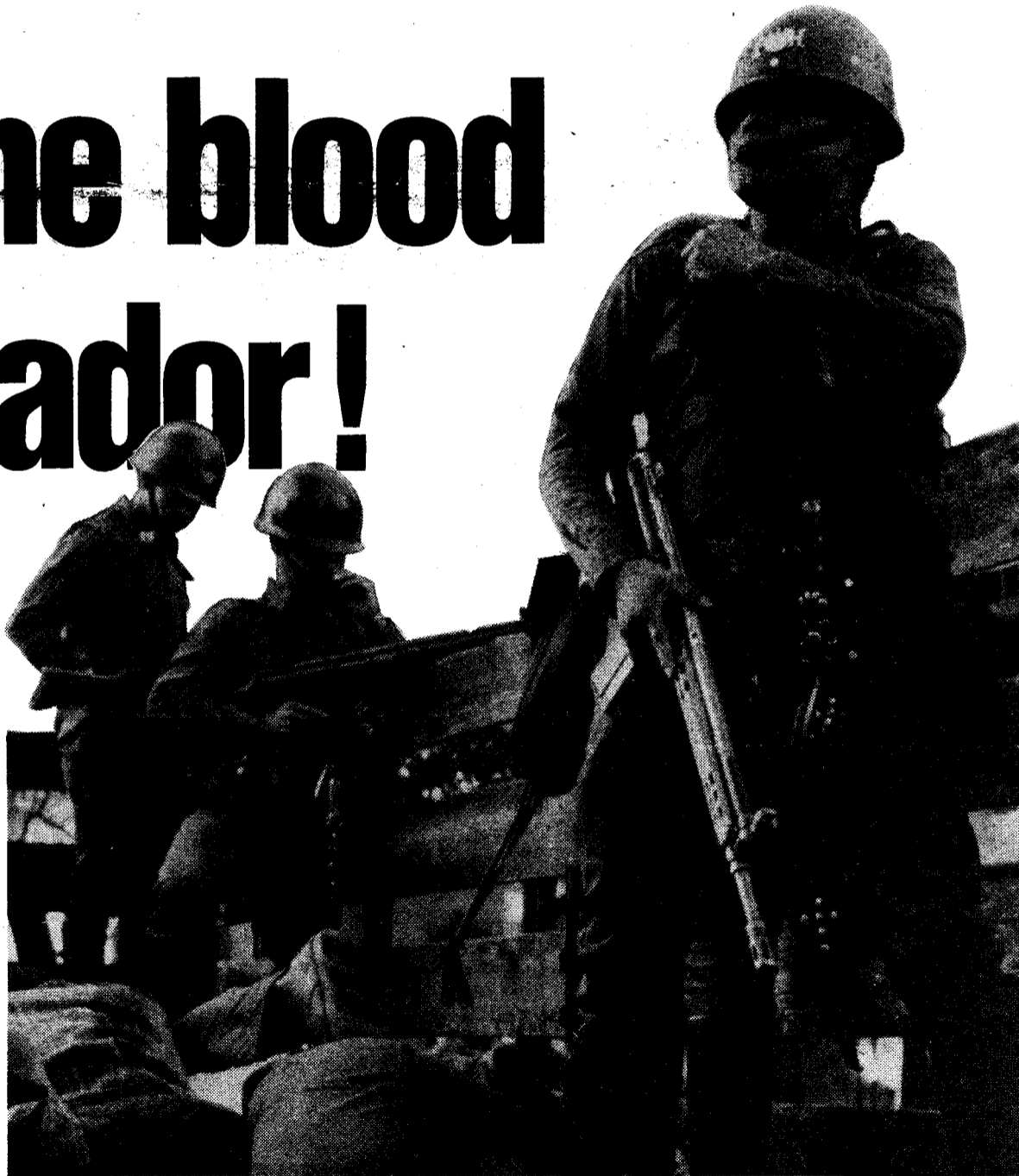
Avenge the blood of El Salvador!

For workers revolution!

27 MAY — While screaming bloody murder about "Soviet" terrorism" in Central America, the Reagan administration's campaign of imperialist lies and slander aims at throwing a smoke-screen around its own support to the criminal military junta which is presently carrying out a war of extermination against leftist insurgents in El Salvador. The Legal Aid Office of the Archdiocese of San Salvador recently announced that so far this year the government and rightist death squads have assassinated more than 5000 victims, three-quarters of them workers and peasants. This comes on top of more than 12,000 killed last year and 200,000 left homeless since 1 January as the rivers of this impoverished land run red with the life's blood of its martyred masses. Reagan/Carter and their butchers have turned El Salvador into a "human rights" charnel house. It will take nothing less than workers revolution to avenge the grisly tragedy inflicted in the name of defending the "free world" against the spectre of communism.

The most deadly massacre so far in the Salvadoran civil war occurred on 25 March, when almost 1500 peasants were

Continued on page six



Join the Anti-Imperialist Contingent June 13/20!

Anti-Imperialist Contingent...

Continued from page one

the gains of the October Revolution, posing the threat of irradiated barbarism in a nuclear World War III.

The real lessons of Vietnam

There's a lot of talk of a "new Vietnam" in Central America. This phrase means different things to different people. For Reagan, imperialism's dirty war in Southeast Asia was a "noble cause". He wants to get even for the humiliating defeat inflicted by the Indochinese (and the Soviets) by drowning the Central American masses in blood.

For liberals, Vietnam was above all a losing imperialist war, and they're afraid of going under with another tinpot dictatorship. Their program: the same phoney CIA land reform that was called "pacification" in Indochina. In El Salvador it's called "reform by death". Don't forget: the liberals brought you the Bay of Pigs and the Gulf of Tonkin!

The reformists see a "new Vietnam" as the excuse for rebuilding a "broad", pacifistic "anti-war" movement. Yesterday, it was the likes of "Jesus" Jim Cairns they were tailing; today, Don Chipp and sundry "peace-loving" churchmen along with the same ALP "lefts" like Tom Uren.

The reformists climbed aboard the band wagon of bourgeois defeatism over Vietnam. But you don't get bourgeois defeatism unless the bourgeoisie is getting defeated!

They claim that the popular-frontist peace crawls "won" in Indochina. No.

Everything that was won in Vietnam was won on the battlefield. When the US army was forced to withdraw in 1973 the "anti-war" movement simply collapsed. It took two more years of bloody fighting against the American-backed Thieu dictatorship before the NLF/DRV could take Saigon — with no help from their "liberal" friends.

In Vietnam the reformists called for "negotiations now" and "bring our boys home". Wide layers of subjectively anti-imperialist militants raised the call for "Military victory to the NLF"; in addition the Spartacist League (SL) proclaimed: "All Indochina Must Go Communist!" We said that our boys over there were the heroic fighters in the Viet Cong. We fought for labour political strikes against the war, to mobilise the power of the working class internationally to stop the imperialists in their tracks.

Then as now, liberal peace crawls are futile attempts to pressure imperialism into more "realistic" policies. But the Yankee tiger won't change its stripes. What's needed is hundreds and thousands marching for military victory to left-wing insurgents in El Salvador and the labour movement using its strength to stop the Pentagon warmongers. For trade-union black bans on all military goods to the junta! **The real lesson of Vietnam is that anti-imperialism abroad means class struggle at home!**

Don Chipp: El Salvador dove, Vietnam hawk, imperialist turkey

The June 13/20 "Day of Solidarity" protests, organised by the Committee in Solidarity with Central America and the Caribbean (CISCAC), which is heavily dominated by the Socialist

Workers Party (SWP), refuse to take a side in the Salvadoran civil war and carefully avoids even mentioning the word "imperialism". At a 22 April public meeting on El Salvador at Sydney's Trade Union Club, the SWP first tried to physically prevent SL members from attending the meeting, then — having failed in this provocative exclusion bid — proceeded to vote down an SL motion calling for military victory to the left-wing insurgents. At a Melbourne meeting on 25 April they refused to even put it to a vote. The SWP/CISCAC's counterposed position is "Let the people of El Salvador decide". So if the junta slaughters thousands by itself, as it did in the 1932 *matanza* (massacre) of 30,000 workers, peasants and leftists, it's no concern of these reformists and liberals!

Why an Anti-Imperialist Contingent?

The program of CISCAC is the program of the imperialist liberals. It calls for ending US military aid to the junta, but has little to say about the far larger "economic" aid which keeps the bankrupt regime afloat. It supports the call of Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) leader Guillermo Ungo for a negotiated "political solution" in El Salvador, which means appealing to the imperialist soft cops to broker a deal with the junta murderers. Yet this same Ungo was a member of El Salvador's ruling junta in late 1979 and has been described by a former US ambassador to El Salvador as an "authentic anti-communist" (Age, 17 March). CISCAC talks only of "self-determination" so it can make a bloc with "democrats" like Don Chipp. But Don Chipp is no friend of the oppressed. Remember: he was minister for the navy during Australia's involvement in the Vietnam war. Yet it is Don Chipp that CISCAC

has asked to speak at one El Salvador rally after another.

There is a fundamental political contradiction within the El Salvador protests between those who want to pressure imperialism and those who fight to defeat it, between class collaboration and class struggle. Genuine anti-imperialist militants must be for the Salvadoran left-wing rebels getting as many guns as they can, wherever they can, certainly, if they can, from the treacherous and reluctant Soviet bloc. Revolutionaries say: No popular-front illusions — Break with the bourgeois! The only way to sweep out the murderous generals and their death squads is through workers revolution.

This is the program for victory in Central America. Yet so desperate are the reformists to avoid any mention of revolution that in the US some of them have resorted to physical violence in a vain attempt to silence the Trotskyists of the SL. Here in Australia they slander us as "disrupters" because we want the masses of El Salvador to actually succeed in toppling their blood-drenched oppressors. But we will not let such criminal provocations stand in the way of protesting US imperialism's Cold War drive.

Unless we mobilise in a militant Anti-Imperialist Contingent on June 13/20, the politics that will be heard will be those of the liberal bourgeoisie — the Teddy Kennedys, Don Chipps, Tom Urens and their cheerleaders. We call upon all those who want to smash the bloody terror of the US-backed Salvadoran junta to march with us on June 13 in Sydney and on June 20 in Melbourne, demanding "Military Victory to Leftist Insurgents in El Salvador!"

March with the Anti-Imperialist Contingent! ■

SWP exhumes "disruption" slander

If Trotskyists stand for speaking "the truth to the masses", the reformists of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) stand for just the opposite: lies and slanders against their left-wing opponents. In a letter to *Direct Action* (13 May) Melbourne SWP honcho Dave Deutschmann accuses the Spartacist League (SL) of "energetic attempts to disrupt" meetings and demonstrations called by the Committee in Solidarity with Central America and the Caribbean (CISCAC) to protest US involvement in the civil war now raging in El Salvador. He offers no proof, of course, since none exists, but then his letter is simply designed to seal off CISCAC rallies — including the forthcoming June 13/20 "Days of Action" — from the SL's anti-imperialist demand for the military victory of the leftist rebels in El Salvador. In fact, the only incident of anything like "disruption" has come from the SWP, when they unsuccessfully tried to physically prevent our comrades from attending a 22 April CISCAC public meeting at Sydney's Trade Union Club. SL supporters have since attended a further CISCAC meeting in Melbourne

without any "disruption" charges being made.

We reprint below statements sent to *Direct Action* by four independent witnesses who were present at the meeting and/or demonstrations Deutschmann refers to. Their factual accounts demolish Deutschmann's lies. The first statement is by Ed Lyon, assistant secretary of the Vehicle Builders Employees Federation, in a personal capacity. The last two letters are excerpted for reasons of space.

22 May, 1981

I was shown by the SL the letter entitled "Sectarian Disruption" by Dave Deutschmann in the 13 May issue of *Direct Action*. As the letter refers to me and as I was present at the 25 April CISCAC planning meeting, I would like to point out that during the time I was present I witnessed hard political arguments mainly from a member of the Spartacist League, and to a lesser extent from a member of the International Socialists. I didn't see any disruption but rather hard irreconcilable differences between the various groups. As I left the meeting early I cannot vouch for events after my departure. I do not subscribe to the political views of either the SL or SWP, but simply state the above in the interests of honesty in the workers movement.

[Signed] Ed Lyon

21 May, 1981

In the 13 May issue of *Direct Action* paper of the Socialist Workers Party, I was sickened by the lies and slanders against the Spartacist League in the letter "Sectarian Disruption" by David Deutschmann. I am an Australian Telecommunications Employees Association member and was present at the April 3 El Salvador demonstration and CISCAC meeting referred to by Deutschmann.

Deutschmann's letter states that these two days of action, the 30 January demonstration and the 25 April CISCAC

meeting the Spartacist League caused "severe disruption". What a load of rubbish.

At the April 3 demo the SWP had everyone, including the church on a platform voicing their program for El Salvador. The Spartacist League was not permitted to speak. Why? Because of their communist program on El Salvador; for supporting the military victory of left wing insurgents. When the organisers of the rally stopped the singing and guitar playing, the Spartacist League attempted to address the rally with a megaphone but were shouted down by the organisers.

And again at the 25 April CISCAC meeting the Spartacist League was given only five minutes to speak while everyone else barring those who did not agree with the CISCAC proposals were given unlimited time and were free to speak whenever they wished. One Spartacist League supporter had his hand up for around an hour but the chair would not recognise him.

No unionist would stand for this in a union meeting. Where was workers democracy? Out the window along with a program to win in El Salvador. Deutschmann's slander is poison to the workers movement and must be opposed by the left and labour movement.

[Signed] John Rouse Australian Telecommunications Employees Union

I was angry and amazed to read the letter by Deutschmann entitled "Sectarian Disruption" in *Direct Action* no 343....

At a supposed planning meeting called to produce debate on the most effective way of showing solidarity with the Salvadoran insurgents why was such debate limited to twenty minutes?...

Secondly, as a blatant example of Deutschmann's refusal to chair the meeting along normal democratic lines, a supporter from the Spartacist League was refused the chance to speak on the flimsy excuse from the chair that he knew what the speaker was going to say!... The speaker insisted on exer-

cising his right to speak and in order to proclaim such he had to contend with constant interjections from the floor...

The methods [Deutschmann] used during the meeting... violated even bourgeois democratic procedures and... bureaucratically prevented further debate....

[Signed] Michael Hickey

...As a participant at the [25 April] meeting I thought SL supporters showed considerable restraint in the face of chairman Deutschmann's continuous failure to recognise Spartacist speakers and facile manipulation of the agenda to silence political debate....

However, the charges of disruption are scurrilous, apolitical red herrings. The real issue is that the SWP is attempting to derail the necessary class solidarity of Australian workers with the El Salvadoran workers and peasants in favour of class collaborationist grovelling before the likes of Don Chipp, a featured speaker at a previous El Salvador solidarity rally, and sundry priests, nuns, reverends and ministers under the guise of pacifist slogans of self determination for El Salvador and no interference....

[Signed] Peter Musicka

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French presidential elections: Mitterrand victory no gain for workers

The following article is adapted from two articles on the French presidential elections by the Ligue Trotskyste de France, section of the international Spartacist tendency: "Pourquoi l'union de la gauche a éclaté" (Le Bolchevik no 24, April 1981) and "Leurs promesses: austerite et anti-sovietisme — Giscard jamais! Mitterrand non!" (Le Bolchevik no 25, May 1981).

18 MAY — By a comfortable margin of over one million votes, Socialist Party (PS) leader Francois Mitterrand defeated Gaullist incumbent Valery Giscard d'Estaing on 10 May to win the French presidential elections. Speculators on the Paris Bourse immediately began a frenzied selling of shares, sending the franc reeling and the price of gold spiraling. The fake left internationally hailed Mitterrand's win as a "victory" for the French working class. But behind the feverish speculation of the investors and the near ecstasy of the left stands a more prosaic reality: Mitterrand's win is no threat to capitalist class rule in France or anywhere else and represents no gain for the working class. Even Murdoch's labour-hating *Australian* (12 May) recognised the truth:

"If President Mitterrand can attract support from centrists rather than the extreme left — as is his desire — those becoming hysterical over a Socialist France have no more to fear than a mild, Social Democrat style of government in the West German mould."

In power, Mitterrand will now implement the real content of his political program: form a popular-frontist alliance with representatives of the bourgeoisie (Left Radicals, Gaullists, etc); reinforce the links of imperialist France with the Atlantic Alliance aimed at the USSR; make the working class pay for the crisis of French capitalism. Mitterrand's strategy now is to dissolve the Gaullist-dominated National Assembly and call fresh parliamentary elections, with a view to forming a coalition government — not with the French Communist Party (PCF) — but with the open political representatives of the bourgeoisie.

Given this stated willingness to form a class-collaborationist popular-front government, the only principled position for Marxists in these elections was that adopted by the Ligue Trotskyste de France (LTF), section of the international Spartacist tendency: "Giscard never! Mitterrand no!" In contrast, both the fake-Trotskyist Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR — French section of the United Secretariat of Ernest Mandel and Jack Barnes) and the Stalinophobic Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI) of Pierre Lambert campaigned for a vote to Mitterrand. True to its role as waterboy for the PS, the OCI called for support to Mitterrand on both rounds of the voting, while the LCR called for "desistement" "to beat Giscard" (*Rouge*, 17-23 October 1980). ("Desistement" is the practice of stepping down in the decisive second round of voting, in favour of the PCF or PS candidate who received most votes on the first round.)

As soon as the PCF's defeat on the first round of voting on 26 April became clear, however, the LCR went all out for a PS majority. "Yes, victory is within our reach", it said in a leaflet put out the morning after the first round. "Once elected thanks to the votes of the workers, Mitterrand must be warned that he cannot govern with the representatives of the bosses." But now that he's in power, who's going to stop Mitterrand from governing with the right? The PS



Before break up of Union of the Left: PCF's Marchais; Mitterrand; bourgeois Left Radical Robert Fabre.

leader is not a prisoner of the working class but of the Gaullists (not to mention the Royalists and Poujade, founder of the reactionary movement of small businessmen in the 1950s, who called for a vote to Mitterrand).

And a willing hostage! By seeking an alliance with the class enemy, he is telling the workers that he will take no account of their demands and even that he will be an obstacle to their struggles. Remember 1937: the Blum Popular Front government did not hesitate to open fire on the proletariat, many of which were members of its own party! And this incipient popular front is not even trying to entice the workers or pretend to be on the left. Even the US imperialists felt prepared to "extend the hand to the socialists". The Washington Post presented Mitterrand as "more favourable" than Giscard to "the anti-Soviet mood of the Reagan administration"



10 January: PCF marches in support of racist attack at Vitry.

(*Le Monde*, 29 April). In return, Mitterrand has made clear where he stands on Reagan's Cold War anti-Soviet war drive: "Giscard deserted (the United States) on Afghanistan and on the hostages and on Poland. I would never have done that" (quoted in *Newsweek*, 18 May).

Stalinist chauvinism means no vote for PCF

One of the most notable features of the election was the defeat suffered by the

pro-Moscow Communist Party candidate Georges Marchais. On the first round of voting Marchais won just 15.34 percent of the vote, the lowest score registered by the party since 1936. The Socialists claimed that "the CP's defeat [was] the price of its divisive policies", and in the PS' wake followed the LCR and OCI who, ever since the 1977-78 breakup of the Union of the Left, have accused the PCF of turning its back on "unity". In fact, the Communist Party was paying the bill for the renewal of the anti-Soviet Cold War (which turned not a few intellectuals, petty bourgeois and sundry Euro-communists, frightened at being rejected by their bourgeoisie, away from it) and its Union of the Left line.

Marchais' analysis is that "the workers who have confidence in the party ... thought they should cast a useful vote on the first round [by voting Mitterrand] to get rid of Giscard" (*L'Humanite*, 27 April). Who is at fault? The PCF was the best builder and propagandist of the Union of the Left, as it was of the other popular fronts in 1936 and 1944. Unfortunately workers who have confidence in the Communist Party believed them. And even after its failure, the PCF leadership was still calling to vote Mitterrand in the name of the Union of the Left!

When the PCF launched its general secretary Marchais as its presidential candidate, proclaiming that "for the first time we are going over to the offensive and directly putting the question of voting Communist at the centre of the battle", the bourgeois press accused the party of voluntarily retreating into the "ghetto" of Cold War isolation. Our comrades in the LTF responded to this unaccustomed combative tone from the Stalinists by declaring that if the PCF conducted a campaign independent of popular-front entanglements with the bourgeoisie, we could consider giving "savagely critical" electoral support to Marchais as a class-against-class vote. Since then the "Communist" Party has waged a virulent campaign "against ghettos" of a very different sort — a chauvinist attack on immigrant workers, which included the outrageous bulldozing of an immigrant hostel in the Paris working-class suburb of Vitry-sur-Seine last Christmas (see "PCF chauvinists attack immigrant workers", *Australasian Spartacist* no 81, February 1981!)

This disgusting campaign made the Marchais candidacy unsupportable by revolutionaries, indeed by any class-conscious worker. As the LTF explained

in the April issue of *Le Bolchevik* (no24):

"His disgusting campaign of racist provocations against immigrants gives a vote for Marchais a meaning which nothing else has superseded so far, namely [it has become] a referendum in favour of Vitry and [the PCF's] chauvinist anti-immigrant line. We could understand why, given the absence of any other perspective, workers might want to vote for Marchais based on their disgust for Giscard and Mitterrand and/or their attachment to the state which emerged from the October Revolution. But unless something happens (especially linked to the question of the defence of the USSR) which could change the meaning of voting for Marchais between now and the elections (and still with the minimum condition that he be free from any popular-front link with the bourgeoisie) no revolutionist, no conscious worker, can give Marchais the slightest support, even the most violently critical."

The bulk of the French "far left" had a very different approach: lining up with the anti-Communist and anti-Soviet propaganda barrage, they condemned the PCF as "anti-unity" for running an independent candidate at all.

To listen to these pseudos, one would think that Trotskyism consisted of endless permutations of "unity": unite, united, unified, union, unitary. For Lenin and Trotsky the only genuine unity of the workers was that based on their historic class interests. But all the present-day "unity"-mongering means something else entirely. It is a thinly veiled call for reconstituting the popular-front Union of the Left, a class-collaborationist coalition which included the tiny bourgeois Left Radical Movement (MRG) as a pledge that it would not transgress the limits of capitalist class rule.

This was clearly shown at the time of the 1978 legislative elections, when both the LCR and OCI called for the victory of the Union of the Left. Only the LTF put forward a policy of proletarian opposition to the bourgeois popular front: "The minimum condition that workers must set in order to give electoral support to the PCF and PS is that they break with their bourgeois electoral partners and with the Common Program which provides the framework for this class-collaborationist alliance" (*Le Bolchevik*, March 1977). And a special LTF pre-election leaflet warned:

"By calling for a vote for the PCF/PS, these centrists call directly for the popular front to take power. But when the workers mobilise to insist that their demands be fulfilled by 'their' government, they will find the popular front blocking their path ... With cries of 'defeat the right' and 'Giscard out', the LCR and OCI have adopted the excuses traditionally offered by the Stalinists to justify popular fronts."

Behind the break-up of the Union of the Left

Already at the time of the initial breakdown of the Union of the Left in September 1977, in negotiations over "updating" the Common Program of capitalist reform, the two greats of French pseudo-Trotskyism had a virtually identical line for pasting back together the popular front. The OCI: "Enough of division! PCF-PS Unity!" And the LCR: "Unity is what's needed". While the LCR tended to hold the Stalinists and social democrats equally responsible for the break, the Lambertists were spotting the "hand of Moscow": "Marchais splits, Brezhnev approves". Even Mitterrand didn't go this far with social-democratic demonology, merely coyly remarking on a "conjuncture of

Continued on page eleven

Spartacist League trounces reformists at LaTrobe Uni debate

El Salvador: which side are you on?

MELBOURNE — "We want to build a movement of solidarity that will fight US imperialism and its lackeys in El Salvador and defeat them.... The demands that we are putting forward are 'Military victory to the leftist insurgents! Down with the junta! No aid to the Salvadoran junta! US/OAS hands off Central America! Defence of Cuba and the Soviet Union begins in El Salvador!'

"Now there's a counterposed program that's agreed to by all our opponents here. And it's summed up in the committee that's been advertised here, CISCAC [Committee in Solidarity with Central America and the Caribbean] ... essentially 'No intervention by the imperialists' and 'Let the people decide in El Salvador'.... There's a refusal here to take sides that is not accidental.... Because they're tailing ... the Teddy Kennedys and the Willy Brandts in West Germany, the Don Chipp, the Bob Hawkes, who fear a military victory. Because ... it could lead to the overthrow of capitalism in Central America."

That's how Steve Haran, speaking for the Spartacist League (SL) at a panel debate on the civil war in El Salvador at LaTrobe University on 6 May, summed up the key dividing line for the left over El Salvador. And the audience heard Demetri Doulos of the ALP Socialist Left, Tom O'Lincoln of the International Socialists (IS), and Dave Deutschmann of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) confirm that assessment of their politics in spades.

Doulos, a member of the ALP foreign affairs policy committee, opened the debate. His main point was that the "Fraser government is attempting once more to get involved in a conflict that [Australia] has no particular interest [in]" — ie, *Australian* bosses can do without it. The US government falsely labelled the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) "extreme left", he complained; after all, this "popular front" was a "coalition ... made from centrist parties ... and also many elements of the church". The problem with Fraser was that his government "seems to be going into whatever the US dictates without any question at all". The ALP, in other words, intends to support US imperialism ... *critically*.

Doulos, who didn't even hang around for his summary, was at least open about his reformism. Not so the IS' Tom O'Lincoln, whose fifteen minute presentation took the prize for waffle. His "analysis" was that the Salvadoran civil war was a "national struggle" which had the "potential to grow into a class

struggle" (our emphasis) — a knowing statement which simply disappears the *existing* class civil war between the Salvadoran workers and peasants and their oligarchic rulers. He added that "El Salvador has a world significance.... The United States can really not afford to lose the war there", but consciously evaded the real reason *why*. Reagan has made El Salvador the front line in his anti-Soviet Cold War drive, yet O'Lincoln nowhere mentioned the USSR. The IS actually makes it a point of principle not to defend the Soviet bloc against the US. Some anti-imperialists! O'Lincoln ended up incongruously quoting the radical Stalinist, Che Guevara, in favour of "two, three, many Vietnams". And this from a group which says that the heroic victory of the Vietnamese workers and peasants over US imperialism produced only a "repressive state capitalist regime" (*Battler*, 27 January 1979).

"[I]n tiny El Salvador and Central America, Reagan and Haig want to send a bloody message not only to Castro in Cuba, but to Brezhnev", Haran replied. The SL says "Down with US imperialism's Cold War drive"

"because the Soviet Union and Cuba are workers states, bureaucratically deformed, yes, but the overthrow of capitalism is a historic gain for the working class ... Now we stand for the ouster of Brezhnev, Castro and the bureaucratic caste ... [because] by conciliating imperialism and defending their own bureaucratic privileges, they undermine the defence of the revolutionary gains."

He went on to explain why the FDR is an *obstacle* to the victory of the Salvadoran masses:

"The FDR program is tailored to respect private property and promises not to overthrow capitalist rule. But the fundamental questions in El Salvador are class ones and they demand a class answer.... The workers must break with the bourgeoisie ... take state power in their own name and spread the flames of proletarian revolution throughout Central America. And above all they must have a party to lead this, a party of the Leninist-Trotskyist type...."

Instead, the FDR is looking for a "political solution", or some sort of negotiated settlement; and what that comes down to is a deal with the junta and a deal with imperialism. Now Carter engineered something like that in 1979; it was called the reform junta." One of its members was Guillermo Ungo — who now just "happens to be the president of the [FDR]...."

The ALP, he continued, "say they're not for revolution So naturally they support the class collaborationism of the

FDR", whereas the SWP "claims to be revolutionary and Trotskyist but it is neither". In fact, the SWP replicates the FDR's popular-front class collaborationism in the shape of CISCAC. But what good is a "solidarity" movement geared to be acceptable to the *enemies* of the Salvadoran masses? "What if there's another Cuban crisis? ... Where will the liberals go then? Where will Don Chipp go? ... Because fundamentally, when it comes to the crunch, these people are for Reagan against the Soviet Union."

SWP "gives confidence" to pop front

Dave Deutschmann for the SWP, unlike the IS, dispensed with any pretence of criticism of the FDR. Intoning long quotations from the left-sounding parts of the FDR program, he gushed:

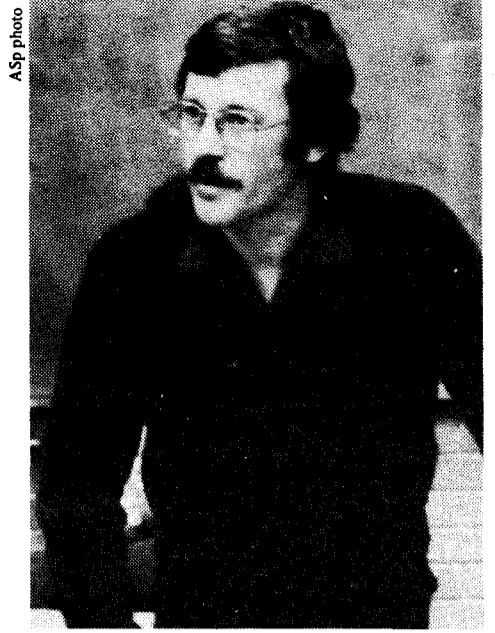
"The Socialist Workers Party ... gives confidence to the revolutionary currents within the FDR, gives confidence to the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, gives confidence to the Castro leadership in Cuba. We're confident of the revolutionary process that is taking place in Central America.... We're confident that the best way to defend the masses of El Salvador is to call for US hands off El Salvador."

The *only* thing the SWP is *not* confident in, or even interested in, is the independent mobilisation of the working class.

From the floor, ALPer and CISCAC spokesman John Fletcher leapt to the wholesale defence of Ungo and the FDR "against the misrepresentations of the speaker from the Spartacist League". The FDR's program is "quite clearly for destroying the present state, for establishing a new state ... whose class character would be radically different from the present state", he claimed; "its practice in struggle" as well "make[s] very clear the revolutionary nature of the FDR". It was slanderous "to accuse someone like Guillermo Ungo, who risked his life by leaving the government and by joining the revolutionary opposition, of having blood on his hands".

The one-time Vietnam War minister, Don Chipp: is he "anti-imperialist" too? Yes, said Fletcher; when he speaks from CISCAC platforms he "accepts an anti-imperialist position". Echoing the SWP, he argued that "it is American imperialist military backing that is keeping the junta in power. To call for its cessation ... is in effect to call for the success of the revolutionary forces". So why did CISCAC vote *against* an SL motion at a 22 April meeting in Sydney calling for military victory? Why did it subsequently suppress a similar motion in Melbourne? The simple truth is that it's not "acceptable" to the jackal-imperialist Chipp and his ilk. Trying to dismiss the SL's call for Anti-Imperialist Contingents on 13 June in Sydney and 20 June in Melbourne, Fletcher pretended that the only alternative to CISCAC was "to say we will only work with people who will agree with us on the complete revolutionary program".

In the discussion period an SL member took up the myth that removing US aid to the junta virtually equals socialist revolution. "Look at Indonesia in '65, Chile in '73.... Thousands of workers were slaughtered ... not by imperialist intervention but by the indigenous reactionary forces.... In 1932 in El Salvador, 30,000 workers and peasants were butchered ... by the military of El Salvador on its own." The FDR stood for "revolution or death", Deutschmann had said. That's the choice for the masses, an SL sympathiser pointed out, "but it's not for the Ungos. He chose



Spartacist spokesman Steve Haran.

'death'.... For ten weeks he sat by while workers' strikes were being smashed, while workers were being killed, while he sat in his little ministerial office.... And now [you say] he's turned over a new leaf and become a revolutionary. What crap!... If the choice comes to socialism or capitalism in El Salvador ... they will turn on the workers."

An SL spokesman revealed some of the "revolutionary" FDR program Deutschmann had expurgated from his quotes. For example, the part "which states that 'this [FDR] government will rest on a broad political and social base ... [including] the advanced middle layers'"'. The program spells out who that includes: "small and medium-sized industrialists, merchants, ... coffee planters, ... the progressive clergy, ... the advanced sections of the Christian Democracy, worthy and honest officers of the army ..." — and this is the program which is supposed to "prove" the FDR isn't class-collaborationist!

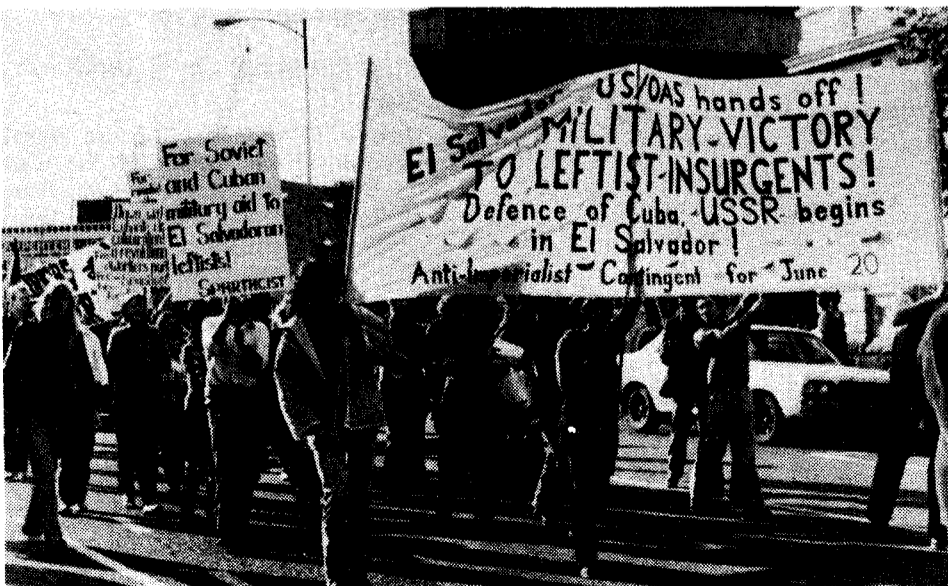
Revolutionary will vs reformist despair

In his summary, Deutschmann reaffirmed his faith in the popular front. Then, like the bursting of a boil, oozed out a venomous, slanderous diatribe against the SL's supposedly "irrelevant" revolutionary Trotskyism. The SL "opposed the Cuban Revolution when it took place". The SL "believes you had counterrevolution in Iran". The SL believes "that the Solidarity movement in Poland is in fact a counterrevolutionary movement". The SL is "in a mood of despair, of despondency and I think that's the reason behind their lack of confidence in the FDR in El Salvador".

"We have a history of documenting the political struggles of our tendency", Haran replied. Deutschmann's falsifications can't stand up to actual SL positions. Thus on Iran we warned that Khomeini was a medieval Islamic reactionary and raised the demand "Down with the Shah! Down with the mullahs! For workers revolution in Iran!" In Poland we never said Solidarity was wholly counterrevolutionary; rather we warned of the danger of capitalist restoration and advanced a program to *split* the clerical-nationalist elements out of the Polish workers movement, to defend the collectivised property forms, and to lead the working class in the direction of proletarian political revolution. As for Cuba, the SL's precursor, the Revolutionary Tendency (RT) within the US Socialist Workers Party, arose in opposition to the leadership's abandonment of Trotskyism through opportunist tailing of Castro. The RT always *defended* the Cuban Revolution against US imperialism. When Kennedy launched his infamous Bay of Pigs invasion, it was RT (now SL/US) leader James Robertson who called for the party's youth paper, *Young Socialist*, to "have a bold, bloody over-the-masthead headline about Yankee Imperialist Rape or Solidarity With Every Soviet-supplied Bullet Entering the Bodies of CIAists, or

Continued on page ten

Australasian Spartacist



Melbourne, May Day 1981: SL marches for "Military victory to leftist insurgents in El Salvador".

Sandinistas' "middle way" a dead end

Nicaragua on the razor's edge

El Salvador is the current hot front line of Reagan's global game plan to "roll back communism". But next on the Pentagon's Central American hit list is neighbouring Nicaragua, where in July 1979 the Sandinista guerrillas smashed the Somoza dynasty installed by US Marines. In the last years of his rule, Anastasio Somoza's National Guard stacked up a mountain of some 50,000 corpses defending it — a regime so distasteful and isolated that even then imperialist chief Carter dumped it. Today Reagan's regime continues to harbour, train and conspire with the ex-Somoza butchers-in-exile, whose occasional raids into Nicaragua from across the border in Honduras have been stepped up. The State Department maintains close links with Nicaragua's capitalist opposition, which has frequently mounted counter-revolutionary demonstrations.

In early March, Reagan viciously cancelled vital wheat shipments from the US, literally taking bread out of the hands of the Nicaraguan masses; on 1 April, he cut off the last of \$75 million in economic aid. When Nixon was bent on the overthrow of the Allende popular front in Chile, he told his ambassador to "make the economy scream"; the petty bourgeoisie driven to economic desperation was ripe for reactionary mobilisation, as in the petty-bourgeois truck owners' "strikes" of 1972-73, paving the way for Pinochet's bloodbath. The Nicaraguan economy is living from hand to mouth; the US can make it scream bloody murder if it wants. And it is by no means impossible for the CIA to mount an invasion force.

Washington justifies its starvation policy with blasts of Cold War propaganda accusing Nicaragua of channelling arms to the Salvadoran insurgents. For the Nicaraguan masses, to extend such aid is a life-and-death necessity, a duty and a repayment of a revolutionary debt (El Salvador guerrillas helped finance guns for the Sandinistas against Somoza with ransom money from kidnappings). Yet the Sandinistas' attitude toward the civil war next door could at best be described as contradictory. They hailed the "human rights junta" installed in San Salvador in October 1979 — breaking with it, and allowing aid to the guerrillas, only after the assassination of Archbishop Romero in March 1980. In response to Reagan's current threats, a "senior" Sandinista official reportedly told the *New York Times* (15 February): "Washington's message was received loud and clear. There is a recognition of the very high political cost to Nicaragua of involvement in El Salvador." But if they don't help revolution to spread throughout the region, they could be slitting their own throats.

Aid to Salvadoran leftists is anathema to the Nicaraguan capitalists, and the Sandinistas refuse to break from them. 60 to 70 percent of the economy — 75 percent in manufacturing and 80 percent in agriculture — were reported in the private capitalist domain in 1980. And yet, in a recent report on the economy, agriculture minister Jaime Wheelock said straight out that the basic ownership of the means of production will stay the

same in 1981. This is the axis of the Sandinistas' policies — unity with the "patriotic" capitalists.

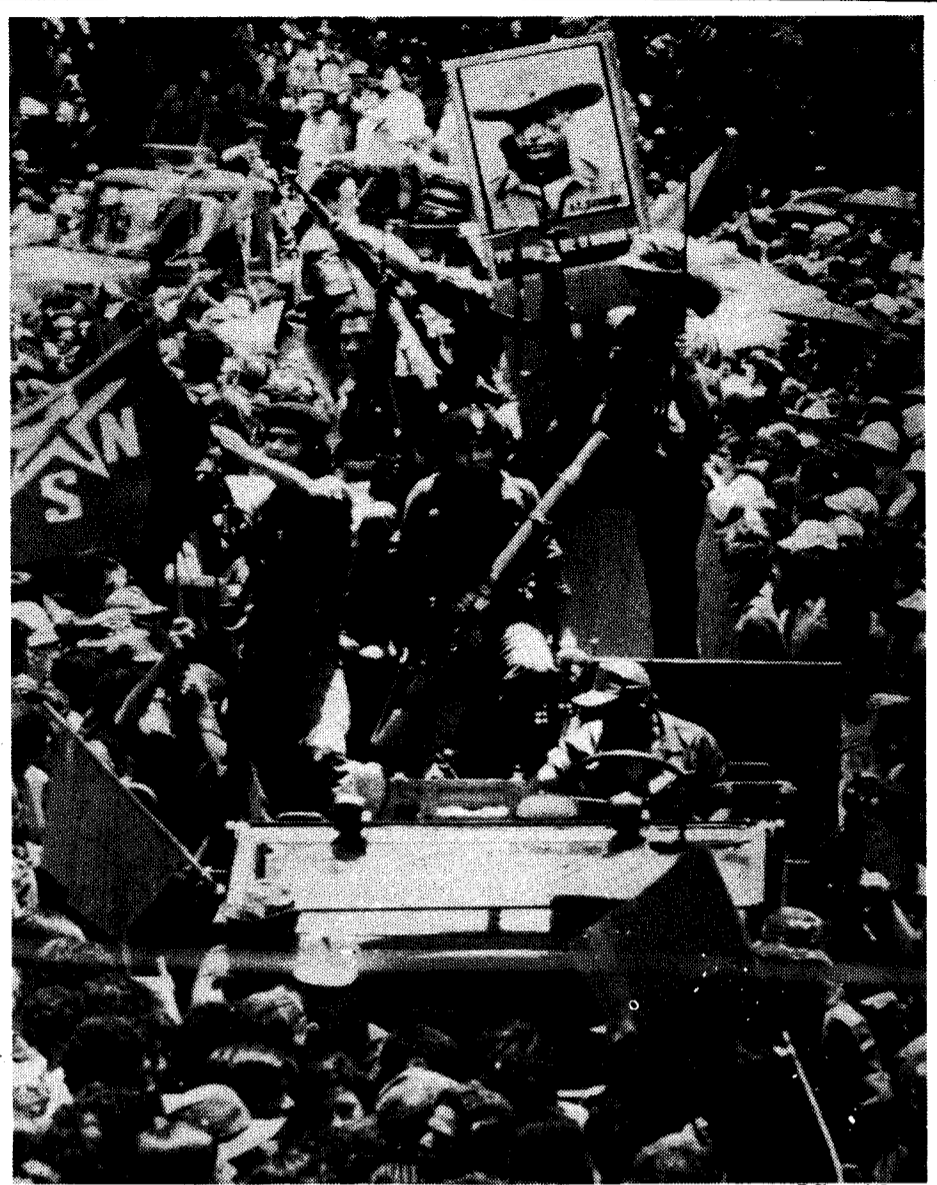
But such an unambiguously capitalist economy is a tremendous weapon in the hands of the imperialists. For in a showdown, the domestic bourgeoisie cannot resist the pressures from its Yankee imperialist masters, obeying a common class interest. The problem with the Stalinist myth of revolution by stages is that in this epoch there is no such thing as an "anti-imperialist national bourgeoisie", as the Sandinistas will soon discover, and there can be no "anti-imperialist stage".

By trying to carve out a "middle road" in Nicaragua, the Sandinistas just leave the way open for imperialist subversion and the white terror of a bloody counter-revolution. Just as in El Salvador, the program in Nicaragua must be to break with the bourgeoisie, to mobilise the workers on a class program, to expropriate all the exploiters. That is to say, to take on not only the "democratic" tasks of ousting the tyrant Somoza & Co, but to break the ties of imperialism and sweep away all the latifundistas and factory owners. That requires a proletarian communist leadership, a Trotskyist party which fights for permanent revolution, for workers and peasants governments based on Soviets — workers councils — throughout the region and a socialist federation of Mexico and Central America.

But that is *not* the program of those posturing as Trotskyists like the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the so-called United Secretariat (USec) it is nominally attached to, who swear they are nothing but true-blue, red-and-black Sandinistas. At their 11th World Congress, the USec voted to "defend their program by working loyally to build this party", that is, the Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSLN). A year later, it repeated: "The recognized vanguard of the Nicaraguan revolution has been forged in the Sandinista Front" (*Intercontinental Press*, 24 November 1980). If that's true, who needs Trotskyists? The SWP calls the Nicaraguan regime a "workers and peasants government", a term first used by the Communist International as a popular designation for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Some proletarian dictatorship, founded with bankers and landowner representatives sitting in the ruling junta and key government ministries!

The Sandinista/bourgeois "government"

The FSLN got into power by mobilising a genuine national uprising, including virtually the entire bourgeoisie outside of the Somoza family and its own private army, the National Guard. Nevertheless, from the start there was a coalition at the level of the junta and the Government of National Reconstruction. Until March this year, a five-man junta had two bourgeois, non-FSLN members. Originally, they were Alfonso Robelo, the cooking oil king of Nicaragua, and Violeta Chamorro, the widow of the publisher of an anti-Somoza bourgeois paper, *La Prensa* (now the



July 1979: Sandinista guerrillas enter Managua.

mouthpiece of the bourgeois opposition). The government sports no less than nine priests, including Ernesto Cardenal, minister of culture, and Miguel D'Escoto, a Maryknoll priest, the foreign minister.

In May 1980, Chamorro and Robelo resigned and the capitalist representatives threatened to walk out of the first meeting of the Council of State. But following a tense period the FSLN chose two more bourgeois figures, Arturo Cruz and Rafael Cordova — director of the Central Bank and a member of the Supreme Court respectively, both members of the Democratic Conservative Party, which represents landowner interests and whose symbol is a triangle with the inscription: "God-Order-Fatherland". In yet another re-shuffle announced on March 4, Cruz was sent off to Washington as ambassador and a three-man junta formed — still including Cordova. An FSLN-only government would also continue to rest on the present capitalist economy and would be open to the same kind of imperialist pressure as in the past.

There is presently no real bourgeois state in Nicaragua in the Marxist sense — that is, a class formation committed to the protection of private property. A petty-bourgeois regime, which is essentially the Sandinista army, has held real power since the National Guard disintegrated following Somoza's flight, not the Sandinista/bourgeois "government". Yet the latter does represent a commitment by the Sandinistas to attempt to follow what they see as a "middle road" — and that includes not offending those imperialist capitalists, like West Germany and Sweden, who want to keep the Sandinista regime in the imperialist economic orbit through massive doses of economic aid.

Workers against Sandinistas, SWP against workers

The Sandinistas are not only maintaining the capitalist "mixed economy", they are defending it against any challenge from the left. Almost immediately after the Sandinistas took over, they clashed with the Simon Bolivar Brigade, followers of the pseudo-Trotskyist,

opportunistic adventurer Nahuel Moreno. When the P-igade organised several thousand workers to come down to the FSLN headquarters with big signs saying "Power to the Proletariat", the Sandinistas arrested them, interrogated them and deported them to Panama where they were beaten up by the bourgeois police of General Torrijos.

These people were then part of the USec (Moreno has since split); but a USec delegation formally told the Sandinista government that they approved of this expulsion of their own "comrades"! And USec dissidents in Nicaragua charged American SWP honcho Peter Camejo with instructing the USec delegation to turn the Bolivar brigadistas in to the FSLN police. Since we published this letter (*Workers Vanguard* no 242, 26 November 1979), neither Camejo nor the SWP has ever denied it. The Trotskyist movement has had to fight against capitulators who bow to the pressure of the bourgeoisie or the Stalinist bureaucracies. *But these people aren't capitulators, they're stool-pigeons!*

Consider also the fate of the ex-Maoist Frente Obrero (Workers Front — FO), whose paper *El Pueblo* was shut down around the same time for calling for land occupations; allowed to re-open only to have its editor arrested for a few weeks that autumn, along with members of a small ostensibly Trotskyist group; only to be re-arrested along with the leadership of FO that January and the newspaper again shut down, this time seemingly for good.

In February 1980 the FO led a strike at the San Antonio sugar mill, which produces 70 percent of the country's sugar. The government broke the strike and arrested several of the FO leaders, although they were eventually let go. The mill workers struck again in November, this time led by the Christian Democratic trade union. Again the strike was broken by the so-called revolutionaries of the FSLN. A strike against the government by Managua textile and construction workers in January 1980 was broken and the textile workers'

Continued on page eleven

Avenge the blood of El Salvador!

Continued from page one

buried alive as they sought to flee from government troops into neighbouring Honduras. The Latin American Human Rights Association reported this hideous slaughter which occurred at the La Sentada cave in the eastern department of Morazan. Peasant survivors told the Salvadoran leftist broadcasting station Radio Venceremos that 600 old people, 700 women and 150 children were killed when aerial bombardment from US-supplied Huey helicopters and artillery fire hit the cave where they had sought shelter. "Then the Honduran and Salvadoran soldiers began to shoot and launch smoke bombs; the children that went out were massacred by the gunfire." Finally, troops "sealed the cave and left all those who remained to die of suffocation" (*Uno Mas Uno* [Mexico], 9 April).

A week earlier, on March 18, a similar incident involving Honduran and Salvadoran troops occurred on the Lempa River in Cabanas department. Leftist guerrillas together with some 8000 refugees were being encircled by government troops who were systematically burning villages and crops in order to force peasants out of the area. The insurgents tried to break through the net to escape across the border at Lempa River. Many never made it, as soldiers from both countries and gunmen from the fascistic paramilitary ORDEN squads killed at least 50 during the crossing. The Lempa River massacre recalls a similar atrocity last May on the Sumpul River, also along the Honduran border. At that time, some 600 refugees were massacred as they tried to escape the kill-crazy soldiers. These repeated bloodbaths dwarf My Lai in the savagery of the slaughter.

And keeping in step with the junta's increasing terror are the supplies from its *Yanqui* master in Washington. In the first quarter of this year 343 tons of bombs,

bullets, machine guns and other "lethal" military hardware were shipped to the junta (compared to the 200 tons alleged by a discredited State Department "White Paper" to come from Cuba, Vietnam and the USSR). This doesn't include "non-lethal" military aid and the more than \$240 million in US/IMF "economic" credits scheduled to keep the dictatorship afloat this year. Nor does it cover "advisers" like Ray Prosterman, whose infamous "Phoenix Project" in Vietnam resulted in the deaths of at least 30,000 Viet Cong "suspects".

But all this firepower and aid has yet to produce any victories on the battlefield for the government headed by Christian Democratic puppet Napoleon Duarte (known locally as "Bonaduarde"). In Morazan department, government troops can't go more than six miles outside of the provincial capital. Junta troops took two weeks to climb to the top of Conchagua volcano in the southeast without inflicting serious casualties on the guerrilla defenders. And on Guazapa volcano, only 20 miles from the capital, army forces are still pinned down half-way up the slope after several months of fighting. The guerrillas claim to be recruiting faster than before the January offensive and express confidence that when the rainy season hits, the US-supplied Huey helicopters will be grounded and they will have the advantage (*Economist*, 2 May).

In frustration the junta soldiers have been doing the only thing they know how — mercilessly gunning down defenceless peasants and slum-dwellers in an attempt at mass terrorisation of the populace. For the most part, the US works hand in glove with junta to cover up these atrocities and when they do acknowledge one, it is only to portray the junta as "moderates" beset by extremists of both the left and right.

This policy isn't confined to Reagan & Co. The darling of the liberals, former



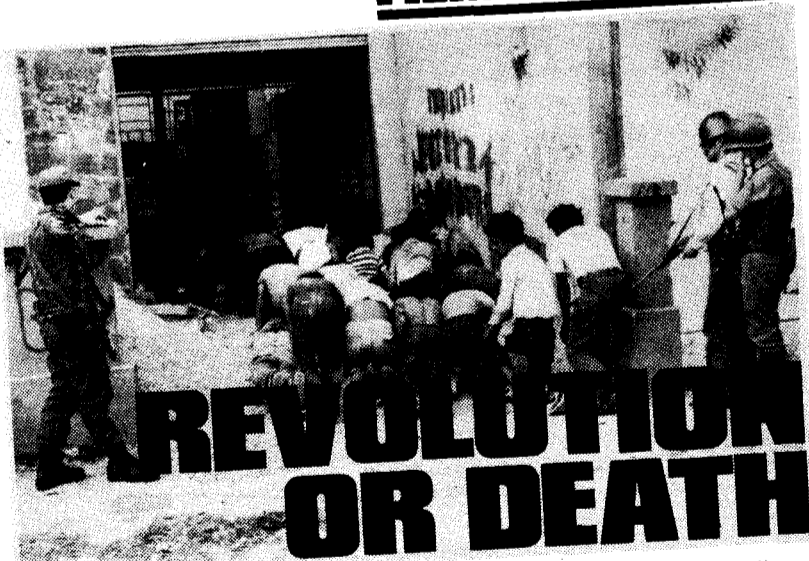
500-strong Anti-Imperialist Contingent marches past Lincoln Memorial, Washington on M

US ambassador Robert White, admitted to the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 9 April that he had supplied documentary proof that rightist death squads led by ex-major Roberto D'Aubuisson were responsible for hiring the gunmen who killed Archbishop Oscar Romero. This information has been suppressed until now because at the time the liberals were supporting the junta. They too have blood on their hands — and not only in El Salvador. The "liberal" John F Kennedy gave us the Bay of Pigs invasion, the infamous "Alliance for Progress" and the introduction of military "advisers" into Vietnam; Johnson and Nixon simply took it from there. The real fear that the liberals have is that their class might lose in El Salvador just as it did in Vietnam.

With Reagan and Haig vowing to

"draw the line" against "Communist subversion" in Central America, and the Salvadoran junta moving steadily to the right ever since Jimmy Carter installed it, it should be clear that all the talk of a "political solution" in El Salvador is dangerous illusion. After being rebuffed by Reagan's State Department and failing to arrange negotiations through Socialist International president Willy Brandt, the Revolutionary Democratic Front (the coalition of leftist guerrillas and bourgeois politicians opposing the junta) dropped their insistence that they meet only with "the puppeteer, not the puppets" and indicated willingness to discuss with civilians (the Christian Democrats) in the junta. The military's answer was to publish a "black list" of 138 names of priests, human rights activists, academics and former junta

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Anti-Imperialist Contingent Activities

No more Chiles!

For workers revolution in Central America!
Break with the bourgeoisie!

Forums

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Friday, 19 June, 7.30 pm, Sydney Trade Union Club, Ground Floor Bar, Foveaux Street, Sydney

Melbourne:

Thursday, 18 June, 7.30 pm, venue to be announced

Friday, 26 June, 8 pm, Forrester's Hall, RMIT, 168 LaTrobe Street, Melbourne

Melbourne University:

Thursday, 11 June, 1 — 3 pm, Public Lecture Theatre D, Old Arts Building

Rally

LaTrobe University:

Wednesday, 17 June, 1 — 3 pm, The Agora

Film showings "Revolution or Death"

Sydney:

Friday, 5 June, 8 pm, Paddington Town Hall Cinema, Oatley Road, \$2.50

New South Wales Institute of Technology:

Friday, 5 June, 1 pm, Turner Hall, Broadway, \$1.00

Melbourne:

LaTrobe University: Speakers and discussion

Thursday, 4 June, 2 — 4 pm, Undercroft Lecture Theatre

For more information phone Sydney (02)264-8195 or Melbourne (03)662-3740

Join the Anti-Imperialist



on May 3 El Salvador march.

Big Anti-Imperialist Contingent in US demos

"Leftist rebels must win the war!"

WASHINGTON, DC — "1, 2, 3, 4 — Leftist Rebels, Win the War!" chanted the 500-strong Anti-Imperialist Contingent at the 80,000-strong march held here on May 3 in response to Reagan's intervention in El Salvador. "5, 6, 7, 8 — Nothing to negotiate!" they added, in a sharp attack on the Democratic Party liberals and fake-left reformists who spread treacherous illusions in a "political solution" — a deal with the puppet Christian Democratic/military junta or with the puppeteers in Washington to cheat the Salvadoran masses out of the victory they are fighting and dying for. The Contingent's huge red-on-white banners drove the point home: "Avenge the Blood of El Salvador: Military Victory to Leftist Insurgents!"

In San Francisco and Seattle another 350 Anti-Imperialist militants organised by the Spartacist League/US (SL/US) were the reddest and just about the *only* militant sections of the radical-liberal anti-Reagan demonstrations. Only the Anti-Imperialist Contingent understood and took on Reagan's anti-Soviet Cold War threats, proclaiming "Defence of Cuba, USSR begins in El Salvador!" The Associated Press photo of the Washington march, which flashed around the world (left) had the SL front and centre.

There was a sharp political line through the demonstrations, the first big protest marches since the Vietnam War. The Anti-Imperialist Contingent challenged demonstrators, "Which side are you on in El Salvador?" The march organisers in the People's Antiwar Mobilisation (PAM) — an uneasy coalition dominated by representatives of the Communist Party (CP) and the Stalinoid Workers World Party/Youth Against War and Fascism (WWP/YAWF) — made it clear where they stood by provocative "disruption"-baiting of the militants, then sealed it by throwing up a line of "marshals" to physically block protesters from joining the Anti-Imperialist rally. "Stay on the right", they said, "it's a counter-demonstration". In fact, the PAM march was a counterdemonstration against military victory to the Salvadoran leftists.

A section of the US ruling class is worried that some of Reagan's binges may go too far and want him to pursue more intelligent anti-communist policies. The march organisers consciously played to this mood of scared liberalism, appealing to a layer of Democrats looking for a vehicle to take the wind out of Reagan's sails. Their main chant was "No draft, no war, US out of El Salvador!" And in a counterpoint that was repeated throughout the march, the Anti-Imperialist Contingent replied, "No draft, class war, US out of El Salvador!"

If it hadn't been for the SL/US, May 3 would have been an unchallenged celebration of Kennedy liberalism. In the late sixties and early seventies many young radicals chanted "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh, NLF has gotta win" and defiantly waved the Viet Cong flag in the face of American imperialism. Among them were many of today's PAM organisers, who today held little green flags of liberal "concern". On May 3, the only flags of

the Salvadoran Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) were carried by the Anti-Imperialist Contingent, whose colour guard also bore the Vietnamese and Cuban banners, along with the red flags of proletarian internationalism with the symbol of Trotsky's Fourth International.

While leftist guerrillas have been fighting for their lives and liberation of their people in the hills of El Salvador, their reformist cheerleaders in the US have been squabbling for organisational control of the protests. On the West Coast the CP-dominated May 3 Coalition accused PAM of trying to run off with the cash box. In Los Angeles, the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) boycotted the May 3 San Francisco demonstration because of bad blood over interminable petty manoeuvres. The ultra-liberal Socialist Workers Party (SWP) first tried to steal the PAM/CISPES thunder by organising its own May 9 March. But when that fell through, the SWP found itself sitting alone, and dumped its own march. For a while it tried to push a "sane May 3", trying to shift the march away from the Pentagon, hoping to intersect liberals' desire for a more sedate location. When that failed, the shameless "best builders" of yesterday effectively pulled out of the El Salvador protests, contenting themselves with sending a few salesmen to the marches to leaflet for their "socialist Watersuit"! In San Francisco a spokesman for the SWP's youth group simply dismissed the 5000 marchers there as "a lot of jaded leftists".

The PAM/YAWF organisers sought to replay the role of the CP/SWP in the Vietnam antiwar movement — delivering young politically heterogeneous protesters to the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. So their main job was to get most of the protesters to the Pentagon to hear Democrat Bella Abzug elaborate on the liberal slogan of "no

more Vietnams": "If we learned anything from Vietnam, it's that the time to stop a war is before it begins". She then urged the assembled crowd to "visit electoral punishment" on the Republicans — ie "Vote Democrat in '82". A CISPES speaker also made clear that the march was to be nothing more than a pressure tactic, as he spoke of "a groundswell that has forced Reagan to reassess his Salvadoran policy". (Want to bet?) Only the Anti-Imperialist Contingent — chanting "Remember the Bay of Pigs, Remember Vietnam! Democratic Party we know which side you're on" — drew a class line against the imperialist "doves".

The march organisers' appeal to the liberal Democrats is in harmony with that of the bourgeois politicians of the Salvadoran popular front, the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), who are looking for a deal with Reagan and his junta puppets. This is a program for a bloodbath. Attempts at compromise with the junta will only leave the murderous officer corps and the oligarchy intact. In counterposition to this program for betrayal, the Anti-Imperialists underlined the fundamental alternatives for the Salvadoran masses — "revolution or death, workers must rule".

The response to the Contingent showed that there are leftists in the US prepared to fight to defeat imperialism, not to pressure it into pursuing a "better" policy. Nine Anti-Imperialist Contingent buses came to Washington, including a group of 24 that travelled 900 miles from Wisconsin. At Detroit's Ford River Rouge factory nearly \$500 was contributed to send a group to the march. In San Francisco the crowd cheered when Diana Coleman, Spartacist-supported candidate in the 1980 elections for Board of Supervisors, said "We want the Soviet Union to send guns to El Salvador. We want them to send anti-aircraft guns so

Continued on page eleven



members labeled "traitors" and thus marked for death.

What kind of "political solution" can there be for the savagely oppressed Salvadoran workers and peasants short of a revolutionary victory over their landlord/capitalist/military class enemies? So long as the bloody officer corps remains intact and a rapacious oligarchy continues to rule the land, the death squads will continue their killing and abysmal poverty will be the fate of the masses in El Salvador. The only ones who stand to gain by an illusory "compromise" are the capitalist politicians (many of them former junta members who now seek to play games with the buffoon Duarte). Alarmed by the extreme class confrontation in El Salvador, their main concern is to stave off the "threat" of workers revolution.

But for the suffering working masses, this is the only solution. For them the alternatives "Revolution or Death" are the terms of survival — and to win the workers must rule by expropriating all the exploiters! That is why the Trotskyists call not for a bogus bourgeois "political solution" but for *military victory to the leftist insurgents! US/OAS hands off El Salvador! Break with the bourgeoisie — For workers revolution throughout Central America!*

— adapted from Workers Vanguard no 279, 24 April 1981

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Anti-Imperialist Contingent June 13/20

Razor Gang...

Continued from page twelve

courier service will be farmed out to private contractors. The result will be massive "rationalisation" leading to speed-ups and redundancies.

The labour movement must fight these vicious attacks now! In the days since the Razor Gang announcements, opposition to the cuts has been growing. Students from Brisbane to Melbourne have taken to the streets to protest the proposed reintroduction of fees; Australia Post drivers in Victoria struck for two days on hearing that AP's courier service was to go, and have since banned all mail deliveries to Fraser, Lynch and the other Razor Gang members.

What is desperately needed is *coordinated national action to stop Fraser in his tracks*. The ACTU and individual union affiliates must immediately launch nationwide strikes — up to and including a general strike — to reverse the cuts and stop all redundancies. But all we've had from the union tops is empty bluster about how bad the cuts are: the only proposal for "action" is to place bans on companies which buy government-run enterprises!

Yet the potential for serious struggle exists right now. In Australia Post and Telecom, workers are already taking action in pursuit of their demands for a \$25 a week plus 8 percent of salary wage rise, and an immediate 35-hour week with a 30-hour week "as soon as possible". So far the leaders of the Australian Postal and Telecommunications Union (APTU) and Australian Telecommunications Employees Association (ATEA) have limited the action to totally ineffective bans, and exclusively in support of the current log of claims. APTU president George Slater — widely despised in NSW for his membership of the union-busting Postal Commission — even called off mass meetings 24 hours before they were due to begin as part of a deal with the Arbitration Commission, which ruled that the APTU was entitled to an industrial allowance for lines supervisors — but would get it only if the union called off the mass meetings.

At a subsequent "off duty" meeting, attended by about 70 union members, Slater defended his action in the face of considerable hostility and upheld the strategy of bans as "intelligent tactics". And he explicitly let Telecom management off the hook by arguing that Telecom "would concede an eighteen to twenty-five dollar increase to line servicemen" if it wasn't for the government's opposition.

The experience at the Redfern Mail Exchange in Sydney in 1979 graphically demonstrates, though, that bans are utterly impotent in the face of a determined onslaught by the bosses. Once the key historic centre of militancy within the APTU, the union at Redfern is now but a shadow of its former self. What was needed in 1979 was a nationwide strike against the union-busting Mail Network Plan — a demand which the Spartacist League (SL) alone raised at the time (see *Australasian Spartacist* no 66, August 1979). And that is what is posed again today. Shut down Telecom and Australia Post! Don't wait for the inevitable stand-downs over bans — one out, all out now!

A national strike in Telecom/Australia Post could lead the way for a generalised offensive to roll back the Fraser cuts. In other public service sectors, the Administrative and Clerical Officers Association (ACOA) is implementing its own bans, and is pledged to a 48-hour strike if there are any sackings or forced redeployments. But why wait for the layoffs? NOW is the time for action, before Fraser gets the chance to put the boot in any further.

The Razor Gang attacks go far beyond the public sector, though. The attacks on health services and education, in particular, strike at every member of the working class. An APTU/ATEA/ACOA joint national strike could be the springboard for bringing other unions with more industrial weight — the metal workers, the wharfies — out on a *general*

strike to beat back the current round of attacks and to win real gains for the working class. At a recent NSW PKIU branch meeting this program to *win* was advanced by a Spartacist League supporter (see box page 10). Stop the cuts! No redundancies! End unemployment by drastically shortening the work week — thirty hours work for forty hours pay! Down with the bloodsucking health funds which leech off people's misery and illnesses! For free quality health care for all! No to student fees — for open admissions to all tertiary institutions with adequate stipends! For big wage increases to make up for inflation! For wages to rise to keep pace with the cost-of-living!

The current leaders of the labour movement have consistently shown, though, that they neither can nor want to fight Fraser's attacks. When the Liberals introduced a 2.5 percent levy on Medibank in 1976, the ACTU eventually conceded to the mass pressure from below and called a one-day national stoppage. Sixty percent of the Australian workforce responded, but the ACTU tops failed to call a single rally or meeting on the day. To show his contempt, then ACTU boss Bob Hawke went off and played a well-publicised game of tennis! When Fraser brought in the RAAF to break the Qantas strike earlier this year, Hawke's successor in the ACTU, Cliff Dolan, actually defended this government strikebreaking operation — the first use of the armed forces to break a strike since Labor prime minister Chifley sent the troops in to smash the coal miners' strike in 1949.

As for Dolan's counterparts in the ALP, both Bill Hayden and Neville Wran have shown that they too are prepared to make the working class pay for capitalism's crisis-ridden state. Hayden *opposes* the union bureaucracy's totally inadequate 35-hour week campaign on the grounds that it would cost jobs, while the businessman's friend, Wran, has turned loose his cops to break strikes — from the government printers' strike of 1978 to the Gosford meat workers' battles of last year. And in NSW Wran began *his own health care cuts two years ago*. It was Wran who campaigned to close Eastern Suburbs hospital and psychiatric centres

in Sydney, who has cut back on nursing staff, and who has allowed equipment at hospitals to run down drastically — resulting in the deaths of at least four people at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in the last two months.

Enough is enough! What the working class needs is a determined *class-struggle* leadership which will lead them to victory in the struggle against Fraser's anti-union offensive, a leadership which is prepared to fight for the overthrow of this decaying capitalist system and to replace it with a workers government which will introduce a planned economy producing for people's needs, not profit. Hawke, Hayden, Wran and Dolan have shown themselves to be the willing agents of Fraser's policies within the labour movement: they must be ousted as part of the political struggle to roll back and defeat the attacks of this arrogant, union-hating government. ■

Students...

Continued from page twelve

people and organisations endorsing the demands.

The united-front campaign has been marred by a display of petty organisational sectarianism from some of Sydney Uni's ostensible leftists. The president of the campus Student Representative Council (SRC), Paul Brereton, along with SRC secretary Margaret "I just work here" Kirkby, have to date refused to endorse the rally and have tried instead to upstage it by announcing *another rally the day before* the June 3 action. Under considerable pressure to take some action on Fraser's cuts, yet afraid of appearing to be tailing a Spartacist Club-inspired action, Brereton and Kirkby have chosen to try to split and wreck what should manifestly be a *united* campaign around fees, going so far as to try to book the front lawn *days after* they were first approached to endorse the June 3 action. On 25 May, though, Spartacist Club supporters are scheduled to address the SRC executive, thus giving the Council the chance to join in building the already widely supported rally.

It is clear that large numbers of students want to go beyond just oppo-

sition to fees and are receptive to militant action proposals against the deeply entrenched class bias of Australian universities. The abolition of fees for universities and CAEs by the Whitlam ALP government in 1973 gave many poorer students the chance of getting a higher education, but it did not fundamentally challenge the inherent class bias of tertiary educational institutions, whose primary role is to train the future scientists, technicians and ideologues needed by capitalist society.

For communists, access to free, secular, universal education is a right, not a privilege as bourgeois administrators like former Sydney University vice-chancellor Williams pompously declare. The Spartacist League stands for the abolition of restrictive entrance quotas, for open admissions and adequate stipends — equal at least to the minimum wage — for students as the only effective way to open up the universities and CAEs to working-class youth. The fees that both Liberal and ALP governments forced overseas students to pay must be abolished! Spartacist clubs oppose the capitalist administration of the Unis and CAEs and call for staff/student/worker control of the campuses.

Students by themselves do not have the social power to smash the Liberals' attacks on education. To be victorious, their struggles must be linked to those of the organised working class; a precondition of this is that students themselves are won over to being partisans on the side of the proletariat — a task which Spartacist League student supporters on campuses alone have taken up. But students can act as weathervanes of social trends and occasionally can spark powerful upsurges in the class struggle — from Budapest in 1956, to Nanterre and the Sorbonne in May 1968, right over to Athens 1973-74. The objective basis for united struggle by students and workers against the entire gamut of the anti-working class Razor Gang cuts exists. Now is the time for action! Build the June 3 Sydney Uni rally! Smash Fraser's attacks on students and workers! ■

Purge in British IMG

As we go to press, we have received news that the British International Marxist Group has carried out the biggest political purge in its history with the expulsion of 16 members of the Communist Faction. The next issue of Australasian Spartacist will carry a full account of the bureaucratic expulsions. We print below excerpts from a Communist Faction statement on the purge, issued on 22 May. For further information write: BM CF, London WC1N 3XX, UK.

"On 16 May the International Marxist Group (IMG) Political Committee (PC) expelled the entire Communist Faction (CF) from the organisation....

"The purge was prepared by a letter from the leadership, signed by an upstart who dares to take the name of revolutionary leader James P Cannon as his *nom de plume*. Its purpose was to lay the basis for a political trial, citing documents of the Communist Tendency (which became the Communist Faction). 'Cannon' noted the obvious. Our documents — one of which, on disarmament, was never even circulated to the membership even though it was used as 'evidence' for expulsion — attacked the leadership's denial in practice of revolutionary Marxism on key issues of the class struggle. 'Cannon' demanded that we now characterise the same leadership as 'revolutionary Marxist' to prove our 'loyalty'. Such a declaration could only have amounted to a recantation. Serious communists form factions when they have become convinced that defence of the revolutionary program is at stake — the demand that factions

should characterise the leadership as revolutionary before any struggle takes place means only one thing: *from now on the right to form factions has been eliminated in the IMG....*

"The CF was expelled for its politics. Only after the purge had been decided on was the question of collaboration with the Spartacist tendency added as an issue. At the PC meeting CF representatives found themselves confronted with the allegation, alongside the other 'charges', that they were 'members of the international Spartacist tendency'. The comrades readily declared their support for the Spartacist tendency and its program. Those of us who sought to collaborate with revolutionists in another organisation on the basis of a *shared program* drew the only serious organisational conclusion possible....

"At the 1980 national conference the comrades who went on to form the Communist Faction had sought to assert the Trotskyist position of Soviet defencism inside the organisation. In the aftermath of the imperialist outcry over Afghanistan we saw that the primary responsibility of communists was to stand firm against Cold War pressure and side with the Red Army in Afghanistan. But the IMG leadership, up to its neck in an attempt to regroup with the anti-Soviet Socialist Workers Party of Tony Cliff, *refused to take the discussion at the conference*. When the Communist Tendency submitted a document opposing the bankrupt line of building the pacifist Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), and argued that the IMG must counterpose to what

Trotsky called 'chatter about disarmament' the defence of the Soviet Union and the revolutionary proletarian struggle to disarm the bourgeoisie, the leadership sat on the Communist Tendency's documents for *five months*, so strong was its need to keep these Trotskyist positions from the membership.

"IMG members today are being told that their future lies with 'Socialist Challenge supporters' in the Labour Party. Ernest Mandel himself has come to town to use his showmanship and demagoguery to sell the new line to the IMG membership. After the orientation to the Cliffites, after the decision to build CND, this attempt to seize the *main* opportunity, entry into a mass reformist party, is being implemented with no formal discussion in the membership whatsoever.... This line means *liquidation*. When the leadership's political project is support to the 'left' reformism of Tony Benn, then all talk of counterposing the IMG program to the Labour Party 'left' is a gigantic fraud. *The expulsion of the Communist Faction (and any other serious opposition to liquidation into the Labour Party) is a tribute offered for full membership in the Tony Benn supporters' club....*

"Comrades, protest the witchhunts! Protest the purges!... Demand the publication of all unpublished documents inside the IMG!... Above all, demand that the political issues be discussed! The slogan used by the leadership to cheer on Tony Benn must be turned against them by IMG members: *Let the Left be heard!*" ■

Australasian Spartacist

British troops out now!

Thatcher kills IRA hunger strikers

20 May — It took 66 days to kill Bobby Sands, condemned to a slow and painful death by the arrogant butchers of Westminster. In the British parliament, the announcement that "Robert Sands, Esquire, the Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone" was dead met with an obscene display of solidarity of Labour and Tory with Margaret Thatcher's refusal to budge an inch on his just, elementary demands. But around the world it met with demonstrations of outrage and indignation at this calculated, imperialist murder. In Catholic West Belfast, the announcement that Bobby Sands, officer of the Irish Republican Army, was dead met with the beating of dustbin lids, the construction of street barricades and the rattle of British rifle fire.



The butcher of Westminster.



IRA volunteers shoulder coffin of martyred Bobby Sands.

A week after Sands' death, Republican soldier Francis Hughes died of starvation 59 days into his fast. After 60 days without food, Raymond McCreesh, too, lay dead. 24 hours later his comrade, Patsy O'Hara, died. The imperialist press claims it was "suicide", but the workers in the ghettos of West Belfast and Derry's Bogside know the truth. Bobby Sands and his comrades died martyrs in the struggle against brutal imperialist oppression. The proletariat will remember them, their deaths will be avenged.

In the US, East Coast dockers announced a 24-hour boycott of all British shipping immediately after Sands' death. Three thousand demonstrated in Paris, another thousand in Athens. In Dublin, thousands queued behind black flags at the General Post Office, scene of the 1916 Easter Rising, to sign a book of mourning and 2000 marched to the Irish parliament. After Hughes' death, thousands converged on the British Embassy in Dublin, only to be beaten back by Free State police who feared above all that the angry crowd would burn down the building, as it had done after the January 1972 Bloody Sunday massacre. American demonstrators marched in New York, Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Two thousand marched in silence through the streets of Sydney. And on 19 May, the Second Battalion of the Provisional IRA in the Republican stronghold of South Armagh struck back militarily, by blowing a British Saracen armoured pig and its five-man crew sky-high.

Even in death, the imperialist swine who rule at Westminster could display only provocative, insulting arrogance. Take the case of Francis Hughes, who led an IRA flying column in South Derry

until he was captured by the British in 1978 after a shootout with a patrol of the sinister undercover agency, the Special Air Services (SAS). Before he was caught, Hughes' unit managed to kill one of these professional torturers and seriously wound another. To avoid any risk of giving away IRA secrets, Hughes refused any anaesthetic as the SAS bullets were extracted from his badly-wounded body. The army never forgave him.

When he died, thousands lined the Falls Road to salute his sacrifice. But the British authorities hijacked his body, sending it straight to his home village of Bellaghy. En route, the hated Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) halted the cortege and dragged the hearse's driver out of the vehicle — lest he drive it through a Republican sector of Belfast. As the cortege moved off again, Loyalist mobs pelted the hearse with rocks and hammered on the windows of the car bearing Hughes' mother. When they got to Bellaghy, the Hughes family found the village entirely ringed by hundreds of police and British soldiers who had been mobilised in force to prevent mourners from attending the funeral.

The British government was driven to meting out this vile, repugnant and criminal treatment on the dead body of Francis Hughes because they could not break him when he was alive. "He can truly be called the unconquerable man", Republican leader Martin McGuinness eulogised in a graveside speech. The imperialists call Hughes, Sands, McCreesh and O'Hara criminals; but they were not. Instead there is real tragedy in the death of these men with the courage to die for their beliefs in a slow and agonising way. Their courage and dignity have made them honourable symbols for the op-

ASp photo

pressed Catholic minority of Northern Ireland in their struggle against the obscene British presence. Bobby Sands was an IRA officer who would not ask his men to do what he would not do himself. The hunger strikers have simply demanded that the Republican prisoners should not be treated as criminals. They are right. Their demands for political status and better prison conditions are just, even minimal. *Free the hunger strikers! Free all victims of imperialist repression in Ireland! Smash Britain's torture camps! Get the armed butchers out now! For the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the British army! Avenge Bobby Sands and his comrades!*

But the other tragedy of Bobby Sands and his comrades is the sad fact that their deaths, however honourable their intentions, are at the service of a program which cannot further the cause of Irish liberation. The bankruptcy of the Republican's strategy was shown with the defeat of the last hunger strike, whose "humanitarian" focus and emphasis on recognition from notables in foreign capitals did nothing to stop the manoeuvring and arrogant refusal of elementary rights by Britain. The whole strategy of pressuring imperialism, whether by civil libertarianism or by the bomb, offers no road forward.

For anti-sectarian, anti-imperialist workers militias!

The tragedy of Republicanism is that it can only, ineluctably, fall into the communalist trap set by British imperialist divide-and-rule policies. British imperialism will face its day of reckoning in Ireland when there is a unified mobilisation of the proletarian masses surging towards power. But what Republicanism urges its supporters to fight for is a united *capitalist* Ireland. What sort of future does that hold that is worth dying for? Looking south, a fellow Republican faces the death sentence in Charles Haughey's Republic right now. The economy there is floundering, with high unemployment and rising inflation. And in the past the Green bourgeoisie in Dublin has let IRA hunger strikers starve to death, too, in the prison cells of Portlaoise and Mountjoy jails.

With the situation in the North at boiling point, the IRA may well be the only force defending Catholic communities from Paisleyite atrocities and imperialist rampage. But it is in the very nature of Republicanism that as and when the conflict deepens, their nationalism will lead to an exacerbation of reactionary sectarian violence on both sides. Republican nationalism directs its acts of terror not only at imperialist targets like Mountbatten and the British army but is also capable of such indefensible atrocities as the killing of twelve innocent Protestants in the La Mon House firebombing of early

1978. Class unity can and must be forged against sectarian terror through the struggle for integrated workers militias.

If the Republican solution offers no way forward, it is not for lack of courage but for lack of political perspective to focus a death blow against imperialism. But instead of providing such a program, the fake left in Britain and Australia merely echo Republican rhetoric while pandering to the pressure of pro-imperialist labourism. In Sydney, on 18 May, a "planning meeting" organised by Bob Gould's Socialist Leadership Group (SLG) to set up an "Australia-Irish Solidarity Campaign" attracted 120 people, including representatives of the International Socialists (IS) and the Healyite Socialist Labour League. But when Spartacist League speakers intervened to put forward a class program for Ireland in counterposition to the platform's wallowing in Green nationalism, Gould & Co proceeded to denounce us as "disrupters" who had a "two nations theory".

This is a lie on both counts. Coming from the loud-mouthed Gould, the charge of "disruption" is patently cynical — particularly as both the IS and SLG blocked *with us* against Communist Party charges of "disruption" at the recent Marxist Summer School (see *Australian Spartacist* no 81, February 1981). As for the Protestants, we do not think that they are a separate nation, but unlike the vicarious nationalists of the SLG/IS — who didn't once mention the Protestants in the meeting — we do consider that they exist and that they are a distinct community comprising the bulk of the Northern Irish working class. Moreover, they are armed to the teeth. The task of Marxists is to break the Protestant working class from their reactionary Loyalist misleaders. Green nationalism, which offers them nothing but the prospect of being an oppressed minority within a united Ireland, only helps bind the Protestant workers to the Paisleys and the Wests.

With world attention focusing onto Britain's brutal role in Ireland, the responsibility for immediate action from proletarian revolutionaries in Britain was clear. On the evening following Bobby Sands' death, the SL/B was the *only* significant left presence at a 400-strong London rally and our chants — "Westminster Butchers" and "Avenge the blood of Bobby Sands! Troops Out Now!" — were enthusiastically taken up by the mainly Irish protesters. In contrast, the IS' British co-thinkers, Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party (SWP), were nowhere to be seen. This criminal abstention is not simply cowardice. Years ago the SWP along with the International Marxist Group (IMG), stopped campaigning for "Troops Out Now" in order to



Melbourne, 6 May: Spartacist League demonstrates against killing of Bobby Sands.

Continued on page eleven

Debate...

Continued from page four

similar" (*SWP Discussion Bulletin* vol 22, no 16, June 1961), while the party majority issued cringing appeals to bourgeois liberals in the name of "self-determination".

As Haran pointed out, it is Deutschmann & Co who "have given up in terms of an independent working-class perspective and an independent revolutionary workers party. So ... all they see them-

selves as being able to do is be a cheerleader on the sidelines". In other words, if it moves, tail it: that is the SWP's method, from the Ayatollah Khomeini to Lech Walesa to Guillermo Ungo and the FDR.

In his summary, O'Lincoln tried to rebut Haran's charge that IS support to the Afghan rebels fighting the Red Army meant supporting the shooting of "schoolteachers who want young women to read and write". "Ridiculous", he sputtered, "I used to be a schoolteacher myself". The irony is though that the IS' Afghan bedfellows would have

O'Lincoln in their sights, too.

On El Salvador, the IS try to have two bob each way: "I'm prepared to support either sort of movement", O'Lincoln declared, referring to the conflicting programs of the SL and the SWP/CIS-CAC. Don Chipp? It's okay to ally "with the devil's grandmother"; but on the other hand, "I would be opposed to Chipp being on a platform". His "personal opinion" was that "the working class will have to break with" the "various middle layers" in the FDR; but "that's not to say that the military victory can't be won without that".

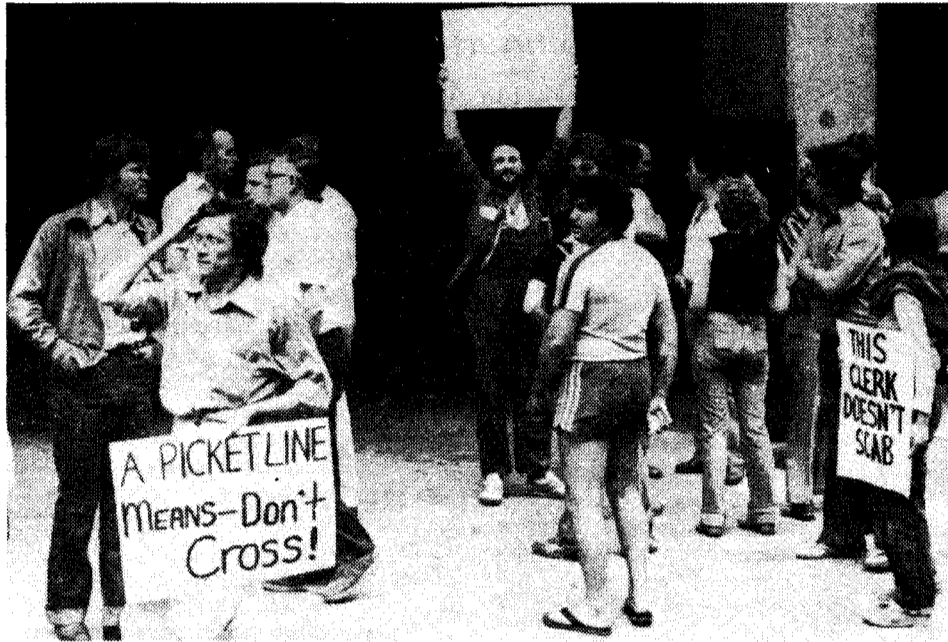
But as Haran had pointed out, there can be no third camp, "no neutrals" in the El Salvador civil war: the question is, "Which side are you on?" Only the Spartacist League has a program for the defeat of the junta and Reagan's Cold War drive, a program for socialist revolution in El Salvador. If you want to fight imperialism, not pressure it; if you want working-class solidarity, not bourgeois hypocrisy; if you want military victory for Salvadoran leftists, not imperialist deals — you belong with the SL, and with the Anti-Imperialist Contingents we're building for 13 and 20 June. ■

Militant polls well in Fairfax PKIU election

In last month's elections in the Printing & Kindred Industries Union (PKIU) chapel at Fairfax in Sydney, 63 chapel members (about 8 percent of the total vote) voted for Spartacist League (SL) supporter Ron Rees, who contested the executive position of Deputy Father of the Chapel on a class-struggle program (see *Australasian Spartacist* no 84, May 1981). The prevailing pessimism among the rank and file, engendered by the current PKIU leadership's defeatist policies, ensured the comfortable reelection of the incumbent right-wing, pro-company executive. But the vote for Rees was an impressive showing for a militant candidate under these circumstances, particularly as he was standing for chapel office for the first time. It was a vote for the principle that "picket lines mean don't cross", for a policy to "get the union off its knees" — the title of Rees' election leaflet.

Normally in chapel elections, candidates stand on their personal reputations and don't bother issuing leaflets explaining what, if any, program they stand for. Rees' leaflet created great interest, however. Copies were taken and photocopied, posted on union bulletin boards, passed from hand to hand and eagerly read. Many militants received it with enthusiasm: a "breath of fresh air" said one; the kind of militant leadership workers would need in upcoming struggles, argued another. It gave militants looking for a fighting program to beat back company attacks a badly needed boost — "it felt good", said one, to vote for Rees. A number helped get the leaflet around and canvass votes. Others agreed with some of the program but thought it too "advanced" for the bulk of the Fairfax workers; others thought it was "too honest" in forthrightly raising revolutionary politics.

The campaign brought the policies Rees has fought for in the plant to a wider audience and laid them out more fully. It especially won militants' support by calling for an industrial union, for unity with the journalists (AJA) and other unions in the plant, and for respecting all picket lines. Rees was the only candidate to fight for a serious, effective strike strategy: mass militant picket lines (and a union strike fund) to bring out the other unions and shut down production of scab newspapers. The right wing baited this



Fairfax picket line, January 1980. Support for Ron Rees (left) in PKIU election came from militant layer.

program as strike-happy, but Rees' strategy would mean that the union need not spend months "on the street" getting nowhere, but instead could win a decisive victory.

No other candidate raised the call for upgrading the second-class temporary employees to permanent status. Yet this demand, which won wide acceptance, is central to any struggle against redundancies, since Fairfax keeps one-third of the plant's PKIU membership as "permanent temporaries" in order to make easier future layoffs. In addition to opposing all redundancies, Rees raised a class-struggle answer to the threat of job losses due to the introduction of computerised typesetting — a shorter working week with no loss in pay. Thirty hours work for forty hours pay! And he called on the PKIU to fight for women clerks operating Visual Display Terminals to be paid at PKIU rates in order to win them to the union's side.

The 63 votes cast for Rees represent a majority of the 80-odd PKIU militants who refused to cross the striking journo's picket lines last June. This support demolishes the bureaucrats' claim that Rees' militant record was just the quirk of an "isolated individual". During the journo's strike, most of the 1100-strong PKIU chapel obeyed the treacherous recommendation of the branch leadership to abandon basic trade-union principle and cross AJA picket lines, thereby throwing away an opportunity to break down the longstanding hostility between journo and printers and to forge instead class unity between these different groups of workers.

The resulting split in the union brought the current right-wing executive to office (in elections which militants could take no part in because they began behind the picket lines), creating a continuing division between the militants and the conservative majority in the plant.

The 567 votes for the incumbent Deputy Father, Graham Quinn, reflect an anti-strike sentiment and demoralisation which is the product of the sellout of past PKIU strikes. In particular the defeat of the 9-week strike in 1976 fostered the belief that the PKIU could never win against the bosses' large-scale scabbing

operation. Rees' class-struggle campaign challenged this defeatist head on, seeking to drive home the real lessons of past struggles — for mass pickets, an adequate strike fund, and industrial solidarity through bringing out the other unions. His 63 votes are a small but important base on which to build. Rees now intends to stand for the chapel representative's position [Section Chairman] in his section.

A third candidate, Gary Lucas, failed to distinguish himself in any way from Quinn & Co. The old chapel leadership around Don Paget and Ian Joliffe — not standing themselves — backed him as "an alternative" to Quinn, arguing that Rees had no chance and would split the militant vote. In fact Rees was the only militant pole in this election — the only candidate who honoured last year's metal workers' strike and who consistently respected union picket lines. His program was the only authentic opposition to the current leadership and it won the votes of many former supporters of the Paget/Joliffe group. Lucas got nowhere near winning with 157 votes and Paget, Joliffe et al are now belatedly contesting section representatives positions to preserve a veneer of militancy.

Rees' campaign leaflet also addressed the key political questions in the world today, calling for military victory to the leftist insurgents in El Salvador and for the defence of the USSR against the US imperialist war drive. Far from being no concern to Fairfax workers as some argued, trade unionists cannot avoid major political questions — from the Razor Gang cuts and the "We Care" anti-union marches to Reagan and Fraser's Cold War drive. "Non-political" trade unionism is in fact reformist politics, the politics of the class-collaborationist ALP and trade union bureaucracy which blocks the workers from taking the road of militant class struggle against capitalism.

The present hot spot of the Cold War is El Salvador, where the choice for the working class is literally death at the hands of the US-backed junta or victorious revolution against it. Australian workers must take a side in this civil war — with their Salvadoran class brothers

and sisters against the capitalist oligarchy. At the 20 May NSW PKIU branch meeting Rees and another militant presented a motion calling on the PKIU to endorse — and help build — the Anti-Imperialist Contingent which the SL is calling for on the June 13 "Day of Action" El Salvador march (see box). But the response of branch organiser John McCarthy was to oppose the motion — despite his professed agreement with the "sentiment" — on the grounds that the SL was a "CIA front". Some "front", which calls for the defeat of the CIA-backed Salvadoran junta! But when the two SL supporters rose to refute McCarthy's time-worn Stalinist slander, they were denied any right of reply and their motion was "adjourned" to the state executive. As for McCarthy, his record includes leading the PKIU across AJA picket lines last June and, earlier, trying to witchhunt Rees out of the union for his principled support to the 1980 metal workers' strike. McCarthy's grotesque slanders of Trotskyists as police agents will not wash; vile anti-working class poison like this only helps the bosses, not the union movement.

Within the trade unions, Trotskyists and their supporters, in the words of Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto*, "disdain to conceal their views and aims" — the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a workers government based on a planned economy. They advance a transitional program to connect struggles around the workers' felt needs to the objective need for working-class power. That perspective means that the Trotskyists are also the best defenders of the workers' immediate interests.

With bosses like Fairfax using new technology to try to break the strength of the PKIU through massive redundancies, more fights are clearly in the offing. The union will need a class-struggle leadership to win when those attacks come; the vote for Ron Rees is a first step in helping to build such a leadership — one based on a program which can win. ■

The following motion was presented at the 20 May NSW branch meeting of the PKIU by Ron Rees.

In the civil war between the Salvadoran leftist insurgents and the bloody US-supported junta we stand for the victory of our working-class brothers and sisters who are under the heel of one of the longest continuous military dictatorships in Central America.

On 13 June, a national El Salvador "Day of Action" has been called. Printing workers have to take a side in this war! Therefore, the NSW Branch of the PKIU endorses the Anti-Imperialist Contingent (based on the demands: Down with the junta! For military victory to the leftist insurgents! End all US aid to El Salvadoran junta! Defence of Cuba, USSR begins in El Salvador!) which will march on the "Day of Action". We stand opposed to all military and economic aid to the murderous Salvadoran junta and we oppose the Reagan/Fraser anti-Soviet war drive. The PKIU in endorsing the Anti-Imperialist Contingent will also mobilise its members to participate.

The following motion was presented at the 20 May NSW branch meeting of the PKIU by Bret Stebbing.

The attacks of the Fraser Razor Gang on health, education and jobs of government employees represents a major attack by the Fraser government on the Australian working class. It includes \$80 a day hospital charges, reintroduction of \$2500 a year university fees and massive job slashing in government departments such as Telecom and Australia Post. If the unions do not respond to this provocation the struggle for workers conditions will be greatly set back. The NSW Branch of the PKIU calls on the Trades and Labor Council and the ACTU to mount a militant struggle to roll back the Razor Gang attacks up to and including a general strike.

Mitterrand . . .

Continued from page three

interests" between the PCF and the Kremlin.

It is a blatant Cold War myth that the rupture of the Union of the Left was the result of a sudden about-face by the PCF. In fact the revived anti-Soviet political atmosphere is part of the reason for the rupture: just as the post-World War II tripartite "government of national union" fell apart as a by-product of the collapse of the Soviet-American alliance, the Union of the Left was in part a casualty of the decline of "detente" and the resurgence of imperialist anti-Sovietism in the 1970s.

In the middle of the 1978 election campaign, the Socialists blamed the PCF's refusal to "disagree with the foreign policy of the Eastern bloc countries on any issue whatsoever" and Marchais' attacks on the "so-called 'Atlanticism' [pro-NATO line] of Socialist policy" as the cause for collapse of Union of the Left negotiations (*Le Monde*, 1 February 1978). The first point of sharp discord was over French nuclear policy and international alliances. The PCF, seeking as usual to pose as more patriotic than the bourgeoisie, had come out for de Gaulle's *force de frappe* (nuclear strike force) and an "all-sided" defence policy directed in particular at West Germany. In August Mitterrand denounced this as veiled neutralism and emphatically swore allegiance to NATO.

At the same time the US intervened in the middle of the election campaign to make clear that it would not tolerate Communist Party presence in West European governments. In November 1977, General Haig, then NATO commander in Brussels, warned that the presence of Communists in the government would "hamper the communication of top secret information and lead these governments to relegate the financing of military expenditure to the background" (*L'Humanite*, 30 November 1977). Additionally NATO secretary-general Joseph Luns threatened that if the Union of the Left came into office, the ministries of defence, foreign affairs and interior must be kept out of PCF hands. Such open US interference in West European politics had not been seen in years — there was no doubt the US was issuing a *diktat*.

In addition, within the Socialist International to which the PS belongs, hard-line parties like Helmut Schmidt's SPD were waging a vigorous campaign against "any kind of cooperation" with the Communists. Initially, Mitterrand, Mario Soares of the Portuguese Socialists, and Felipe Gonzalez of the Spanish PSOE favoured popular fronts as a means of "moderating" Communist Party influence in a more left-wing context. But Soares soon came out hard against any alliance with the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) of Alvaro Cunhal, and Gonzalez and Mitterrand followed suit on their domestic terrains. Money played no small role: during 1975-76 the CIA channeled several million dollars monthly to Soares through Schmidt's SPD in an attempt to stave off proletarian revolution in Portugal. Likewise, Gonzalez' PSOE lived in good part on massive doses of D-marks during the crucial period following Franco's death. And the PS' 1978 election campaign too was widely reported to have been heavily funded by the SPD. There is not doubt

that if any of these parties had been in a coalition with a Communist Party, their subsidies would have been cut off down to the last pfennig.

The imperialists said no to Communist parties participating in governments in the period 1975-78 and the social democrats danced to their tune. But it wasn't simply a conspiracy: the European bourgeoisie and the SPs themselves were more than willing. Portugal was a real watershed, as they watched with anguish the revolutionary ferment on the banks of the Tage, where Cunhal's PCP was under tremendous pressure from centrist forces on its own left flank. The bourgeoisie wanted iron-clad guarantees of the "Communists'" undivided loyalties. But while the PCF tops talked of Eurocommunism and dropped references to the dictatorship of the proletariat, they refused to join the imperialist/social-democratic cries over the supposed danger of a "Prague coup" in Lisbon. The bourgeoisie demanded guarantees that Marchais was not prepared to give because he wasn't sure what he was getting in return.

So the PCF can legitimately talk of blackmail by the bourgeoisie and the PS. Question: what then is the PCF's alternative? Answer: it hasn't any. It would sign up for a new popular front tomorrow if the international political climate changed. For the PCF leaders created the Union of the Left not for the conquest of power by the working class but as a means to *hold in check* the combative energies shown in 1968. Their complaint is that they aren't given sufficient influence. The Ligue Trotskyiste de France is the sole tendency that openly proclaims the Marxist lessons of history: that the popular front is a roadblock to revolution.

The LCR and OCI are calling not for a *break* from the popular front but its *reconstitution* under the guise of "PS-PCF unity". Their de facto rejection of the Trotskyist program for the unconditional defence of the USSR and political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy led them to draw fundamentally false lessons from the break-up of the Union of the Left and to present a pro-imperialist program in the recent elections. Blaming the "hand of Moscow" for the collapse of the French popular front, they propagate imperialist myths, acting as waterboys for Mitterrand.

In France today, "unity" has become the codeword for pro-imperialist anti-Sovietism and reconstituting the defunct popular front. In the name of "unity" Mitterrand will now ask the working class to accept "sacrifices" for the greater glory of French capitalism. We agree with what Lenin wrote in April 1914: "Unity is a great thing. But what the workers' cause needs is *unity of Marxists*, not unity between Marxists and opponents of Marxism". The only solution for the French working class lies in its own battles and in the capacity of the vanguard organisation to organise them, against the reformists, to defend them against the bourgeoisie's attacks and to put forward a series of transitional demands leading to setting up its own power, a workers government. Not poisonous French chauvinism but genuine proletarian internationalism! Not a new Union of the Left but a new 1968 that goes all the way! ■

Nicaragua . . .

Continued from page five

leaders arrested; this time they were leaders of the pro-Moscow splinter group, the Communist Party of Nicaragua (PCN), and its trade-union group, the Centre for Trade Union Action and Unity (CAUS). They were held for several months, and eventually most were let go although some received one-year sentences.

Despite the perversion of Trotskyism represented by the USec, SWP, Moreno,

et al, the FSLN leaders have a pretty good idea what it is and start foaming at the mouth whenever they see the slip test sign of it. According to an SWP/US internal bulletin: "There have been occasional reports of attacks on Trotskyism by FSLN leaders. Recently, right here in New York, Commander Victor Tirado of the FSLN National Directorate — when egged on by a questioner from one of the sectarian outfits — referred to Trotskyism in derogatory terms at a news conference" (*[SWP] International Internal Information Bulletin*, September 1980). What they don't say is that Tirado's tirade was directed against the Spartacist League/US. And what set the *comandante* off was our question, "How do you justify jailing militants and leftists who are trying to extend the revolution in Nicaragua?"

Back in Managua, on 6 March 1980 a demonstration of several thousand led by the Sandinista Labour Federation (the CST) was called to protest CIA "destabilisation". But instead of marching on the US embassy as planned, the demonstration headed to the offices of CAUS, sacked them, burned documents and drove out the occupants. The SWP's *Intercontinental Press* reported that the demonstrators chanted "Death to the CIA!" It didn't report the CST's other major slogan, though: "Death to Trotskyism!"

Now the PCN is no more Trotskyist than the pro-Albanian FO. But in the January/February 1980 strikes, one slogan that was frequently reported was "Workers and Peasants to Power! Down with the Bourgeoisie!" And regardless of who raised them, Sandinista leaders know full well that such slogans aren't part of the "national-democratic" or "anti-imperialist revolution". Only the Trotskyists have a coherent program which would give meaning to such demands — certainly not the SWP imposers who denounce them as "deliberately provok[ing] a premature confrontation with the bourgeoisie" (SWP resolution on Nicaragua at the USec 1979 World Congress).

There is no "middle road". Petty-bourgeois forces such as the FSLN can come to power at the head of radical-democratic movements in certain exceptional circumstances: the weakness of the local bourgeoisie, the absence of the proletariat as an independent factor, and the combination of hostility and abstention on the part of imperialism. What happens then is not pre-determined. In Algeria, the French imperialists sought to buy off the petty-bourgeois-led national independence movement once it took power, with the result that Algeria ended up a French neo-colony.

In Cuba, on the other hand, US imperialism forced Castro to the wall, making him choose between self-destruction or the revolutionary expropriation of the Cuban capitalist class. The result: since late 1960, Cuba has had the property forms of a workers state, but one saddled with a ruling caste analogous to the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union which issued from the *degeneration* of the October 1917 Russian Revolution — a caste which must be thrown out through workers political revolution.

With Reagan saying that Nicaragua is already "lost to Marxism" and having embarked on a Cold War campaign aimed at the Soviet Union, the petty-bourgeois Sandinista leadership could go further than it intended and expropriate the bourgeoisie. That is not the road Castro himself is advising them to take — when the FSLN beat Somoza, he declared that Nicaragua would *not* be a "second Cuba". Nor is that the only alternative. The threat of imperialist-sponsored counterrevolution remains ominously real. The only genuine preparation to meet it is a revolutionary mobilisation of the working class, and therein lies our road: not of a bureaucratic overturn of capitalist property relations, but a genuine workers revolution. That requires above all a proletarian, Leninist-Trotskyist party, *like in October 1917*. ■

US demo . . .

Continued from page seven

they can shoot those American helicopters out of the sky!"

May 3 may prove to be a pivotal event as were the early Vietnam antiwar protests of 1965-66. Then, also, the SL/US participated in a Revolutionary Contingent calling for an NLF victory in the Vietnamese civil war and as against the petty-bourgeois radicals of the day we fought for labour action against the war. Today we are far larger, with roots in the factories and an audience on campuses from coast to coast. And many of the thousands of young protesters who walked miles to hear the Democratic politicians will remember that it was us who told the truth: "Defeat Reagan's Cold War, The Line is Drawn in El Salvador!"

— adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 280, 8 May 1981

H Block . . .

Continued from page nine

scramble after the handful of Liberal MPs and "left" Labourites who wanted a vague "commitment to withdrawal" in order to better "defeat the gunmen". But as the situation in the North has polarised, these same politicians are now either mute or foursquare behind Thatcher. The IMG and SWP have consequently been paralysed. As for the SLG, Gould announced at the 18 May meeting that he "jumped for joy and was very happy when Foot became leader of the [British] Labour Party". This is the same Michael Foot who disgustingly solidarised with Thatcher's hardline against the hunger strikers.

What is needed in Britain, as in Ireland, is a perspective of *class mobilisation* against imperialism and for a proletarian-socialist solution. Bobby Sands and his comrades must not simply become further additions to the long list of martyrs for Irish freedom. He will only be avenged, and British imperialism and its vile deeds finally defeated, when the united Irish working class puts an end to the rule of capitalism, Orange and Green. An Irish revolutionary vanguard must be forged to lead the fight for an Irish workers republic as part of a socialist federation of the British Isles. That fight must begin now — *Avenge the death of the Irish hunger strikers! British butchers out of Ireland now!* ■

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Telecom/postal unions must lead the way!

Strike against Razor Gang cuts!



Students rally against fees, education cuts, Melbourne 7 May.

24 MAY — "It's more scrape than slash", headlined Fairfax' *Sydney Morning Herald* (1 May). But for the working people of Australia, the "Razor Gang" cuts announced on 30 April are a vicious, calculated attack on their living standards. 16,000 jobs in the public service are to go; government funding for 30 out of 70 Colleges of Advanced Education is to cease; stiff new fees at tertiary education level are to be introduced for second degrees and higher qualifications, paving the way for reintroducing fees at undergraduate level; increased restrictions on student

allowances have been announced, along with a student loans scheme, and the paltry half-tax indexation introduced last year has been abolished.

Fraser's heaviest blow, however, was reserved for health care. The new health scheme, announced the day before Razor Gang chairman Sir Phil Lynch made his full report, virtually means *the end of free medical care* — including in Queensland, where every government for the last forty years has maintained free public hospitals. A day in hospital is now likely to cost around \$120 for the bed alone — doctor's fees, operations, x-rays, even

pain-killing tablets will cost more. Commonwealth benefits for health care are to be abolished for all except the "disadvantaged" (ie, poverty-stricken pensioners and the impoverished unemployed).

As for the alternatives, the health funds are there. And these profit-gouging bloodsuckers stand ready to clean up since they are the *only* alternative. To get medical cover, it will now cost at least \$10 per week to be in a private fund; if you're not covered, tough. The alternatives now are literally: pay up or die! At the same time, Fraser has announced an

increase in government subsidy to the private hospitals — from \$16 to \$28 per bed per day.

For all the rhetoric about cutting back excess spending in the public sector and "saving the taxpayers' money", the reality of Fraser's policies is to increase the profits of the private capitalists by making the working class pay. Lucrative sectors of Telecom and Australia Post — for instance, cable TV services and PABX systems — are threatened with "denationalisation", ie handing them over to private monopolies. AP's

Continued on page eight

Wide support for SL-initiated rally at Sydney Uni

For open admissions! No student fees!

23 May — Students all over the country were shocked and enraged when news of the cutbacks in education proposed by the Fraser government's budget-cutting "Razor Gang" committee broke. Fees for higher and second degrees are to be reintroduced, affecting about 20,000 students; government funding for 30 Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs) is to end, forcing their closure or amalgamation; eligibility for even the current sub-starvation Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme (TEAS) allowance is to be further restricted (already only a small minority receive the full benefit of \$49 a week) and next year's TEAS level will be undermined by the proposed student loans scheme.

This vicious attack on the limited educational opportunities available is part of this arrogant Tory government's strategy to unload more and more of the cost of deteriorating social services such as health and education onto the backs of those who can least afford it. Higher education will become even more the exclusive preserve of the children of the rich, while the sons and daughters of the working class now have even less chance of getting a university education.

Faced with having to cut their studies in mid-stream and join the ever-growing ranks of the unemployed, students have

responded with a storm of healthy outrage. Large, militant student contingents joined the May Day marches and big rallies were held in most major cities. Some ten thousand students and staff marched on Parliament House in Melbourne on 7 May chanting "No fees, no cuts, no closures!" At Macquarie University 350 students greeted Fraser with tomatoes and rotten fruit as he arrived to address an "Independent (ie private) Schools Committee" dinner on 8 May. Twelve days later over 5000 marched in Brisbane.

At Sydney University a front-lawn demonstration initiated by the campus Spartacist Club for 3 June has won widespread support. Seeking to build the most powerful working-class response to the cuts, the demonstration has been called around the demands: "No to fees! Free education for all! Free and open admissions to Unis and CAEs! For TEAS to be equal to at least the minimum wage with full indexation!" Endorsements have flooded in from a wide range of trade union officials and rank-and-file union militants, ALP parliamentarians, student clubs, socialist groups and individual students (see box this page for a partial list of endorsers).

The platform at the rally is open to all

Continued on page eight

RALLY!

Wednesday, June 3, 1pm
Sydney Uni Front Lawn

No to fees! Free education for all!
Free and open admissions to Unis and CAEs!
For TEAS to be equal to at least the
minimum wage with full indexation!

Partial List of Endorsers:

Peter Baldwin, MLC; Jeff Claffin, Secy PGSA*; Linda Daley, AUS delegate, Monash Uni; Cat Doig, Alexander Mackie AUS Secy*; Raymond El-Hazzouri, Lebanese Society President; June Esposito, Telecom Section Cttee, ACOA*; Paul Ford, *Keep Left*; International Socialists; Jim Jane, Organiser, Trainee Teachers, State Executive Teachers Federation*; Carolyn Kearney, FLOA*; J Kohn, ACAE Exec*; Peter Knight, Education Society President*; Lebanese Society; Leichhardt Women's Health Centre; Terry Lewis, President Churchlands CAE*; Lidcombe Workers Health Centre; Susan McQueen, H&REA*; Jimmy Maja, Malaysian Society Cttee Member*; Kerry Mardin, President Students Union, BCAE*; Julie Milligan, Vice President NSW ATPOA*; Bob Markovic, UNSW Socialist Club; Peter Noonan, TAFETA*; George Petersen, MLA, Illawarra; D Pimenidis, FIT Education Officer*; Ron Rees, PKIU militant*; Spartacist League; Sydney Uni Left Action; UNSW Socialist Club.

*Organisation or position listed for identification purposes only.

For more information phone 264-8195