

# Australasian SPARTACIST



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## Gallagher wins in BLF fight Bosses' victory



Builders' labourers arrive at 24 March meeting to decide fate of NSW branch. Asp photo

The NSW Master Builders Association (MBA) and Norm Gallagher, Federal Secretary of the Builders' Labourers' Federation (BLF), have succeeded in their joint efforts to bring the militant NSW Branch of the union to heel. A unanimous vote at a NSW Branch meeting on 24 March endorsed a recommendation of the branch's leadership (centred around Communist Party of Australia (CPA) members Joe Owens and Jack Munday) that its members join the bogus Federal branch set up by Gallagher last October.

Earlier this year the bosses had stepped up this campaign, with moves by contractor Concrete Constructions to sack NSW BLF members and replace them with holders of the Federal ticket, the most provocative of numerous guerilla actions by MBA contractors to force or dupe workers into joining the Federal union. In response a NSW BLF mass meeting voted on 27 February to go on strike. The poorly prepared strike was designed to take the MBA and Gallagher head on, demanding among other things "recognition of the democratically elected leadership of the NSW Branch as the only legitimate body covering Builders Labourers in

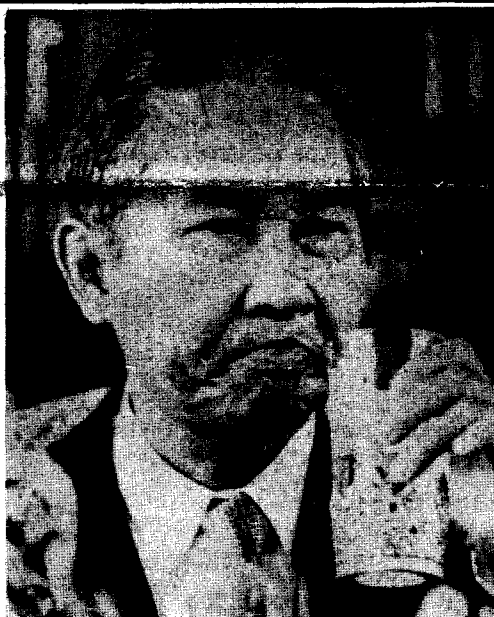
this State" (NSW BLF leaflet, 6 March 1975), but it also demanded job permanency, the leadership having discovered a little late that unemployment should be fought. But the strike could not realistically promise success on any front unless the jobs worked by Federal ticket-holders could be brought out. Gallagher predictably denounced the strike and told workers to scab. An effort was made to stop scabbing with vigilante squads, resulting in some arrests, but the jobs continued to work. When the strike was called off on 10 March, nothing had been won and reportedly about 500 workers had defected to the Federal branch.

The failure of the strike was the signal for the MBA and Gallagher, together with their mates in the central trade-union bureaucracy, to go on the offensive. Bob Hawke declared on 11 March that the ACTU would henceforth recognise only Gallagher's union; and on the same day the MBA told its members to ban NSW branch officials from construction sites (*The Australian*, 12 March 1975). The next day it was announced that Galla-

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Khmer Rouge leader Khieu Samphan (left) with Prince Norodom Sihanouk in 1974.



Lon Nol presenting medals for "valour" to generals in August 1974.



US Congressional "investigating" team in Cambodia; ex-dove Millicent Fenwick at right.

## Military victory to the Khmer Rouge!

# Cambodian government crumbles

reprinted from *Workers Vanguard*, No 64, 14 March, 1975

MARCH 9 -- The Cambodian puppet government is falling and can no longer be propped up by the dollars of US imperialism. Despite Gerald Ford's pious references to the "loss of American reliability" and the "deep sense of shame" involved in "walking away from our friends" (*New York Times*, 7 March), it is clear that the days of the Lon Nol regime are numbered.

The only territory still under Lon Nol's nominal control, the capital city of Phnom Penh, has been effectively sealed off since January. The Mekong River, which normally carries over 80 per cent of total supplies to the Cambodian capital, has been mined by the Khmer Rouge. Their gun emplacements line the river banks and the last government outpost (at the ferry-crossing town of Neak Luong) cannot hold out. Meanwhile, the government army (FANK) has practically no reserves and is in total disarray. (The 7 March *New York Times* reports that the FANK is now mobilizing desk clerks and wheeling invalids from the hospital to the battle front!)

Only the Pentagon's massive airlift of munitions and supplies for the Lon Nol army has so far sustained the government in Phnom Penh, a city with a refugee-swollen population of 2,000,000. Now even the airport is being hit with accurate heavy artillery fire.

The Ford administration is merely going

through the motions of wanting to continue to prop up the rapidly disintegrating Cambodian regime. Ford has asked for an immediate military aid package of \$222 million to help tide his Cambodian cronies over "until the rainy season". However, given the hopeless situation of Lon Nol and the economic and political problems of US imperialism at home, it is unlikely that Congress will throw money into such an obviously lost cause.

Ford, of course, knows this since he is as well informed about the terminal condition of his Cambodian puppets as anyone. But if Cambodia cannot be "saved" for US imperialism, at least its downfall can be used to whip up anti-communist hysteria and to scapegoat Ford's Democratic Party opponents for allowing Cambodia to "go communist". Ford thereby hopes to refurbish the badly tarnished image of the post-Watergate GOP.

Socialists and militant workers must give no quarter to this coming campaign of chauvinism and mutual anti-communist recrimination by bourgeois politicians. No Aid to the Reactionary Corpse of

the Lon Nol Regime! Military Victory to the Khmer Rouge! Take Phnom Penh Now!

Under the pressure of Lon Nol's imminent fall some former Congressional Vietnam "doves" have now become Cambodian "hawks". Republican Congressman Paul McClosky, one of the capitalist darlings of the liberal/reformist antiwar movement, decided that in the interest of peace he would support more aid to Cambodia so that the US "could negotiate from strength". And Millicent Fenwick, who was elected to Congress last fall on a platform of "no military aid to Southeast Asia", has, since her trip to Cambodia, become "undecided" about continued military aid....

...[But] the military/political reality is overwhelming: US imperialism faces a domestic economic crisis and a still vivid public memory of the unpopular Vietnam war. Barring ... unlikely ... massive US intervention, the Khmer Rouge can easily control the Mekong [and] the

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# editorial notes

## "Left" bureaucrats boycott march for jobs

A demonstration and march against unemployment held in Sydney on 20 March provided trade-union leaders with an opportunity to back up with concrete action their verbal concern for workers facing the sack or on the dole. The unemployed themselves, atomised and without the power to halt production, cannot go far in any fight for their interests except in conjunction with the organised trade-union movement. The failure of the leaders, even those who verbally endorsed the demonstration, to mobilise the rank and file or even to turn up themselves meant that the march could be only a small-scale example of the kind of united-front action needed to mobilise for the defence of the working class. But while it had

little real, direct impact on the class struggle, the demonstration aided the fight against unemployment by showing clearly that the main obstacle to that fight is the reformist union bureaucracy.

Organised by the Unemployed Workers Action Group (UWAG), the demonstration was attended by about 75-80 people, with contingents from the Spartacist League, the Communist League (CL), the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) (mostly from the Glebe-Balmain branch), the Socialist Workers League (SWL) and the Sydney Anarchists, and with a number of unaffiliated students and unemployed workers also present. The demonstrators marched



from Trades Hall to the Stock Exchange, chanting slogans such as "Jobs for all, for a 35 hour week", "Fight back, fight the sack", "35 hour week and a living wage" and "Dole for married women". At the Stock Exchange a number of speakers addressed the demonstration, but two of the scheduled speakers, Joe Owens of the NSW BLF and Laurie Carmichael, CPA president and AMWU Assistant Federal Secretary, failed to turn up. Though Owens did send his apologies and another representative of the NSW BLF spoke, Carmichael, who had publicly stated at a 12 March meeting for unemployed migrant workers that he endorsed the demonstration's aims and that he would be present, provided no explanation. Another speaker,

an SL supporter and a rank-and-file AMWU militant, pointed out how Carmichael's cop-out typified the bureaucracy.

In the UWAG the SL had emphasised the importance of seeking trade-union endorsement for the 20 March demonstration and of calling for a strike on that day. CL members argued on a number of occasions that union endorsements were not as important as going "straight to the rank and file". (How exactly the small forces of the UWAG were going to do this was never explained.) Such an approach is merely an attempt to evade politically confronting and exposing the established misleaders of the class.

On the other hand some CPA members wanted to conciliate the trade-union bureaucrats, especially over the question of the strike which they argued was not "practical". The strike call was important in underlining that the demands of the demonstration could not be achieved without industrial action by the organised labour movement. Several unions did endorse the march, among them the NSW BLF (who provided the UWAG with a room in Trades Hall), the AMWU, and the FEDFA, while others gave some assistance, such as the Federal Miscellaneous Workers Union which helped run off leaflets. But none, despite all their paper policies about fighting unemployment, actively sought to build the demonstration or urged their members to attend.

Lately the CPA's *Tribune* has been full of fiery rhetoric about fighting unemployment but the CPA refused to mobilise its members to support the UWAG or the demonstration. The SWL, though it lacks the CPA's base of support, showed its close political kinship to the CPA. Not only did it refuse to support the strike call, but these advocates of building mass actions sent only a handful of salesmen.

The anarchists turned up to stage what was effectively a counterdemonstration, violating their own "libertarian communist" principles by maintaining a disciplined contingent. Indicative of their unserious, utopian or downright reactionary politics were their chants such as "Support capitalism, get a job", their demand for a "Three hour week" and their opposition to fighting for jobs.

Despite the CL's correct criticism of the trade-union bureaucrats and recognition that unemployment is inherent in capitalism the SL was the only contingent to pose the necessary alternative to capitalism and the bureaucrats who serve it: a *revolutionary party* forged in the labour movement and committed to combatting the sellout policies of the bureaucrats, thereby enabling the working class to weld itself into a united force capable of smashing the capitalist order and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. ■

## Max Wechsler "unmasks" SWL: a case of mistaken identity

On February 26 the Melbourne gutter-press *Sunday Observer* printed a lurid account of the activities of Max Wechsler, according to the *Sunday Observer* a "super spy" now living "in fear of being killed" because he took "the first, dramatic step toward stopping a group of blood-thirsty fanatics from overthrowing the established Government". The alleged "blood-thirsty fanatics" are supposed to be the Socialist Workers League (SWL), which Wechsler had infiltrated as a paid ASIO agent.

The Political Bureau of the SWL denounced as "a slander on the League and a falsification of its well-known and easily ascertainable political positions" Wechsler's wild claims that the SWL "will use weapons and men from world-wide terrorist mobs for a bloody revolution" (*Direct Action*, 7 March 1975). We wholeheartedly agree that nothing could be further from the truth. The SWL vehemently opposes terrorism, not because it upholds the revolutionary Marxism of Lenin and Trotsky (we recommend Trotsky's *Terrorism and Communism*), but because the SWL is really a legalistic reformist grouping. Far from blind enthusiasm for confrontation with the capitalist state, the SWL wants only to build single-issue campaigns for reforms designed to appeal to eminent bourgeois liberals, and characteristically demands that the capitalist army act as a defender of the oppressed. The SWL does not advocate taking potshots at leading imperialist butchers; it supports sending telegrams of condolence to their widows, such as the one its American co-thinkers in the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) sent to Jackie Kennedy in 1963. Only recently the SWP proudly claimed a big victory when it got an American judge to certify them as "non-violent" (see *Workers Vanguard* no 59, 3 January 1975).

The strange behaviour and paranoid fantasies of Wechsler must not be allowed to detract from the fact that he was a paid ASIO informer -- clear proof of systematic state harassment of the left and labour movement. Moreover the *Sunday Observer* saw in the "expose" the potential for a

noisy red-scare slander campaign (and not incidentally a boost to sagging circulation figures), following up Wechsler's tales with new ones of supposed CPA-initiated armed training camps(!). Rabid anti-communist Liberal Party Senator Greenwood eagerly seized upon Wechsler's story to label the Federal Government soft on communism (*The Australian*, 7 March 1975).

On the other hand the Wechsler farce is undoubtedly embarrassing to the liberal bourgeoisie, and from their standpoint ASIO's use of unstable, unreliable or depraved elements for their dirty work appears as incompetence. But the case also reveals ASIO's grandiose repressive appetites. Political police are essential and dangerous arms of the bourgeois state; their existence exposes the bourgeois "democracy" of both Liberals and Labor as a fraud. *Abolish ASIO and all political police! Destroy all the files!*

Whether or not ALP ex-Senator Murphy actually authorised the surveillance of the SWL as Wechsler claims, it is clear that the Labor Government has no intention of doing away with ASIO (founded in fact by the Chifley Labor Government). All these class collaborators want is a more "respectable", "competent" secret political police. But after the successful socialist revolution, the victorious proletariat will know how to deal with the ASIO vermin. ■

## letters

Sydney  
21 March 1975

To the Editor:

In *Australasian Spartacist* March 1975 in an article entitled "Metal Unions not prepared for struggle" you commented on the retrenchments at Plesseys Meadowbank. Brother Roy Pollock (AMWU Plessey Convenor), who supports the Communist Party of Australia (CPA), has made criticisms of the article on the grounds of accuracy and political content. Pollock told me he would write a letter to *Spartacist* outlining his criticisms. Whether or not he has it could be useful if, as an AMWU member at Plesseys, I commented on the criticisms he expressed to me.

Brother Pollock strongly objected to you saying "... tradesmen at Plesseys were faced with a vote on whether apprentices finishing their time or tradesmen with fewer years in the plant should be sacked next. A close vote decided that it was the apprentices who should go with no opposition from Pollock who did not even put union policy!" Pollock claims that at this meeting in response to a question from the ranks about union policy on retrenchments he had said the union urged resistance in any way possible, and that one such possible way was to work a shorter work week. Firstly union policy is quite definitive -- refuse the sack, for a 35 hour week with no loss of pay -- not a series of possibilities. More importantly, in keeping with his role in the earlier plantwide sackings, Pollock did not point out that union policy is for a shorter working week only *without loss of pay*. For a union official to propose or go along with a shorter work week with a cut in pay is a gross betrayal, designed to make workers shoulder the burden of the capitalists' recession.

But it didn't stop there. He actually voted

for the motion which requested that if the company must sack someone from the toolshop then it should be apprentices. And then Brother Pollock has the nerve to claim he had opposed retrenchments at the meeting!

Pollock's excuse for going along with a cut in hours and wages as a means of fighting unemployment was that once workers have experienced the wage cut they will quickly begin a struggle for a wage rise to get back what they have lost! This arrant nonsense serves to remind us that the reformists of the CPA are past masters at the art of plucking non-existent victories out of the jaws of very real defeats. The other trick is to blame the workers' supposed "apathy", as union officials at Plesseys have done to excuse themselves from advocating official union policy. But it is not unwillingness to fight the boss that has led to the present demoralisation on the shopfloor but rather the eminently realistic judgment of the workers that their existing leadership is totally unwilling and unable to lead the fight against the bosses' offensive.

Brother Pollock's other complaint was that *Spartacist* always attacked the "left" in the union, the CPA supporters, rather than just the right wing. But as militant workers at Plesseys have learnt through their own experiences there are no basic differences in practice between the "left" talkers around the CPA and the openly sellout right wingers. The "left" actually only provides a militant cover for the leadership sellouts, not a real fighting alternative.

Yours fraternally,  
David Grumont

Since the events at Plesseys Laurie Carmichael and John Halfpenny have joined in pushing the "arrant nonsense" of "32 for 32". See the article on page eight of this issue -- editor.

### Australasian SPARTACIST



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# German Spartacusbund expels Trotskyists

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BERLIN -- At its fifth national conference, held on February 15 and 16, the faction-ridden West German Spartacusbund united just long enough to bureaucratically expel the only principled left opposition in the organization. The expelled group, the Trotskyist Faction, was composed of two senior members of the Cologne local and a former member of the Berlin local executive. (Five more supporters of the TF, in both cities, left the Spartacusbund in protest following the expulsion.) One of the principal themes emphasized in the documents of the TF is opposition to the Spartacusbund's attempt to present a "political alternative" to the Social Democratic Party (SPD) by "uniting" several centrist and reformist groups in a common electoral bloc.

On the second day of the conference the otherwise divided leadership managed to present an oral motion -- being too cowardly to put it in writing -- to expel the Trotskyist Faction on the sole grounds that it was in programmatic agreement with the Trotzkiistische Liga Deutschlands (TLD -- Trotskyist League of Germany) and the international Spartacist tendency.

This is the second overtly political expulsion of oppositionists from the Spartacusbund in ten months and is unlikely to be the last. Last May Comrade Anton G, one of the group's leading theoreticians, was likewise purged for "Spartacism". His struggle against the centrism of the Spartacusbund focused in particular on the question of communist work in the trade unions and on

the character and validity of the Transitional Program. Since a large part of the recent conference was devoted to mutual recriminations among the leading cliques as to the reasons for the admittedly dismal failure of the Spartacusbund's trade-union work, its militants would do well to reread Anton G's document "Trade Unionism or Revolutionary Politics":

"The party's task in its trade-union work is the construction of *revolutionary* (and not just 'oppositional') groupings which are capable of fighting against bureaucrats of all stripes for the leadership of the unions." (*Kommunistische Korrespondenz* no 4, July 1974)

With these *political* expulsions, alleging in neither case a single breach of organizational discipline, the Spartacusbund reveals that its Menshevik concept of "freedom of criticism" (the right of minorities to express their differences outside the party) is coupled with a refusal to allow real freedom of discussion within the party, at least for Leninists.

Barely a year old, the Spartacusbund was the product of a re-fusion of two left-Pabloist groups which split from each other in late 1971. The common denominator of the 1974 fusion was economism. A formal commitment to Trotskyism was coupled with systematic adaptation to the current consciousness of the proletariat (symbolized in the call for "transitions to transitional slogans"). In its twelve months of existence the

Spartacusbund has stumbled from one empiricist maneuver to another in a desperate effort to find a shortcut to leadership of the working class.

The organization is currently split almost evenly between a "left" tendency which pays lip service to the Transitional Program and two right-economist tendencies. One, centered in the old Central Committee, wanted to develop a minimal "Program of Action" for leading mass struggles now, while the other (centered in Frankfurt) attacked the outgoing leadership for not making enough concessions to the syndicalists and reformists with whom the Spartacusbund has sought to form a propaganda bloc.

The Spartacusbund's penchant for opportunist propaganda blocs reached a nadir (so far) in its attempt to form a "Communist Electoral Bloc". Declaring its willingness to make "concessions" on program, the leadership approached the GIM (German section of the "United Secretariat") and the reformist SAG (a "state capitalist" sect linked to the International Socialists) with a proposal for common candidates and a common program. In an internal document presenting this scheme, the leadership noted that it would not endanger relations with the Maoists by pressing discussion of Chinese foreign policy (which calls for strengthening NATO against the USSR!). However, this point disappeared when the document was "edited" for public consumption, after it had been adopted.

In its initial document, after a lengthy critique of the Spartacusbund's recent and projected opportunist misadventures, the Trotskyist Faction announced its formation around the following points:

"1. The *Transitional Program* is the scientific expression of the experience and revolutionary strategy of the international workers' movement under imperialism... The Transitional Program ... is the basis of the organization's practical work....

"2. The Transitional Program is the program of the *factory and trade-union work* of the revolutionary organization....

"3. The organization's central task is to fuse the revolutionary program with the working class vanguard... the regroupment tactic, programmatically regrouping the best comrades from the traditional workers' organizations, the ostensibly revolutionary organizations, etc., is an essential lever for winning the revolutionary vanguard....

"5. For the reconstruction of the *Fourth International* on clear programmatic bases.... For taking up political relations to the international Spartacist tendency, the revolutionary tendency for the reconstruction of the Fourth International, with the perspective of a fusion on clear programmatic bases!

"6. The *SPD and DKP* [Deutsche Kommunistische Partei -- the pro-Moscow Stalinist party in West Germany] are bourgeois (reformist) parties *within* the working class, internal barriers against the revolutionary mobilization of the working class...." ("Für den Aufbau einer trotzkistischen Fraktion im Spartacusbund", 23 January 1975)

Caught between larger and more effective syndicalist and Maoist groups on the right and the TLD on the left, while forced to compete with GIM for the same centrist territory, the Spartacusbund must resort to bureaucratic suppression of internal criticism and blatant political purges in order to preserve its tenuous existence. Unfortunately for it, such anti-Leninist practices will not silence the revolutionary Marxists who are going forward in the construction of the Trotzkiistische Liga Deutschlands, West German sympathizing section of the international Spartacist tendency. ■

## Halfpenny sells out Everhot shop steward

The determined fight waged by the 17 women metal workers sacked from the Draffin Everhot factory at Bayswater near Melbourne on January 24 faces imminent defeat. Regarded as a test case by employers who want to use sexual divisions among workers as a way of preventing militant opposition to retrenchments, the events at Everhot are significant as a measure of the "militancy" of the Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union (AMWU) leadership. Responsibility for the Everhot defeat lies with State Secretary and CPA member John Halfpenny and his "left" cohorts in the Victorian branch of the AMWU, who have all along had as their objective not to win jobs back for their members and shop steward but to defuse and isolate this struggle.

There is a clear pattern to the events: Frank Cherry, the AMWU organizer responsible for the dispute, argued that the male workers who had joined the women on the picket line should go back to work; the union officials persuaded the militant women that it was necessary to call off their picket so that negotiations could proceed, allowing the company to stockpile material at a time when supplies had almost run out; the bureaucrats continued to recognize scab Gary Brain (who has since been promoted by the company to a staff position in recognition of his efforts) as an AMWU shop steward; Cherry and Halfpenny did not organize support for the picketers, despite the evident willingness of workers in other factories in the area to take action in support of the Everhot women; they refused to approach other strong unions like the Waterside Workers Federation, which was willing to come out on the picket if the AMWU had asked; and finally they advocated the acceptance of a sellout "compromise" with the company that four women would be rehired on a part time basis of twenty hours a week, three to be selected by the company and one by the union, provided that the workers in the plant agreed. And this after lengthy negotiations and shadow-boxing with the company! (See *Australasian Spartacist* no 17, March 1975 for details of the first six weeks of the struggle.)

Yet according to Frank Cherry (who seems to think that everything was resolved two weeks ago):

"It was a long and difficult dispute. I couldn't say it was always handled perfectly, but I feel the union could not have done more under the circumstances." (*Tribune*, 18 March 1975)

At a meeting for unemployed migrant workers in Sydney on 12 March AMWU Assistant Federal Secretary Laurie Carmichael praised Cherry's role, insisting that Cherry had never ever "welched" on workers' struggles! But now even the wretched package deal has proved too much for Halfpenny,



Pickers at Everhot confront delivery truck. Asp photo

Cherry and the Victorian AMWU tops to fight for. Three women, chosen by the company, were rehired at twenty hours a week, and the company promised that the union's nominee, shop steward Edith Turnewitsch, would be rehired a week later. Since then Victorian Chamber of Manufactures (VCM) official Colin Mews has held private interviews at the factory with every worker who remained at work during the dispute(!) asking him his opinion of Turnewitsch as a worker(!) and as a shop steward(!). After such intimidation, the company has refused to rehire Turnewitsch, claiming the workers do not want her back, and the AMWU officials have meekly acceded to this.

At an area shop stewards' meeting on 19 March, Halfpenny and Cherry announced that they would lead a walk-in with Turnewitsch and another militant woman leader of the picket into Everhot before Easter. This plan was supported by the meeting and apparently also by the AMWU State Council. This militancy was short-lived, however, and now not only do they say that nobody is going to walk-in, but they no longer support shop steward Turnewitsch getting the job. Instead they now want her fellow worker to take the job starting 8 April, a move designed to create divisions between the two militants and justified on the basis of the VCM "survey" of Everhot workers -- without even holding a promised factory meeting to allow Turnewitsch to state her case. As a sop, Halfpenny has reportedly backed a company proposal that Turnewitsch should take one of four jobs offered in the Bayswater area without knowing exactly what they are, provided that she keeps quiet about everything.

The union has done nothing to enforce even the few token concessions obtained. As agreed with the union, the company sent telegrams to those men who had been fired or left as a result of the sackings of the women, offering them their jobs back; only one accepted. But in spite of a supposed agreement to give the sacked women first preference in any new hirings, four new men have been hired. What's more, six men are regularly brought in from the Port Melbourne factory to work and many of the workers are working long hours of overtime, including over the Easter holidays.

At the AMWU shop stewards' and delegates' meet-

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# Pabloists betray Trotskyist prisoners

## Mao's jails for revolutionaries

reprinted from Workers Vanguard No 63, 28 February 1975

At the end of 1952 the Stalinist bureaucracy which controls the Chinese deformed workers state began a nationwide wholesale roundup of Chinese Trotskyist militants. Seized in their homes one night, these revolutionaries, together with families and friends, were bound and dragged off to jail to serve indeterminate sentences for unspecified crimes. In the next several weeks many were secretly shot.

The victorious Chinese Communist Party (CCP), led by Mao Tse-tung, already had a history of such savage criminality toward working-class revolutionaries. Immediately after the overthrow of the bourgeois Kuomintang (KMT) regime in 1949, the agents of the new "People's Republic" raided several local organizations of the Chinese Trotskyist Party. The CCP mounted an anti-Trotskyist campaign in Chekiang and Kwangtung provinces, where the supporters of the Fourth International had a long tradition of struggle and influence.

Taken away to be shot, these militants demanded that they be permitted to wear signs printed with the single word, "Trotskyist". They were refused that last subversive gesture, and were instead falsely branded "Kuomintang agents" by the Stalinists. Their executioners shoved cotton in their mouths so that they could not shout out to those watching and wondering why veteran revolutionaries were being reviled and butchered.

The same sinister *modus operandi* was employed by the secret police in the arrests of 1950 in Kwangsi province, and in the blanket dragnet in December 1952 and January 1953 in which every known Trotskyist and sympathizer was locked up. "From Peking to Canton and from Shanghai to Chungking" the mass arrests, obviously ordered on central authority, were kept secret. There was not a word in the newspapers; there were no public trials.

Hounded and persecuted, the Chinese Trotskyists had to find a way to get their story out of China. At considerable risk they put their appeal before the Fourth International, desperate for international assistance. "We hope to complete this document", they wrote, "and find means to send it abroad before agents of the Communist Party knock at the door. Our fate and that of countless comrades and friends rely now almost entirely upon the voice of justice and the actions of the international working class, revolutionaries, and all progressive individuals.... This document is written in Shanghai and will be taken to Hong Kong at the risk of death. We hope it will be published to the whole world by our friends."

But the enemies of the Chinese Trotskyists were not only those who held rifles to their backs and shoved cotton in their mouths. They found them also among those to whom they turned for help. *The International Secretariat of the Fourth International, headed by Michel Pablo, suppressed their desperate plea for aid.* Only nine months after the arrests, on 19 October 1953, was their statement printed in the *Militant*, newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party in the US.

How could this happen? The Fourth International was at the time embroiled in a dispute which led to a split in November 1953. At the heart of the fight was the attitude to take toward Stalinism, which had expanded its rule in Eastern Europe and consolidated hegemony over key sections of the workers movement in France, Italy and elsewhere after World War II. The faction around Pablo argued that the Stalinists could no longer betray and would be forced by "the objective process" into "roughly outlining a revolutionary orientation".

Although late, and even then only incompletely, the SWP decided to fight Pablo, upholding the necessity of building Trotskyist parties throughout the world. Writing to Ernest Mandel in a letter dated 19 January 1954, George Breitman stated that the SWP had not published the appeal sooner because they "never saw [it] until a few months ago because Pablo suppressed it". This was not an accident:

"The Chinese [Trotskyists] were condemned and ridiculed [by the Pabloists] as 'refugees from a revolution,' including, I presume, those who were murdered at their post inside China. Whenever anyone would say anything about the need for an independent party, the answer hurled at him was: 'Look at China. Wasn't the revolution made there without our party? Keep talking that nonsense about the independence of the party

and you will end up the way the Chinese did ... running away from the revolution'."

Just who were these so-called "fugitives from a revolution"? The appeal includes the name of Chen Chao-lin who was a leader of the 1927 revolution in the Wuhan area. He was a founding member of the CCP and of the Chinese Trotskyist movement. After the end of the Sino-Japanese war he continued his revolutionary work in Shanghai. He spent seven years in the prisons of Chiang Kai-shek and, if he is still alive, 22 years in the prisons of Mao Tse-tung. He would be 74 years old today.

Ying Kwan's name was also included in the appeal. He was associated with Chou En-lai in France in 1920 and became secretary of the Chinese Socialist Party organization in Europe. He participated in the 1927 revolution in the province of Anhwei. Ying Kwan broke with the CCP and became a Trotskyist in 1929. Arrested by the KMT police, he spent 1932 to 1934 in prison. Like Chen Chao-lin he continued to fight for Marxism-Leninism in Shanghai until his arrest in 1952.

Thanks to an article by Li Fu-jen other names have been added to the list of revolutionaries arrested by Mao. These include: Chiang Tseng-tung, a leading activist in the Shanghai labor movement who participated in that city's general strike in 1925 and a Trotskyist who, if alive, is now 65 years old; Ling Hwer-hua, who was a member of the executive of the Printers Union of Canton and a Fourth Internationalist who would be over

that the Trotskyists had an unblemished record of revolutionary opposition to the KMT, *unlike Mao* who "engaged in continuous and prolonged compromise peace negotiations with Chiang Kai-shek... in hope of establishing a 'coalition government'...."

Peng criticized the bureaucratic abuses of the CCP regime, pointing out that the worker and peasant masses were not allowed to strike, have independent trade unions or elect their own councils to control the state administration and all organizations of production -- fundamental elements of proletarian democracy as realized in Lenin's Russia. But, he pointed out, the Trotskyists had participated in the overthrow of Chiang, in the land reform campaign, in the campaign against US "aid" to Korea, and stood ready to defend China against imperialism.

Unfortunately for the Chinese Trotskyists, the Pablo leadership of the Fourth International had quite a different position. An International Executive Committee (IEC) resolution stated in May 1952 that "The Fourth International and Chinese Trotskyists will give critical support to Mao Tse-tung's government." The document makes certain criticisms of the CCP regime -- lack of soviets, slow pace of agrarian reform, problems with "certain theoretical concepts" -- but not a word is said about the 1949 and 1950 arrests of Chinese Trotskyists.

When these critical supporters of Mao's government did get around to criticizing the mass



Mao Tse-tung with American ambassador Patrick Hurley in Chungking, August 1945. Under pressure from US imperialism Mao offered to form coalition government with butcher Chiang Kai-shek.

50 years old; Ho Chi-sen, a student leader in Peking in the early 1920's who worked in the underground for the CCP after 1927, became a Trotskyist in 1929 and represented the "Proletarians" in the fusion that formed the Communist League of China (section of the International Left Opposition) in 1931. These are only a few of the Trotskyists in Mao's prisons, and it should be understood that these jails are not for Trotskyists only. Today they hold many oppositional worker militants, radical intellectuals and left-wing youth arrested in the aftermath of the "Cultural Revolution".

What had these Chinese comrades done to deserve the deaf ears that Pablo, Mandel and the others turned toward them? Mandel ticks off some political errors made by the Chinese section in 1947, but it was not any political error which set Mandel/Maitan/Frank against the Chinese Trotskyists. For the Pabloists the Chinese Revolution of 1949 was the most positive example of the "new world reality" which gave revolutionary capacities to non-proletarian forces. By extension, the Chinese Trotskyist Party, which continued to oppose Mao, was the singular example of what not to do.

The Chinese Trotskyists refused to liquidate the struggle for a Bolshevik party -- this was their "crime", both in the eyes of Mao and of Pablo and his acolytes. The failure of Stalin's policies in China and the massacres of the Shanghai and Canton soviets in 1927 played a crucial role in deepening Trotsky's understanding of Stalinism and the crisis of revolutionary leadership. One can easily imagine that many of the CCP who managed to live through that period, seeing the erstwhile "revolutionary ally" Chiang Kai-shek butcher thousands of their comrades, became some of the earliest and firmest supporters of Trotskyism outside the USSR.

In his "Open Letter to the Communist Party" printed in the *Militant* of 2 November 1953, Peng Shu-tse, one of the leaders of the Chinese section of the Fourth International, pointed out

arrests of their own comrades, it was in the language of sycophantic apologists and not Trotskyists:

"The revolutionary Marxists would have no criticism whatever of these measures [eliminating counterrevolutionaries] if they were directed exclusively against reaction and if they were carried out by the revolutionary activity of the democratically organized masses. But this is not exactly the case. [No, not 'exactly!'] The Chinese CP has included in its campaign of elimination of counter-revolutionaries all former revolutionary Marxist opponents...." (*Fourth International*, March-April 1953)

This pusillanimous "critical support" was given political justification in the resolution on "The Rise and Decline of Stalinism" of the Pabloists' "Fourth World Congress" in 1954, which declared:

"... the Yugoslav CP and the Chinese CP have been able to lead a revolution victoriously and independently of the Kremlin and have in these instances ceased to be Stalinist parties in the proper meaning of this term...."

"Since both the Chinese CP and to a certain extent also the Yugoslav CP are in reality bureaucratic centrist parties, which however still find themselves under the pressure of the revolution in their countries, we do not call upon the proletariat of these countries to constitute new revolutionary parties or to prepare a political revolution in these countries."

In contrast to Pablo's orientation of pressuring the bureaucracy and prettifying the CCP (which had locked up and murdered his own comrades!) into a "bureaucratic-centrist" non-Stalinist force, the SWP and its allies in the International Committee correctly stated:

"The Third Chinese Revolution was deformed by the Stalinist leadership and control...."



1945: Mao and Chiang toast the "anti-imperialist united front".

"The contradiction between the conquests of the revolution and the bureaucratic rulers is the central internal contradiction of Chinese society....

"... posing before the Chinese workers the iron necessity of political revolution against the bureaucratic caste." ("The Third Chinese Revolution and Its Aftermath", [SWP] *Discussion Bulletin*, October 1955)

There can be no doubt of the fundamental differences behind the 1953 split. With regard to China, Pablo suppressed the appeal of the Trotskyist prisoners, refused to call for political revolution and said that the CCP "can project a revolutionary orientation" ("The Rise and Decline of Stalinism"); the International Committee, in contrast, published the appeal, accurately labelled the CCP Stalinist and called for political revolution. Thus the fight against Pabloism was the fight for the preservation of the independent Trotskyist perspective and for the very lives of the Trotskyist cadres.

As the isolation of the SWP grew due to McCarthyism and the weakening of its modest proletarian base by the 1953 split of the American Pabloists, the central party leadership began more and more to adopt capitulatory stands approximating those of Pablo's International Secretariat (IS). By the early 1960's the SWP found itself in agreement with the IS over Cuba, which both characterized as a healthy workers state (although "lacking the forms of workers democracy") and proposed reunification.

At the congress which set up the so-called "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" (USec) in 1963 it was agreed to ignore a number of past differences, such as over the 1953 split and China. However, as always occurs in such opportunist maneuvers, later events brought out the old differences once more. In the case of China, the so-called "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" found the SWP trying to assert a bogus orthodoxy by giving support to neither Mao nor Liu Shao-chi, while the European majority around Mandel/Maitan/Frank (ie, the remnants of the old Pablo leadership of the IS) preferred its past policy of apologizing for the Maoists.

The SWP objected to statements in the "Draft Resolution on the Cultural Revolution" adopted by the USec majority in 1969, which declared that "Peking ... objectively favored anti-imperialist struggles" and furthermore that:

"The more radical line pursued by the Chinese leadership towards world revolutionary developments since the beginning of the Sino-Soviet conflict which, on several important questions, brought it nearer the positions of revolutionary Marxism...."

What is happening here, of course, is that the centrist European majority wants to tail after the Maoist-influenced "youth vanguard" while the now-reformist SWP, orienting to left liberals and mainstream social democrats, wishes to absolve itself of support for anything labelled "communist".

As in the dispute over guerrilla warfare currently raging in the United Secretariat, the SWP's pretense of always having had an orthodox Trotskyist position on China is given the lie by the very documents on which this rotten-bloc "International" was founded. The SWP castigates Mandel and co for not calling for political revolution in China until 1969. But what did resolutions of the 1963 reunification congress state? They not only fail to mention political revolution, but give the same kind of "critical support" to Mao in the Sino-Soviet dispute that the SWP objects to today:

"Within the framework of the world Communist movement, the Fourth International reaffirms its critical support to the Chinese Communists in their struggle against the neo-reformism of the Khrushchev leaderships ... because it holds that the Chinese line on the fundamental problems of the anti-imperialist and anticapitalist struggles ... is on the whole more progressive...." ("The Sino-Soviet Conflict and the Situation in the USSR and the Other Workers' States")

Even today, when it now says a few nice words about political revolution, the United Secretariat continues to apologize for Mao in the most obscene way. Thus, while passing a resolu-

tion demanding freedom for the Chinese Trotskyists in April 1972, USec majorityites have given this statement little or no circulation. And when challenged about its assertions that Peking favored anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggles with the example of the Indonesian massacre (the result of the Indonesian CP's reformist line of "peaceful coexistence" with Sukarno, a line specifically endorsed by Peking), the majority replies:

"Even if one wished to attribute to Mao exclusive responsibility for the defeat of the Indonesian revolution -- which, in any event, would be excessive: the Kremlin's responsibility is at least equal to if not greater than Mao's in this tragedy -- this event weighs less heavily on the scale of twentieth-century history than the victory of the Chinese revolution." (IEC Majority Tendency, "The Differences in Interpretation of the 'Cultural Revolution' at the Last World Congress and Their Theoretical Implications", [SWP] *International Information Bulletin*, November 1973)

These were not the scales that Trotsky used to weigh the tragedy of the Spanish revolution! These are the lawyers' arguments of apologists for Stalinism, the worshippers of non-proletarian leaderships, the renegades from Marxism who have abandoned the struggle for an independent Trotskyist world party of proletarian revolution!

And if there is any lingering doubt about the fundamental Pabloism of both sides in the feuding United Secretariat it can be seen in the attitudes toward the Vietnamese and Cuban Stalinists and Trotskyists, attitudes which exactly mirror Pablo's attitude toward the Chinese Stalinists and Trotskyists in 1953.

In the early 1960's when Joseph Hansen was defending the SWP leadership's characterization of Cuba as a healthy workers state against the attacks of the Revolutionary Tendency (the US forerunner of the international Spartacist tendency) within the party he was forced to explain why the supposedly non-Stalinist Castro was locking up the Cuban Trotskyists. Hansen justified this bureaucratic suppression by pointing to some of the theories of J Posadas' brand of ostensible Trotskyism in order to dismiss the specific anti-bureaucratic demands of Posadas' Cuban affiliate. Hansen attacked them as "ultra-leftists" who "added to the complications facing the central leadership" (ie, Castro); Hansen was proud to claim for the SWP the appellation "Fidelistas".

The proposals of the Cuban POR (Revolutionary Workers Party) for institutions of workers democracy were called "bizarre or utopian", and its criticisms of Castro were dismissed as refusing to entrust him with "the red charter" until he becomes a "simon-pure Marxist-Leninist" (*Militant*, 13 August 1962). After the Cuban Trotskyists were arrested beginning in November 1963, the SWP maintained a discreet silence and when questioned about them at a public meeting Barry Sheppard, now SWP national secretary, replied: "There are Trotskyists and there are Trotskyists. But, if I were in Cuba I wouldn't be arrested" (see "Freedom for Cuban Trotskyists!" *Spartacist* no 3, January-February 1965). How true!

More recently, the European majority of the USec has taken to praising the "revolutionary" capacities of the Vietnamese "Communists" in a

similar manner, denying they are Stalinists, asserting that they have absorbed the lessons of the permanent revolution, etc. There is, of course, the sticky point of the *Vietnamese Trotskyists who were murdered by Ho Chi Minh and his associates in 1945-47*. But for this, too, Mandel and co have an "explanation", just as Hansen and co explained the arrests of the Cuban Trotskyists.

Pierre Rousset, the USec's "Vietnam expert", has written that the "VCP [Vietnamese Communist Party], ie, the Stalinists] led the revolutionary process in a way that was uncontested -- at least after 1939-40" (*International Socialist Review*, April 1974). In his book on the same subject (*Le parti communiste vietnamien*, 1973), he tries to cast doubt on the actual occurrence of the murders of Ta Thu Tau and the rest of the Vietnamese Trotskyist cadres, referring to "These assassinations, about which historians of the Indochinese CP don't speak, in their writings in French at least ...".

However, if one grants that they occurred (which is not at all in doubt), Rousset explains that they demonstrate "the width of the political gulf which then separated the Trotskyist groups from the Indochinese CP" (!) and accuses the Trotskyists of "probably underestimating the importance of the national question ...". The implication is that this alleged political weakness justified their extermination! (See "Stalinism and Trotskyism in Vietnam, Part IV: Those Who Reveal Our History", in *WV* no 21, 25 May 1973.)

This brazen covering up for counterrevolutionary Stalinist crimes is the inevitable consequence of Pabloism. It is the concrete demonstration that Pabloism and Trotskyism have nothing in common, that these renegades will side with the Stalinist butchers against their own former comrades in order to curry favor with the bureaucrats.

In fact, to take their statements literally one would have to conclude that the USec "Trotskyists" reason like this: China, you see, has a bureaucratic-centrist CP; it vacillates and can only "approximate" a revolutionary line. Thus they jailed our comrades there (those "fugitives from a revolution") and killed some of them. But the Vietnamese Communists, they are *really revolutionary!* They murdered every last one of our comrades they could get their hands on (which is why there are no Trotskyist prisoners in Hanoi's jails).

China, Cuba, Vietnam: In each case the newly victorious bureaucracies found it necessary to liquidate revolutionary Marxist opponents in the process of consolidating their bureaucratic rule. In each case the Pabloists apologized for these assassinations and mass arrests, or else passed them over in silence while suppressing appeals from the endangered comrades. This is the history of betrayal which, whatever their numerous differences, is common to all the renegades from Trotskyism who lead the United Secretariat. The struggle for the rebirth of the Fourth International is the struggle to expose these crimes and politically destroy these revisionists, stripping them of every last pretense of Marxism. ■

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## ... BLF

gher was demanding a formal agreement from the NSW MBA to give preference to Federal ticket-holders, which the MBA was likely to accept with pleasure (as they had already begun to put it in practice), threatening a lockout of all NSW branch members. After this, *in the absence of* a broad mobilisation of the union movement to defeat the NSW branch, the 24 March decision was the best of several grim alternatives.

The setback is serious, not only for building workers but for the working class as a whole. Builders' labourers in NSW will now be saddled with a bureaucratic regime run without even a pretence of union democracy. The "Federal branch" has never yet held a meeting and its officials are appointed, not elected. Gallagher with full MBA backing intends to carry out a purge of militants, saying following 24 March that the NSW branch leaders and 30 other militants (for a start) would be barred from the Federal branch. With job organisation in disarray and because Gallagher recruited by appealing to anti-strike, pro-scab backward sentiments, the MBA will find resistance to their anti-union policies weaker and can count on Gallagher to keep the rank and file in line.

Was the defeat of the NSW BLF avoidable? The chief direct blame lies not just with Gallagher but with the rest of the trade-union bureaucracy whose acquiescence to the attack on builders' labourers is part and parcel of their refusal to defend the labour movement as a whole against the capitalist recession and of their role as policemen for the bourgeoisie within the labour movement. The only active aid came from the Federated Engine Drivers' and Firemen's Association (FEDFA), a union also led by CPA members (although support was also expressed by the Wollongong and Newcastle Labor Councils and by the NSW Teachers' Federation). The power of the BLF to resist employer attacks was weakened by the recession, which has thrown thousands of building workers out of work, creating the pool of potential scab labour the MBA was waiting for to make the threat of the sack a potent weapon against union militants. Finally, the nature of the building industry, with its high job turnover and numerous scattered, small worksites, creates

special problems for union organisation. It was a difficult fight in the best case, and for this very reason the role of the leadership was all the more crucial.

But the policies and political program of the NSW branch leadership seriously weakened that fight. In the face of a well-organised and ruthless enemy, the BLF needed strong organisation and preparation. But early last year the Owens/Pringle/Mundey leadership did not prepare the union to meet the recession, even after the deregistration of the union last June. The leadership was based on the *form* of rank-and-file democracy but a *reality* of bureaucratic anarchism -- disorganisation sufficient for the leading clique to retain office without the normal mechanisms of union bureaucrats, but only at the expense of union organisation. And the leadership pursued a general policy of ignoring the need for ongoing solidarity with tradesmen (manifest in some of the green bans and in the dropping of serious efforts toward amalgamation). In order to expose and isolate Gallagher, the BLF needed a clear political program of class struggle; but the politics of Owens/Mundey are in the essentials indistinguishable from those of Gallagher, most obviously in their mutual attempts to get the bourgeois state on side against each other. It was necessary to attempt to organise all building workers against unemployment; it was left until February 27 strike to take action and no campaign was carried out among BWIU members for joint action. It was necessary to systematically build support from other unions, which meant in almost all cases a political struggle against hostile officials. But CPA union officials in key unions -- such as John Halfpenny in the Victorian AMWU -- have remained silent or inactive! Instead the CPA pinned its hopes on pressure from petty-bourgeois and liberal bourgeois quarters -- such as those spoken for by the Australian Conservation Foundation and Federal Labor MPs and ministers. And it was necessary to discredit and isolate Gallagher within the Federation as a whole, rather than simply labelling all Federal ticket-holders scabs and adopting the slogan "Gallagher Go Home" (to continue selling out labourers in other states).

Not just the policies of the last six months but the whole unique variety of reformism which made Mundey prominent helped create the conditions for a defeat. As we said when the BLF was deregistered last June:

"Because of their isolation from the rest of

the trade-union bureaucracy, the CPA's BLF officials have needed a form of reformism which could maintain their militant image to the ranks and at the same time find them protection in high places. The green bans fit the bill.... So far, this reformist ruse has met with success from Mundey's point of view. But his own prominence (and resulting pull within the bureaucracy) was achieved by sacrificing the political independence of the builders' labourers, and by erecting obstacles between BLs and other unionists and dissipating BLF militancy in either minor reform struggles or useless, utopian environmental campaigns whose net effect is harmful. In short, by paving the way for an attack by the employers the Mundey leadership has achieved short-term success." (*Australasian Spartacist* no 10, July 1974)

NSW BLF militants now face a long, bitter struggle within the Gallagher-controlled union. The resolution put to the 24 March BLF mass meeting, passed with no opposing speakers, also outlined a program for this struggle, to be taken up by NSW branch supporters organised in a rank-and-file grouping to oppose Gallagher. It explicitly endorses all "the democratically-decided policies and actions of the elected leadership of the N.S.W. Branch", and one point of the program is to "Continue the social policies pioneered by the N.S.W. Branch, particularly the 'Green Bans' to stop destruction by developers for speculative profiteering". But the bankrupt reformist policies of Mundey/Owens/Pringle cannot provide a real alternative to Gallagher.

Members of the pseudo-revolutionary Communist League (CL) in the union attended the meeting and handed out a broadsheet but did not attempt to speak, allowing the resolution to go through unopposed even though the CL has in the past criticised the union's leadership. Such opportunism, typical of the CL, is elaborated in the proposal of their broadsheet, *On Site* (undated):

"We have learned that this Federation will not make one step forward until Gallagher and the whole present leadership throughout the other branches are defeated and replaced with one that is directly answerable to the full rank and file. One of our first tasks will be to unite all those forces throughout the Federation which stand for workers' democracy in a fight against this leadership."

But even the CL (eventually) admitted that the Owens strategy of taking Gallagher to the bosses' courts was not exactly the epitome of workers' democracy. And Owens in his report to the meeting which passed without comment from the CL said that Equity Court actions would continue against Gallagher's suspension of NSW BLF Executive members. *On Site* goes on to list a program that goes further than Mundey's (but which remains inadequate, failing to go beyond the building industry). But while it is necessary to bloc with Mundey to defend elementary democracy, it is utterly wrong to put forward Mundey's brand of reformist betrayal as preferable to Gallagher's. The CL, whatever its differences, ends up tailing Mundey.

The CL's capitulation helps to realise the hope of the CPA that in spite of the defeat, as CPAer Jack Cambourn of the FEDFA said on 24 March, Mundey's "ideas" will live on. Perhaps the most damaging thing in the long run -- and the main reason for defending workers' democracy -- is that the defeat postpones and obstructs the struggle against those false ideas. Elementary workers' democracy must be restored in the BLF in order to allow the fight for a revolutionary leadership against both Gallagher and Mundey to take place. It is only a revolutionary leadership based on a full program of class struggle -- a strategy to lead the working class to state power -- which can lead the BLF forward. ■

CONTINUED FROM PAGE THREE

## ... Everhot

ing in Melbourne on 26 March some delegates voted against going for the log of claims at this time because, they said, the workers at their shops were too frightened for their jobs to stop work even to attend meetings. In the Melbourne area many shops are working short hours and sackings are continuing. Especially hard hit are women and migrant workers. The Everhot dispute where the women workers have displayed a militant will to fight for their jobs could have provided an example to other workers to fight sackings in their factories. But when their leadership acts as it has done in the Everhot dispute, it is not surprising that many workers doubt the ability of the union to carry out struggle. This blatant betrayal is just one more illustration of the urgent need to replace these fake lefts with a revolutionary leadership prepared to fight in the interests of the workers and willing to pursue the class struggle to its final solution -- the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of workers' state power. ■

## Mundey, amalgamation, Mainline

*Australasian Spartacist* no 15 (December 1974), in the article "BLF faces defeat", in attempting to illustrate the false policies pursued by the Mundey/Owens/Pringle leadership of the NSW BLF, made factually inaccurate or misleading assertions concerning two issues: (1) the attitude of Mundey toward amalgamation of the NSW BLF with the Building Workers Industrial Union (BWIU); and (2) the response of union officials to the financial collapse of the big building investment and construction company, Mainline Corporation Ltd, in August 1974.

1. We said that "The CPA officials of the NSW BLF have never made any concrete moves toward amalgamation." In fact, there were serious moves toward amalgamation with the BWIU in NSW in 1968-69, but merger was evidently vetoed by Gallagher. These moves occurred before the 1970-71 split in the Communist Party of Australia (CPA), in which Clancy of the BWIU supported the pro-Moscow Stalinist wing which eventually formed the Socialist Party of Australia (SPA) while Mundey remained part of the Aaronsite CPA leadership. Since the split Clancy and Mundey, despite lip-service to amalgamation on both sides, simply manoeuvred against each other: Clancy seeking to extend his power base by absorbing the BLF, Mundey attempting to preserve his by allowing the BLF to remain apart with no real challenge to Clancy's attempt to dictate terms.

2. The article said: "The absolute worthlessness of the CPA's pallid reformism was proven when Mundey/Owens did not bother to lift a finger over the Mainline failure." Actually the BLF did participate in talks initiated by the BWIU seeking continuation of work on Mainline projects. The article also carried the unintended possible implication that workers on Mainline projects had simply lost their jobs, whereas in fact most Mainline projects were continued without significant interruption, because many of the company's major clients clearly wanted the projects to continue.

But the response of the union bureaucracy must be judged not in relation merely to Mainline, but rather in the context of growing unemployment and the general crisis in

the highly unstable and irrational building industry. During the week which ended with Mainline's final liquidation on 13 September, at least 34 major projects valued at a minimum of \$100 million (excluding Mainline jobs) were cancelled or postponed (*Financial Review*, 13 September 1974). The building union officials did nothing about this wholesale disappearance of jobs.

Nationalising Mainline was never seriously considered by any of the parties. However, although nationalisation would not have directly gained much more for workers on Mainline projects than they got through the unions' holding action, a call for the nationalisation of Mainline property with no compensation was important *as part of a demand for the nationalisation of the building industry as a whole*.

The CPA did *pretend* to support nationalisation and *Tribune* (10 September 1974) quoted Joe Owens as saying only that "The government should *move towards* the nationalisation of Mainline and of the building industry, with the immediate formation of a federal government authority" (emphasis added). Such a piddling reform was actually proposed by elements in the Federal Government, but rejected, because nationalisation of Mainline made no sense from a reformist perspective but only in the context of the revolutionary expropriation of the whole industry. That the CPA's standpoint was the former and not the latter was made clear in the August 1974 issue of the CPA building branch irregular broadsheet *Helmet*, which said that "a policy for at least 60% of all building materials and labour be diverted for building in the public sector" was "the only answer to the crisis in the industry...". The only way to guarantee employment in an industry as marginal financially and irrational socially as the building industry, which is faced with numerous bankruptcies during sharp economic downturns, is to link the immediate struggle to preserve jobs to the fight for the expropriation of all the big contractors, the finance companies and the banks; workers' control on the job sites; nationalisation of the land; and a carefully planned program of massive construction to meet social needs.

## ... Cambodia

rest of Cambodia, airlift or no airlift. The Phnom Penh government cannot last in any case.

"Sihanouk is Cambodia and Cambodia is Sihanouk," once said Prince Norodom Sihanouk, descendent of both Khmer (Cambodian) royal houses, with typical royal narcissism. Proclaimed king in 1941 as an 18-year-old school-boy, Sihanouk reigned until his own trusted associates deposed him in a palace coup on 18 March 1970. He watched from Paris as his number two man, Lon Nol (premier and head of the army), along with Sirik Matak (deputy premier and cabinet strongman), took the reins of government with probable help from the CIA, as the first step in the US plan to invade Cambodia.

As a result of Nixon's 1970 invasion, the political and military strength of the Khmer Rouge grew rapidly. From a very small force of indigenous Stalinists aided by the Viet Minh who had come across the border in 1954, they were by the early 1970's in a position of unquestioned military and political dominance in Cambodia.

The "Comrade Prince" went into exile in Peking where he "shared the place of honor" with Mao.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE EIGHT

## ... Metal workers

This means that any action will be severely weakened, with the bosses confronting one small section of the workers at a time rather than a united front. Through the MTIA and the Victorian Chamber of Manufacturers (VCM) the employers are highly organised with a coherent national strategy to defeat workers. An *industry-wide, national continuing strike* would quickly bring the bosses to the negotiating table and put their pleas of poverty to the test -- call their bluff! No to Arbitration!

Clearly a new leadership is needed; but what kind? Those who see leadership simply as a question of economic militancy, such as the *Link* activists, only end up tailing along behind the left wing of the bureaucracy, never offering a political alternative. Another example, in spite of its occasional outbursts of super-radical rhetoric, is the Communist League (CL). For the Melbourne MTF delegates' meeting the CL put out a leaflet containing *not a single criticism* of Halfpenny or any of the union bureaucrats. The *only* solution it gives to the capitalist crisis is unspecified "industrial action"! There is *no mention* of workers' control, of the need to resist sackings with strikes, occupations, or work-ins, or of nationalisation; no call to open the books; and no mention of the treacherous role of the ALP misleaders (in fact no mention of the ALP or the Labor Government at all). It calls for "an all-out campaign" but doesn't even hint at *what kind* of campaign. Aside from a few quibbles, the CL's leaflet is *indistinguishable* from Halfpenny and the CPA, or even from the ALP Socialist Left!

By contrast, a good example of how to oppose the politics of sellout with the politics of class struggle is a recent leaflet signed by three AMWU members at Plesseys Meadowbank (Tony Naughten, Ern Casey and Dave Grumont), militants who have opposed the capitulation of union leaders over layoffs at Plesseys (see the letter on page 2 of this issue). The leaflet endorses the SL's call for "a revolutionary leadership of the workers movement pledged to the expropriation of the capitalist class -- for a real workers government". Unlike the opportunist CL, the writers of this leaflet link the award campaign to the need to attack the capitalist system directly. Therefore it points out:

"When, like at Leylands, factories are threatened with closure we must demand their nationalisation under workers control without compensation....

"... In order to fight the special oppression of women, youth and migrants the log must demand equal pay for apprentices, youth and women, free 24-hour child-care centres and free English lessons on company time....

"... Rather than representing the interests of the workers as they sometimes claim, the ALP leadership has *led the attack on the working class living standard*....

"Like their colleagues in the leadership of the AMWU and the entire existing trade union movement, these betrayers are wholly committed to supporting capitalism. When from time to time they pay lip-service to the interests of the workers or mouth socialist rhetoric it is only in order to better *misdirect* the working class. We need an alternative leadership in the workers movement which is based on a full program of class struggle."

These militants must work towards organising a caucus in the AMWU to fight for the program they put forward against the reformist program of all the bureaucrats, both right-wing and fake-left. ■

Five days after the 1970 coup Sihanouk released a disingenuous statement declaring that, "The treason ... and despicable attacks ... have opened my eyes and made me painfully aware of my unpardonable naivety." This "self-criticism" was a prologue to the subsequent announcement that Sihanouk had joined his old and bitter enemies of the Khmer Rouge to form a popular front, the National United Front of Kampuchea (FUNK), and a royal government in exile (the GRUNK).

Although lionized by world Maodom, Sihanouk was and is above all a dyed-in-the-wool anti-communist opportunist. When he ruled Cambodia he often smiled favorably on Peking or Hanoi in order to maintain his neutralist balancing act. So long as the forces of the Khmer Rouge remained small and his "socialist" monarchy was unthreatened, Sihanouk's anti-communism seemed less important to some than his expressed neutralism.

However, in the mid and late 1960's Sihanouk began to raise the spectre of "outside communists" in his kingdom. In 1967 there was a peasant rising in the province of Battambang. Sihanouk blamed the Communists and with Lon Nol sent in the army to massacre the insurgent masses. In the same year three leading left intellectuals fled the National Assembly to join the Khmer Rouge. Sihanouk labeled Hu Nim, Khieu Samphan and Hou Youn "communist conspirators" and placed them on his "liquidation list". After the coup, these three were placed in the GRUNK's "royal" cabinet.

In 1969 Sihanouk, the "nationalist" chameleon who said that he admired both Mao Tse-tung and Charles DeGaulle, made his position on the Khmer Rouge perfectly clear: "The Asian communists and their Khmer lackeys ... claim they are trying to liberate us from the Americans. However, we who are independent do not need to be liberated." At the same time, Sihanouk was turning a blind eye to repeated US Saigon border incursions aimed at the NLF base areas inside Cambodia.

Nevertheless, the prince has so far had little to fear from the Stalinist leadership inside or outside of Cambodia. The Khmer Rouge never mounted a serious campaign against him. Although he has little stature even among the exile group, his value is as a titular head of state for some kind of "government of national union".

Sihanouk's future may prove to be quite similar to that of King Michael of Rumania, placed on the throne by Stalin following World War II -- ie, to be a temporary monarchic facade preliminary to the establishment of a deformed workers state. The "Comrade Prince", however, may not wish to wait around for the denouement, and has realistically offered to accept a roving ambassadorship should the Khmer Rouge come to power.

While there seems little likelihood of the stabilization of a "reformed" capitalist regime in Cambodia, this is not due to revolutionary action by the Stalinists. On the contrary, the Cambodian masses have already once been the victims of the narrow national appetites of the Stalinists. At the 1954 Geneva conference on Indochina, Moscow and Peking refused to allow the Khmer Rouge to represent Cambodia even though the French hold at the time was tenuous in the extreme. Despite the terminal condition of the Lon Nol "government" there remains a danger that the Cambodian civil war will once again be tossed onto a bargaining table for some such class betrayal cooked up in Peking, Moscow or Hanoi.

Never before in this bloody war have the insurgents mined the Mekong River or used the sophisticated artillery they are now deploying to shell Phnom Penh's airport. But this year's drv

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## ... gangster attacks

faith in the working class or the revolution, and it serves only the bosses.

Every good trade unionist understands the need for violence against scabs or thugs hired by the bosses, so Stalinists have always tried to justify their violence against opponents with outrageous slanders, by lying that their political opposition are police or fascist agents. The Melbourne Maoists are no exception. At the May Day Committee meeting Mick Lewis, one of the perpetrators of the bashings, moved "that Steve Painter, ASIO agent and police informer, be removed from this meeting". The Maoists claimed that the recently surfaced ASIO agent Max Wechsler proved that the SWL were police agents -- in which case the Bolsheviks must have been Czarist cops due to the presence of Malinovsky!

While we did and will continue to defend the SWL, SWAG (and others) against such gangster attacks, the self-righteous appeals of these two groups to workers' democracy are thoroughly hypocritical. The SWL has excluded Spartacist members, from its "public" forums. And at the very same May Day Committee meeting SWLen Painter opposed a Spartacist motion for an open speakers' platform on May Day. SWAG organised the political exclusion of the SL from the Melbourne Working Women's Group in 1973.

When supporters of the labour movement face an immediate threat of death or serious physical injury intended to suppress their political views,

season offensive should not be seen as an attempt to take the capital. The Stalinist insurgents could certainly have done that as early as last year, or even in 1973.

The political strategy generates a military strategy: surround the capital but do not take it. The strategy is meant to pressure for a "democratic" monarchic/military regime, most likely through a coup by "progressive" army officers. The Stalinists seek to form, if possible, a popular-front government to maintain capitalist rule in the country. Their model is the coalition government of Laos in which the Pathet Lao control three-quarters of the country and the right-wing generals control the airports, the brothels and the opium trade.

The Cambodian Stalinists have made it clear that they are anxious to form a government with "all social classes". The French Communist Party daily *L'Humanite* (3 March 1975) reports that a future government, according to the GRUNK, could include anyone but the "seven traitors". Among the evil seven are Lon Nol, Sirik Matak and the present head of the army. (Next door in Vietnam the NLF/PRG has offered to cooperate with elements in the present Saigon government if Thieu is dumped.)

While the strategy of the Stalinists is to form a popular-front government and maintain capitalist rule, FUNK/GRUNK military dominance is unquestioned and the FUNK forces (with or without Lon Nol) are so enfeebled and hopelessly corrupt that they represent no social base at all. A Laos-type "settlement" is evidently non-viable. Any "coalition government" of this sort would be highly unstable, and in the context of the present balance of forces within Cambodia would at most be a transitory episode in the process of forming a deformed workers state.

In fact, even US embassy diplomats have lately stopped talking about a "negotiated settlement" and are now willing to settle for an "orderly transfer of power". In the event of a collapse of the Lon Nol regime, the likely outcome is obvious. As we said in *Workers Vanguard* no 25, 3 August 1973:

"If, however, the GRUNK takes power through the defeat of the Lon Nol regime by Khmer Rouge forces and the US government is too paralyzed by domestic crisis to intervene, the Stalinist component of this unstable popular front could very well shed its monarchic shell, leading to a deformed workers state."

It is unnecessary to speculate on the exact steps by which this may come about. One thing is certain in Cambodia, however: neither Peking nor Moscow nor Hanoi nor the FUNK is acting in the revolutionary interests of the working masses of Indochina. Instead of fighting for a "government of all social classes" or the "implementation of the Paris peace accords", as the Stalinists counsel, the workers and peasants should break from the capitalists and reject all forms of nationalist ideology in order to wage a struggle for proletarian power.

Above all, a struggle must be waged to construct Trotskyist parties in Indochina as the necessary precondition for establishing the democratic rule of the Indochinese proletariat rather than the bureaucratic rule of the Stalinist-led deformed workers states. Only the establishment of soviet democracy and the extension of the revolution, through social revolution in the capitalist countries and political revolution in the deformed and degenerated workers states, can open the road to socialism and the abolition of class society. All Indochina Must Go Communist! ■

and no realistic alternative for self-defence exists, no one could reasonably object to their seeking police protection, even from opponents in the workers movement. This does not deny the general principle of opposition to interference by the bourgeois state in the internal affairs of the workers movement. Revolutionists know better than to rely on the cops for anything, and do not advocate that the working class and oppressed rely on the bourgeois state to defend them. They oppose the use of the courts to settle disputes or seek retribution for crimes, including gangster assaults.

The SWL has asked SL members who witnessed the Trades Hall bashings to make statutory declarations and to make these available to the SWL. These comrades have made statutory declarations but we will not give them directly to the SWL because its political record shows that it cannot be trusted to refrain from using such statements in criminal proceedings against the Maoists. The SWL has uncritically supported the NSW BLF leadership, including its use of the bourgeois courts against Gallagher. In 1975, their American co-thinkers brought criminal charges against a member of the much smaller National Caucus of Labor Committees involved in physical assaults on SWP members. We are, however, prepared to make them available to any bona fide workers' commission of inquiry.

We call on the workers movement to reject and repudiate violence, slander and exclusion against political opponents in the workers movement, and to organise defence of the targets of gangsterist attacks, regardless of their views. ■



## Whatever happened to the autumn offensive? Metal workers kept under wraps



John Halfpenny.

### Defend workers' democracy!

## Maoists launch gangster attacks

On 20 March Ian Coulter and Brian Boyd, members of the Maoist Radical Student Movement at LaTrobe University, attempted to physically prevent members of the Revolutionary Communist Club (RCC), the campus arm of the Socialist Workers Action Group (SWAG), from setting up a literature table. The LaTrobe Spartacist Club signed a joint leaflet with the RCC/SWAG and the LaTrobe Socialist Youth Alliance (SYA) protesting this act and took part in a bloc to defend the right of all left organisations to distribute their literature at LaTrobe (see *Campus Spartacist*, 24 March 1975). On the following day, before the opening of the May Day Committee meeting at Trades Hall, Socialist Workers League (SWL) members Doug Jordan and Steve Painter were viciously attacked by members of the Maoist-led Victorian Builders' Labourers' Federation (BLF), including Mick Lewis and Jim Bacon. Jordan was dragged on his stomach down the steps of the Trades Hall and Painter was punched, knocked to the ground and kicked. Spartacist League members who witnessed the attack called on others present to oppose this flagrant act of gangsterism and attempted to defend the SWLers.

These are not the first instances of Maoist violence against opponents in the workers movement. Melbourne members of SWL/SYA have been attacked in the past, and in July 1973 members and supporters of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) (CPA-ML) including Waterside Workers' Federation Victorian State Secretary Ted Bull attacked Spartacist salesmen outside a reception for the Chinese ambassador. On several recent occasions *Direct Action* salesmen had been threatened because of the paper's defence of the BLF NSW branch against Gallagher's attempts to destroy the branch. In the case of the Trades Hall bashings however, a new "reason" was cooked up: that *Direct Action* had, almost two months before, "dobbed in" a "worker", one R Skeggs, to the police by quoting in *Direct Action* (24 January 1975) a statement by NSW BLF Secretary Joe Owens. Owens said he had been warned by Victorian trade-union officials that "Melbourne criminals, including Raymond Gilbert Skeggs, have literally been offered a contract on NSW officials, including myself."

Owens' word, of course, is not to be trusted, as the allegations he makes are in line with the mutual charges of corruption adopted by both Gallagher and the NSW BLF leadership as their method of "political" struggle; but the Maoist

The metal trades award campaign requires a difficult struggle if a serious loss in living standards is to be avoided. But this campaign, which could mobilise the working class as a whole against rampant inflation and sackings, has been systematically stalled by the bureaucrats who run the metal trades unions in the hope of a token wage indexation handout by the Arbitration Commission. With the reformist Communist Party of Australia (CPA) forgetting its bluster of last winter about an "autumn offensive", its leading members in the key Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union (AMWU) are working hand in glove with the right-wing officials to keep the struggle in check.

Last year the metal industry award, which directly affects 500,000 or more workers, was settled on a totally inadequate basis with no real struggle. Although a militant log of claims was presented, only half the wage demand was won and most of the other claims were dumped without a fight, in spite of the looming economic crisis. The role of the leadership of the Metal Trades Federation (MTF) was obvious at the time, when we pointed out:

"Union leaders are promoting illusions about the course which the struggle must take, leaving the working class totally unprepared for any defence of living standards under recession conditions." (*Australasian Spartacist* no 6, March 1974)

Last year the 35-hour week claim in the log was never seriously fought for -- and now there are constant sackings. According to the employers'

paper *Vanguard* has not denied the charges or demanded any retraction. Stalinists (Maoist variety included) and bureaucrats have resorted to murder and physical intimidation before to silence opponents in the workers movement and this is not outside the framework of Gallagher's political program. And the "dobbing in" charge is meaningful only if Owens' allegations are true. But if there were reasonable grounds to believe the reports Owens claims to have received then it was not only legitimate but necessary for Owens and *Direct Action* to help prevent violence in the workers movement by exposing such threats to the working class. It is those who use gangsterism who expose themselves to bourgeois prosecution, and encourage state intervention in the workers movement.

Those who carry out acts of violence against the class enemy, even when their actions may have been tactically inept or politically stupid, must be defended against the bourgeois state. In line with this principle one of the first acts of the Spartacist League when it was established in Australia was to take part in the demonstration outside Sunshine Court to defend the members of the Maoist Worker-Student Alliance on trial for an attack on the Melbourne Nazi headquarters. But gangsterism against others in the workers movement is a violation of workers' democracy, and those who carry out such acts can hardly expect the workers movement to protect them from bourgeois prosecution and other such consequences of their thuggery.

The Maoists' gangsterism is an attempt to shore up their own ranks by creating hard and violent organisational divisions in the face of their inability to politically defend their betrayals, especially Gallagher's role as a flunky of the Master Builders. Workers' democracy is needed to allow the working class to thrash out freely the best way forward. Revolutionaries have faith that in the clash of competing political strategies, their program, based on the real needs of the class, will win the overwhelming majority of workers. Thus the Spartacist League unconditionally defends the right of all tendencies within the labor movement, no matter how politically discredited, to freely propagate their views. Violence is the resort of those who want to prevent the political struggle necessary for proletarian liberation, those who have no

group, the Metal Trades Industry Association (MTIA), about 6 to 7 percent of the workforce in the metal industry have been fired, with more on the way (*The Australian*, 24 March 1975), and according to the February issue of the Melbourne syndicalist publication, *Link*, about 65 percent of metal shops had already had layoffs.

The MTF bureaucrats have no intention of fighting even for a 35-hour week on full pay. Now they are beginning to talk about a 32-hour week for 32 hours pay -- a proposal to spread the poverty, not fight unemployment. CPAer John Halfpenny (Victorian AMWU Secretary) told a Victorian shop stewards' and delegates' meeting on 26 March that a lot of workers are already on a 32 hour week -- at 32 hours pay of course -- so half the job was already done and now it's just a matter of getting 40 hours pay! Laurie Carmichael, CPA National President and AMWU Assistant Federal Secretary, said the same at a meeting for unemployed migrant workers at the Migrant Action Centre in Sydney on 12 March. These so-called "communists" have thus already given up on the 35-hour week demand in the 1975 log of claims.

The wage demand in the log of claims is for \$6 plus 13 percent -- which comes out to \$20 for tradesmen and \$18 for process workers. The \$6 is the balance of last year's claim and the 13 percent is to make up for inflation since September 1974, when the last increase (\$9) was granted. This year's proposal for a percentage wage increase is a concession to craft prejudices among sections of tradesmen and will only further divisions among workers, penalising the unskilled and lower paid (particularly women and migrants). The minimum wage demand -- provided there is an adequate cost-of-living adjustment -- should be a flat \$20 for all metal workers. The only real solution to inflation is an adequate cost-of-living clause -- with wages adjusted monthly on an accurate price index, back-dated to cover the month of April, and at a flat rate based on the highest wage in the industry.

The MTIA has totally rejected the log and refused to negotiate with the unions, claiming that to meet the demands would cause massive retrenchments (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 March 1975). They say that every year, but this year it appears more convincing because of the large number of layoffs already. The bosses' alternative of wages or jobs is accepted openly by right-wingers such as John Percer, a delegate from the ETU at the Plessey telecommunications factory in Meadowbank, who said at a Sydney MTF delegates' meeting on 2 April that to "get priorities straight" it was necessary to choose between "catching up" on wages and fighting for a 35-hour week. But in order to keep up on wages, firings must be stopped because unemployment undermines the strength of the unions and throws workers on the dole. On the other hand, holding back on wages in order to preserve jobs is equally a capitulation to the bosses' tactic of using unemployment to drive down wages in order to boost profits.

A 35-hour week is only a start; a sliding scale of hours is necessary, reducing the work week enough to maintain all the jobs wherever sackings threaten -- and with no cut in weekly pay. The metal unions must actively support work-ins or occupations of factories to stop sackings, not just say they're a good idea. When the MTIA pleads poverty, workers must demand to inspect their books. Halfpenny admitted on 26 March that the MTF negotiators did not bother to do so when they met with the MTIA! Plants that are closing down should be nationalised without compensation and run by the workers, but the union officials never mobilise union strength to force nationalisations. The struggle for jobs and to maintain wages cannot be successful if you accept the limits set by capitalist private property, yet this is exactly what the bureaucrats do.

Thus in the current award campaign the bureaucrats can be expected to do nothing more than give a show of fake militancy and then sell out in the Arbitration Courts. Their strategy is one of ineffective 24-hour stoppages and isolated, totally unco-ordinated individual shop-floor struggles. Halfpenny's attitude is that the award is not all that important, and that losses can be made up through over-award struggles.

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