



Labour tops pave way for bosses' offensive

Swing to right elects Fraser

The 13 December landslide electoral victory of the Liberal/National Country Party (L/NCP) coalition over the ALP is a setback for the working class. The L/NCP victory means a government which will seek confrontations with the labour movement in an effort to drive down real wages. It will attempt to impose an austerity program to rescue capitalist profits from the recession at the direct expense of workers. And it will attempt to consolidate its conservative policies on behalf of finance capital by systematically undercutting reforms introduced by the Labor Government, restricting civil rights, and attempting to shore up the ideological props of capitalist theft -- the church, the nuclear family, national chauvinism, etc.

purge was created. The capitalist class used Whitlam as the scapegoat for the recession, to transform discontent from a threat to the system into a weapon to preserve it.

This was made possible by the complete servility to the capitalists of the bureaucratic misleadership of the labour movement. By systematically sabotaging workers' struggles, as in the scuttling of the metal trades award campaign, the trade-union bureaucracy has prepared the way for Fraser. The Labor Government could do nothing about the recession, which stems from the basic irrationality of production for profit, because it is the servant of the bosses whose privileges rest on that system. Its open defence of the



Capitalists are ready to go on a limited offensive against the working class, as witness their recent argument to the Arbitration Commission for a general wage cut. Thanks to the labour lieutenants of capital, the struggle which temporarily threatened to break down the traditional cover for bourgeois rule and challenge the legitimacy of its traditional institutions has been contained within and returned to the confines of parliamentarism, postponing the decisive struggle for power between capital and labour which is inevitable in this historical period. And in that struggle parliamentary "democracy" is destined at some point to become "inoperative". In the meantime, the relation of class forces and the consciousness of the working class have not yet undergone a qualitative change; but the initiative has passed to the bosses.

The shift to the right reflected in the vote is a reaction of the middle classes and backward workers against the ALP among those who can be easily mobilised to see the source of their problems in "outsiders" (those at the very bottom of society or those who oppose the status quo) and small proprietors who are caught between monopoly capital and the working class. Using a hypocritical campaign of abuse -- "corruption", "bad management", "moral decay" -- an atmosphere of

interests of the bosses, in direct opposition to the interests of its working-class supporters, and deliberate suppression of any attempts to attack the bosses, has made it possible for Fraser to hide his true intentions behind a smokescreen of fake concern about unemployment and inflation and doubletalk about his plans to dismantle social services.

Thus, Fraser's policy on the economy turned out to be the most recent Labor budget (with its "responsible" trimming of essential social services and devices to raise profits through heavy "indirect" taxes on staples)! Coupled with the indexation wage freeze championed by former ALP Minister for Labour "Diamond Jim" McClelland, the Hayden budget was accepted by both sides as the framework for "fighting" the recession and inflation at the expense, of course, of the working class.

As the campaign progressed, Whitlam was forced to deviate from the issue of his undemocratic dismissal from office by the Governor-General and give a half-hearted defence of Labor's half-hearted reforms (necessarily half-hearted -- otherwise the bosses might think him "irresponsible"!)). However token, the ALP's reforms -- Medibank, education spending, a limited expansion

Defend East Timor

On 7 December Indonesia launched a full-scale invasion of East Timor, with several thousand troops, tanks, and massive naval bombardment, capturing Dili. The attack came soon after FRETILIN's unilateral declaration of independence as the Democratic Republic of East Timor on 28 November, culminating a long Indonesian campaign to grab the ex-Portuguese colony.

Australian maritime unions have placed a ban on all Indonesian-registered ships and on all military supplies to Indonesia; the Melbourne Waterside Workers' Federation has banned all Indonesian-bound cargo. The predatory Indonesian generals must be forced out by extending these solidarity actions throughout the workers movement internationally!

The petty-bourgeois nationalist FRETILIN postponed independence to the last moment, seeking useless negotiations with Indonesia, Portugal and Australia. It has now appealed to the imperialist den of thieves, the UN, to intervene. The future of the Timorese masses lies not with diplomatic horse-trading but with the Indonesian proletariat to whom FRETILIN's bourgeois nationalism has no appeal to make. Only workers' revolution in Indonesia can guarantee East Timor's independence and the rights of national minorities throughout Indonesia, and open the way out of backwardness and grinding poverty for the East Timorese people as part of a socialist federation of the Indo-Malay archipelago.

*All Indonesian forces out of Timor!
For an immediate, total trade-union ban on Indonesia!
For a permanent ban on military aid and material to Suharto!
For international working-class action to defend East Timorese independence!
For a Trotskyist Party in Indonesia!*



Outside Indonesian Consulate, Sydney, 7 December.

Continued on page two

Swing to right . . .

of social services -- symbolise in the eyes of its working-class supporters their aspirations for a better life. But Whitlam has made it clear that these reforms are strictly an adjunct to the demands of capitalist profits, and that he supports only the "reforms" which the bosses can tolerate. The end result is that he differs with Fraser only in the details of how much these reforms should be cut back because of the recession.

The left in Australia, aside from the Spartacist League, has uniformly adapted to the hegemony of the ALP bureaucracy within the labour movement, in supporting the ALP in the elections because of its "progressive" reforms. This ranges from left reformists who aspire to replace the ALP as chief class collaborationists, such as the Socialist Party of Australia, the Communist Party of Australia (CPA), the Socialist Workers League (SWL) and Socialist Workers Action Group, through the Communist League (CL) and the amorphous and vacillating "Left Tendency" (LT) of the CPA (who talk about supporting Labor in the name of an alleged objective "dynamic" which allows more reforms to be pressured out of the ALP or as a "lesser evil" capitalist government not quite as bad as one run by Fraser), to those who use ritual denunciations of parliamentarism, ravings about "dictatorship" and abstract rhetoric about the struggle for power as a cover for parliamentary cretinism, most notably the Maoists and the Socialist Labour League (SLL).

"Like a rope supports a hanging man"

The merely quantitative difference between the policies of Whitlam and Fraser is scarcely grounds in itself for a vote for the ALP. It is quite possible for even this difference to vanish in the course of a Labor Government. It is on the contrary crucial to explain to the class that there is no difference in essence. And this does not depend on how formally "left" the reforms promised by ALP bureaucrats are. To pretend that a Whitlam Government, or any Labor Government operating within the framework of parliamentary reformism, could have significantly advanced even the most basic aspirations of the working class is a treacherous deception.

Attempting to compete with Fraser's appeal to

the middle classes, Whitlam offered Labor as a better disciplinarian of the workers (through "persuasion"). To counterpose to this as do the SWL and CPA that the ALP needed "socialist policies" in order to win the elections is a completely futile and empty opportunist illusion. Real socialist policies cannot be carried out through parliament; oppressed sections of the petty bourgeoisie will never be convinced to vote Labor because of parliamentary "socialist policies". The petty bourgeoisie has not yet of course been driven to reject parliament. But when parliament becomes paralysed by massive social struggles, the petty bourgeoisie will look elsewhere. Only if the leaders of the working class show themselves as resolute and willing to take on the capitalists can the working class induce the oppressed middle classes to abandon parliament in favour of the working class rather than in favour of fascism. We don't hold Whitlam guilty of losing an election, but of fighting against workers' interests.

Except when the ALP commits a clear, direct attack on the working class or such a grave crime that it must be sharply denounced; or when it has entered a coalition with direct representatives of the bourgeoisie -- a vote for Labor is a contradictory and deformed expression of class political independence because the ALP is the mass party of the working class, based on the trade unions. The mass response to the dismissal of Whitlam reflected its working-class character. The fake, watery "socialism" of formal ALP policy is retained in order to retain the support of militant workers. Likewise, the bourgeoisie has deeply distrusted the ALP historically, no matter how subservient and corrupted its leadership, because of the potential implicit in it of working-class political action. This is what motivates attacks on ALP "socialism" by the right wing of the bourgeoisie. The contradiction within the ALP must be resolved by splitting the base away from the top, opening the way to the unity of the class behind a mass revolutionary workers' party.

A vote for Labor on 13 December was necessary as an expression of the need for a working-class political alternative to the openly capitalist parties. For the same reason the election of the ALP would have created the best conditions for exposing the reformists. To oppose a vote for Labor in these conditions is to prevent the exposure of Whitlam and to call on the working class *not* to use the only available means of expressing political class solidarity against the bosses' parties. Likewise, the support for Labor as a "lesser evil" capitalist party -- the rotten position advanced by sections of the LT -- not only promotes reformist illusions in Labor's minimal reforms but declares that the political subordination of the labour movement to bourgeois parties is irrelevant; that for the sake of a few crumbs the working class should express political confidence in a section of the bourgeoisie. This is the methodology of the popular front, which the LT retains in common with the central CPA leadership, only decorated with a syndicalist veneer.

Revolutionaries and the general strike

Another litmus test for the left in the political crisis was the question of a general strike. Against a defeatist bloc with the labour bureaucrats to prevent a general strike on the one hand, and the use of the general strike demand in an insurrectionary sense as a militant cover for propagating illusions about the state and capitulating to Whitlam/Hawke's "defend democracy" demagogy on the other, the SL called for a defensive general strike to oust Fraser and to raise demands to protect workers against inflation, unemployment and the Labor Government's anti-working-class policies.

As the strongest economic weapon of the working class, the general strike poses the question of whether the capitalist class can continue to rule. But it does not necessarily present a

positive *alternative* to capitalist rule simply by paralysing it. Depending on the success of the revolutionary vanguard in taking the leadership of the general strike away from the bureaucrats, it can become transformed into an open struggle for state power. But it can only mobilise the working class as a measure necessary to win a particular struggle of major importance to the working class and perceived by it as such at its present level of understanding.

Posing the immediate aims of a general strike in defensive terms by no means prevents the expansion of its aims, depending on how the struggle develops. *All* struggles of major importance to the working class, consistently prosecuted, must go beyond capitalist limits. The task of the vanguard is to foresee and explain this and *promote* that development by fighting for the revolutionary program, providing consciousness and direction -- not to use this fact as an excuse to tail-end the existing level of struggle.

The movement of the class in the direction of a general strike was effectively demobilised by the bureaucracy, and workers were cajoled, brow-beaten and intimidated into retreating into the relatively normal electoral conditions, unable to see a clear alternative way forward. Because provocative ruling-class reactions could not be ruled out, and in order to maximally expose the bureaucrats' treachery, the demand for a general strike retained its validity as an agitational weapon in the period immediately after the strike movement had been stemmed. But as it happened, the consolidation of the election campaign and cautious stance of the ruling class meant that a general strike after a certain point necessarily would be a strike not to veto the Governor-General but against Parliament -- not a subordination of the elections to an effective class action but a strike in opposition to the elections, which could be justified only if the class were prepared for insurrection.

True revolutionaries are realists. The defeat of the Labor Government at the polls cannot be reversed by an immediate general strike unless it is a question of overthrowing the bourgeois state. But the masses are not yet ready for that. Agitation for a general strike must be taken up again when it is warranted by new ruling-class attacks. A permanent demand for a (necessarily) insurrectionary general strike is in contrast both useless and unserious.

Program, political struggle and the revolutionary party

The basic need of the working class remains the replacement of the bureaucracy with a revolutionary leadership, both by exposing the role of the reformists in practice and by providing an alternative revolutionary program whose central axis is the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the smashing of the bourgeois state and the expropriation of the capitalist class. Such a program must include a system of transitional demands, corresponding to the dynamic of the class struggle, linking the goal of state power with the immediate needs of the class. However, isolated from the program as a whole, any demand can be adapted to the purposes of reformist deception, just as any particular struggle, no matter how militant the tactics, without a revolutionary leadership can always be prevented from challenging capitalism.

In all struggles the integration of particular issues into the revolutionary perspective requires the organised revolutionary leadership of a party. Likewise the key prerequisite for the successful revolutionary seizure of power by the working class is a vanguard party, possessing not only an organisation with the necessary discipline but a program for revolution. Every other group to the left of the CPA (and even the CPA when it suits) talks about the revolutionary party, but a party without a revolutionary program is an obstacle to revolution. And it is not their claims but the program they fight for, their criminal opportunism or reformist treachery, which determines the kind of party which they seek to build.

A revolutionary party is not a debating club or a pedagogical institute, not a coalition of special interests, not a cheering squad for whatever struggles are going on, not a loyal opposition to the bureaucrats, and not a lobby for exerting pressure on the powers that be. It is a selection of cadres trained in Marxist principles, steeled in struggle to withstand the material pressures and ideological influence of the class enemy, and rooted in the mass organisations of the working class, an instrument to lead the working class to power. It can be built initially only from among class-conscious workers and honest revolutionaries, seeking to unite them in a common bolshevik organisation, by winning them through irreconcilable political struggle against all forms of false ideology to the program of Trotskyism, the revolutionary Marxism of our time. That is the program and task of the Spartacist League. ■

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Hostility to class struggle exposed

Feminism and the political crisis

The ruling-class offensive that deposed the Labor Government and then led to the Liberal/National Country Party coalition's crushing 13 December electoral victory drew out the petty-bourgeois nature of the feminist women's movement, its opposition in practice to class struggle and its utter inability to provide any direction for the struggle against women's oppression. Throughout the political crisis the feminists' primary concern was that "women's issues" were being overshadowed. The feminists' political response -- "Women in, Fraser out" (quoted in *Tribune*, 19 November 1975), "Democracy - For Men Only?" and "Are Women Satisfied" (from an undated leaflet entitled "On December 13 Will Women Win?") -- was simple: what's in it for women? *Mabel*, a national feminist paper initiated during the crisis succinctly delineated the feminists' political framework:

"The current political crisis and election campaign illustrate amply the extent of resistance by *male* politicians and *their* party machines to *feminist* issues and demands." (our emphasis)

However, Fraser's offensive, the enormous working-class response it engendered and the whole election campaign made it clear that the determining axis of the political crisis was not "resistance to feminist issues and demands" but a ruling-class move to curb working-class organisations in order to make the working class pay for the recession.

Working-class women have been among the hardest hit by the capitalist recession -- first sacked, last hired, unorganised, discriminated against and poorly paid. And it is primarily the corrupt reformist leadership of the workers movement that bears the responsibility, not only for its criminal failure to mobilise the working class for any fight against sackings, soaring prices and the system of profit that breeds them, but for its contemptible failure to fight for even the elementary needs of working-class women. But despite their present rotten leadership, to the extent that the trade unions are weakened in the coming ruling-class attacks, so too will be the potential to mobilise the enormous social power of the working class in a fight against women's oppression be set back.

Feminists oppose class consciousness

At Women's Liberation General Meetings in Melbourne and Sydney feminists neatly separated women and their aspirations out from the context of class conflict in favour of a "fight" for women's rights only, without challenging the system that perpetuates women's continued oppression and social impotence. In Melbourne they arrived at a slogan of "Oppose Liberals, Support Women's Rights, Vote Labor", in Sydney "Vote Labor, fight for women's rights" -- a recipe for classless, parliamentarist, pressure-group politicking. In Melbourne the feminists explicitly *opposed* the call for a general strike because, according to a report given at a Sydney WLM general meeting, the situation was not ready! Nowhere did they put forward the sort of fighting slogans that could have united the whole working class, men and women, in defence of their basic interests -- in effect saying to working-class women, don't be class conscious!

Leaflets issued during the crisis called for

DROP THE CHARGES AGAINST LIVERPOOL WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE WORKERS!

Two women from the Liverpool Women's Health Centre, a doctor and a nurse, were charged, on 30 October and 3 November respectively, with performing an illegal abortion. These charges must be dropped! The widest possible support must be mobilised, in particular the organised strength of the trade-union movement, in their defence.

Contributions to the defence fund should be sent to:
Liverpool Women's Defence Fund,
Box 65, Post Office,
Liverpool 2170.

"Women Unite to Stop Fraser" and "we can't rely on men and politicians for this [full control over our lives] -- women acting together is our only chance" (leaflet -- undated -- "Will Women Win on December 13"). In fact the only unity the feminists have achieved is in tailing behind the reformist traitors of the Labor Party. Their call for "critical support" to the Labor Party ("Women support Labor if Labor supports us", quoted in *Tribune*, 19 November 1975) was not intended to unmask the reformists before their working-class base, but because Labor was "more progressive", ie was offering a few more crumbs. And it is precisely a perspective that was limited to reforms, that ultimately had to reconcile class conflict in the interests of the bourgeoisie, and not some mirage of "male power structures", that has led Labor to betray the interests of women and will continue to do so.

Women's liberation and the class struggle

To see women's issues as distinct from the class struggle is to deny the possibility of the "male-dominated" working class to fight for women's liberation, and to deny the role of women's oppression in maintaining capitalist rule and the continued exploitation of all workers. It also denies that working-class women can become active participants in the class struggle on an equal basis with men. Thus feminism mirrors the sexism which feminists set out to oppose.

Women's oppression stems from class society, private property; through the bourgeois nuclear family, it is an essential prop of capitalist exploitation. Women remain oppressed to the extent that they remain on the whole isolated from and shut out of the productive life of society, confined to petty domestic drudgery. The socialist revolution creates the material and social conditions to free women from this bondage by ending unemployment and through the socialisation of domestic responsibilities and abolition of the coercive institution of the nuclear family. Working-class women suffer not only the oppression of women but the oppression of their class. For them the *class* interests are decisive, because it is only by exercising power as part of the victorious working class that they can eliminate the bulwarks of both.

It is necessary for the working class as a whole to fight against the oppression of women as a sex in order to overcome the male-chauvinist false consciousness instilled by bourgeois society in the masses of proletarian men (and women). But not only this -- it is fundamentally in the interests of the working class because the liberation of women will give an immense impetus to the development of society under socialism. There is also a more immediate reason. Like every aspect of social oppression by the bourgeoisie, the oppression of all women must be fought, and its victims from all classes defended by the working class, in order to win the support of all layers of the oppressed, uniting them against capitalism under its leadership. But to argue, as do most feminists, that *working-class* women can "ally" with working-class men only on the basis of promises to carry out "women's demands" as a quid pro quo, is either self-defeating or simply anti-working-class. To *define* working-class women as interested only in the non-class aspects of their oppression is not only tacitly sexist but opens the door to their organisation by the class enemy against the proletarian revolution.

The logic of the feminists' striving for an autonomous women's movement is inherently petty-bourgeois -- attempting to balance between, but remaining aloof from, both the capitalist class and the proletariat. It is thus no accident that the social basis of the feminist-dominated women's movement is primarily from among petty-bourgeois women. And its active demands reflect the concerns of this layer, rather than focusing on the needs of working-class women, for example the restriction of the Women's Abortion Action Campaign (sponsored by the Socialist Workers League -- SWL) to "repeal all abortion laws" as against a campaign for free abortion on demand and free quality health care; the Women's Electoral Lobby's emphasis on increasing the number of women bureaucrats in the media, the ALP, government, and more recently even the trade unions; the social-work projects of the women's movement which because they are totally dependent



"Women's role": Feminists push democratic illusions in Perth.

on bourgeois sources for serious finance are simply an extension of bourgeois charity.

And in practice, this perspective leads to co-optation by the bourgeoisie, attempting only to pressure more reforms out of a historically bankrupt capitalism, and tying women to capitalism's defenders and apologists. Feminism is ultimately a form of bourgeois reformism and completely counterposed to revolutionary socialism.

Revisionists on the left who talk about "socialist feminism" in order to justify tailing after the feminist women's movement simply invert this reality -- as the SWL's nostrum goes, "socialists are the most consistent feminists". Thus they reduce the difference between "fighting" women's oppression *through* and *completely within* the framework of capitalism and fighting *against* capitalism to a mere matter of degree! This is just a form of the reformist conception that socialism can be achieved through the linear extension of capitalist reforms.

Feminists and revisionists join hands in PAC

The political paucity and the dead-end of bourgeois pressure-politics was driven home by the Sydney feminists' venture into the petty-bourgeois swamp of the Peoples Action Coalition (PAC), an amorphous collection of ecologists, blacks, media reformers and others, huddled together under the slogan of "People Unite! Return a Labor Government supporting Progressive [?] Policies". PAC's only reason for existence was to act as a barely left-tinged CPA front group for tailing the ALP bureaucrats, and to "defend and advance" the "progressive policies" which "Labor has partly implemented" (undated PAC leaflet). The opportunists tailed after the feminists, both inside and outside PAC. The fake-Trotskyist Communist League (CL) was so eager to reform PAC into a "socialist" pressure group on the ALP that at a PAC meeting on November 16 it voted for a key slogan put forward by anarcho-feminist Gillian Leahy: "Return a Labor Government pledged to Socialist and Feminist Policies"! The CL's "co-internationalists" in the SWL had their women Senate candidates stand as "feminists" (while the males stood as "socialists")!

The organisation and the program capable of leading the socialist revolution will only be developed by forging a revolutionary party, which in the tradition of Lenin's Bolsheviks, must build special transitional organisations not to organise women *as women* but to do communist work amongst women; not separate from the party but acting as a disciplined section united with it politically, to draw women into the class struggle and to the understanding that the proletarian revolution and the solution to their class and sexual oppression are inseparable. *For a non-exclusionist, communist women's movement!*

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U Sec on Angola and Algeria

They never learn

reprinted from Workers Vanguard no 86, 21 November 1975

The fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USec) over the past several years has been factionally polarized by a "two-line struggle" between its European-based centrist majority and a reformist minority grouped around the American Socialist Workers Party (SWP). But the cosmetic "unity" precariously preserved by the feuding factions in this so-called "United" Secretariat has become acutely strained by developments in the tumultuous class struggle in Portugal.

While Ernest Mandel and the other Pabloist patriarchs leading the centrist USec majority have been tailing the Portuguese "far left", the Communist Party and "revolutionary officers" of the Armed Forces Movement, the ultra-legalist SWP has rushed to the defense of "democracy" and ... the CIA-financed Portuguese Socialist Party. The political appetites expressed in these counterposed positions would place the two wings of the USec on opposite sides of the barricades with an outbreak of civil war in Portugal. Some "International" this is!

The inability of the USec to present a coherent revolutionary policy in Portugal is characteristic of its response to every major political event. Thus, naturally enough, the factional dispute has spilled over to the civil war in Angola where once again two contradictory lines are presented. The USec majority cheers the radical-nationalist Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), while the SWP plies its pen to whitewash the anti-communist National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and, less brazenly, the neo-colonialist National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

Communists extend *military* support to such petty-bourgeois nationalist movements when they are engaged in actual struggles against imperialism. But Leninists remain sharply politically opposed to nationalism, even when cloaked in "socialist" rhetoric and commanding a mass plebeian following. At every step Marxists uncompromisingly struggle for the political independence of the proletariat, expressed through the vanguard party fighting for the leadership of the national-social revolution. In the civil war presently raging in Angola, with Portugal out and the FNLA/UNITA forces having been effectively subordinated to US imperialism and its South African ally, we call for military support to the MPLA against the CIA-financed South African-organized military offensive (see "Smash Imperialist Power Play in Angola!", *Workers Vanguard* no 85, 14 November).

The Pabloist epigones of Trotskyism, however, long ago discarded the Leninist-Trotskyist program. Regarding Angola, both camps of the USec are "united" today by their common refusal to expose the Angolan nationalists -- the MPLA no less than FNLA/UNITA -- as *bourgeois* formations and to fight for working-class independence in Angola.

Apologists for MPLA and FNLA

As vociferous enthusiasts for petty-bourgeois-led "armed struggle", the USec majority expresses its unqualified political support to the MPLA, raising the slogan "all power to the MPLA" (*Inprecor*, 11 September 1975). While grudgingly acknowledging simply the most glaring betrayals of the MPLA, these revisionists contend that the MPLA is only "partially controlled" by a petty-bourgeois nationalist leadership". For Mandel and company "the only alternative to the present MPLA leadership" is the development of a so-called "vanguard" within the MPLA, *not* the struggle for a Trotskyist party.

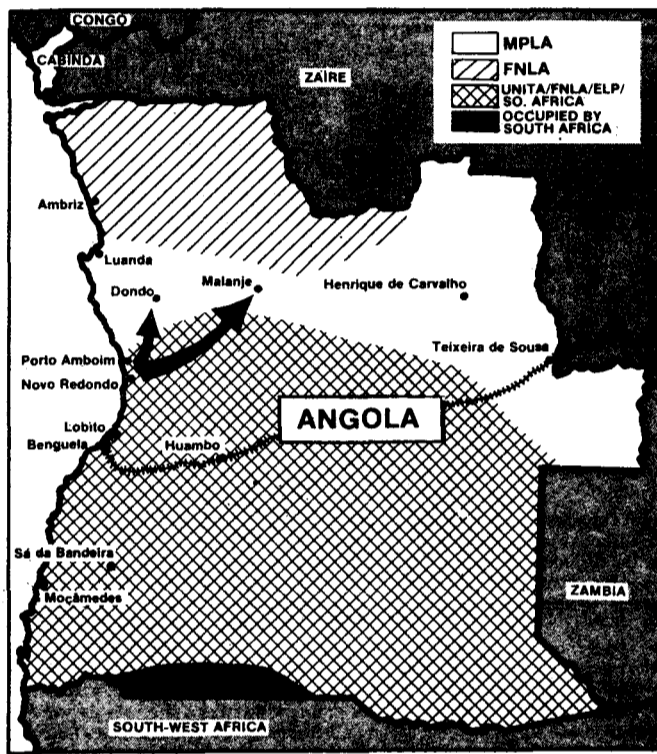
In an earlier article, entitled "In the Whirlwind of Permanent Revolution" (*Inprecor*, 17 July 1975), the USec hails the MPLA's alleged "real break with reformist nationalism" and its "empirical revolutionary approach with a socialist dynamic". When the dust from this "whirlwind" of revisionist claptrap settles, the call for a Trotskyist party and for the political independence of the working masses from all the treacherous nationalists is buried.

Eager to make use of another opportunity for thinly veiled public factional polemic against the pro-MPLA USec majority, the SWP last summer cranked out a three-part series on Angola (*Intercontinental Press*, 7 July, 14 July and 21 July 1975) marshalling the evidence to demonstrate -- quite correctly -- the anti-proletarian character and past opportunism of the MPLA. But while

seeking to cut the demagogically leftist MPLA to ribbons, the SWP wields its polemical rapier against the openly rightist FNLA far less aggressively. The SWP either ignores or disingenuously questions all the well-established facts documenting the FNLA's sordid anti-communist and pro-imperialist record.

While typically refraining from any hard programmatic statements, the SWP, like the USec majority, never so much as obliquely hints at the need for a Trotskyist party in its articles on Angola. On the contrary, despite its occasional pseudo-orthodox posturing, the SWP, too, suggests that the Angolan nationalist groups may be caught up in a "revolutionary dynamic": "In a tumultuous situation marked by the sudden collapse of a centuries-old empire and a steady rise of the colonial revolution, the nationalist forces may yet be pushed further than they are now willing to go."

Although each now apologizes for different hostile nationalist forces engaged in bloody com-



bat, the two wings of the United Secretariat stand on the same revisionist methodology and tradition. Prior to their present falling out, USec leaders in the past unanimously backed whichever was the most popular and active Angolan nationalist force of the moment, while denying the need for a revolutionary communist party and calling for revolutionaries to work under the leadership of the nationalists.

A USec declaration on Angola issued in 1964 -- at a time when the MPLA had been all but shattered by repression and when the FNLA was leading guerrilla actions based on the Bakongo secessionist revolt in northern Angola -- stated:

"The FNLA leadership is being forced to turn more and more towards revolutionary sources for aid including workers states, above all China. That this leadership has given indications of being willing to turn in this direction is an encouraging sign... The most effective way in which the revolutionary Marxists can help the Angolan freedom fighters find their way to the program of socialism is to participate actively in the struggle led by the FNLA." (*Fourth International*, June 1964)

Algeria revisited

The approach toward the nationalists in Angola shared by both factions of the USec today is simply a repetition of the Pabloist liquidationism followed during the nationalist-led struggle in Algeria against the French colonial regime. The Pabloists for years gave uncritical political support to the petty-bourgeois National Liberation Front (FLN) in Algeria with the rationale that radical nationalist formations can provide a "possible substitution in the role which traditionally is played by the revolutionary Marxist party, of a more restricted [!] leadership of a different [!] ideological origin" (Michel Pablo, "The Colonial Revolution and the Theory of the Permanent Revolution").

The revisionists cynically trampled on the fundamental Marxist principle of the political

independence of the proletariat from all alien classes, rejecting the perspective of struggling for a Trotskyist party politically counterposed to the bourgeois nationalists, with the twaddle that "the FLN will transform itself into a political party which will have a programme with a clear socialist orientation" (*Quatrieme Internationale*, July 1962). As early as September 1962 the Pabloists claimed that the FLN could establish a healthy workers state: "the Algerian revolution already has a programme, the one adopted unanimously at Tripoli, which, if it is carried out, will make Algeria a society belonging to the Algerian peasant and worker masses, and the Algerian state into a workers state building socialism" (Pablo, "Impressions and Problems of the Algerian Revolution").

This illusion-mongering was not limited to Pablo. The United Secretariat, shortly after its formation, referred to "the socialist revolution as it spreads from Algeria to Morocco and throughout the Maghreb [northwest Africa]" (*World Outlook*, 23 October 1963). By 1964 the USec declared that Ben Bella's Algeria had become a "workers' and peasants' government", a regime capable of evolving into a workers state without the intervention of a Trotskyist party and without a civil war, similar, it said, to Cuba under Castro (*World Outlook*, 21 February 1964). Both the SWP and the Pabloists in Europe had embraced Castro as an "unconscious Marxist" able to establish a "workers state" in Cuba without the intervention of a revolutionary vanguard party. Agreement on this anti-Trotskyist perspective was, in fact, a key element in bringing about the 1963 reunification which produced the USec. But what Castro consolidated was a *bureaucratically deformed* workers state which excluded the proletariat from direct political power and which has consistently pursued policies fundamentally no different from the degenerated/deformed workers states of Russia and China. The Pabloists hoped that Algeria's Ben Bella would be "forced" to take the same road as Castro. They were to be sadly disappointed.

While the Pabloists could only vicariously cheer Castro from afar, in Algeria the USec was able to at last implement its perspective of actively pressuring the nationalist formations to the left. While still a titular international leader of the USec, Michel Pablo entered the bourgeois Ben Bella government, serving as a top economic advisor. According to his pamphlet "World in Revolution", Pablo "helped codify and institutionalize self-management in Algeria, and draft the Algerian Reform Law and economic and social policy in the country between 1962 and 1965".

Pablo "Institutionalises" Algeria's unions

Having crossed the class line by entering a bourgeois government, Pablo, with the tacit support of the entire USec, proceeded to braintrust the "social and economic policy" which was aimed at strangling the independent organizations of the working class by incorporating them into the bourgeois state apparatus. The "institutionalization of self-management" pushed by Pablo led directly to the state regimentation of the Union Generale des Travailleurs Algeriens (UGTA) labor federation, whose leaders had sought to preserve at least a semblance of independence of the workers organizations from the post-independence Algerian state (Ian Clegg, *Workers Self Management in Algeria*).

The UGTA organized independent workers self-management committees in the factories and on the agricultural estates abandoned by the departing French. In July 1962 it called for factory occupations to prevent a consolidation of power by the nascent Algerian bourgeoisie. Such independent mobilizations of the working masses posed a direct threat to the bonapartist bourgeois regime of Ahmed Ben Bella. Thus when the first UGTA congress, convened in January 1963, opposed the regime's policy that "allows the exploiters to profit from the situation in reinforcing their privileges and consolidating their political power", the Ben Bella government packed the congress with FLN cadres who proceeded to elect a new "leadership" pledged to upholding and enforcing the policies of the government. Such was the "institutionalization of self-management" forced upon the Algerian masses by Pablo and company!

The successful putsch by Houari Boumedienne in June 1965 delivered a crushing blow to the Pabloists' illusion-mongering. This palace coup was

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Letter bombs and witchhunts

At 5.30 Friday morning on 28 November twenty armed cops invaded the Balmain home of members of the Communist Party associated with its Left Tendency. A police gunman was reportedly posted at the back gate with a rifle. The pretext for the raid, according to the warrant, was a search for "bombs and bomb components". The cops interrogated the inhabitants for three hours, and searched the place thoroughly (taking particular interest in addresses and telephone numbers).

This raid comes in the wake of the bourgeois press hysteria surrounding the letter-bombs addressed to Kerr, Fraser and Bjelke-Petersen. It is clear from the details of the raid (statement by CPA members Mick O'Loughlin, research officer in the Miscellaneous Workers Union, and Libby Barrat, Teachers Federation member, published in *Daily Tribune*, 1 December 1975 and the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 December 1975) that it was politically motivated. It is intended to link the alleged letter-bomb attempts to the left, to harass and intimidate, and to prepare the way for future repression.

The politics of acts of individual terrorism such as the alleged letter-bomb attempts is inconsistent with the politics of all organised tendencies in the Australian left. Nor is there a shred of evidence to connect the alleged bombing attempts with any of the organised left. Despite the obvious fact that the addressees were all conservative bourgeois politicians, the bombs cannot be regarded as serious assassination attempts as they could certainly not have harmed the alleged intended victims (who obviously do not open their own mail). While the Maoists are positive it is a right-wing conspiracy, and the

Socialist Workers League only think it could be a "possibility", almost all the Australian left has seen it as a planned provocation by the state, fascists or the CIA to set up the left, behind the alleged letter-bomb attempts, for a reactionary witchhunt.

Exactly who did it is however unknown. The CPA has pointed to the Ustasha, but the evidence is meagre; more likely, it was some individual acting alone, a right-wing extremist or a madman, conceivably someone under the delusion that they were acting on the behalf of the oppressed. But the bourgeoisie will use any opportunity provided by such incidents as a pretext for a witchhunt. No matter who is responsible, the result is the same -- the letter bombs have been used to discredit the left, both directly (particularly by Mrs Flo Bjelke-Petersen, who slanderously accused "socialist and communist unionists") and indirectly. In this context the harassment of CPA members, with no grounds even to suspect them of any connection with the bombs, is an attack on the democratic rights of the working class as a whole. The workers movement must unite to protest against this raid, part of a general move to the right by the bourgeoisie which, if left unanswered, could become the beginning of systematic police victimisation of leftists and trade-unionists.

Bourgeois morality is at its most hypocritical in relation to violence and terror. The bourgeois media predictably tried to use the incidents against Labor, warning Whitlam and company of the dangers of "inflammatory" talk; but their concern did not extend to the recent defacing and burning of ex-Labor Minister Tom Uren's Granville

offices by a right-wing gang or the blowing up of the Brisbane CPA offices by the Nazis in 1973 which went virtually unnoticed.

It is not out of any sympathy for the likes of Sir John Kerr, Malcolm Fraser or Joh Bjelke-Petersen that we stand firmly opposed to the use of letter-bombs as a tactic in the struggle against capitalism. There is no evidence in the present case that this alleged attempt at terrorism was motivated by a distorted though honest anti-capitalist impulse, but if that were the case we would stand morally on the side of the perpetrator against the bourgeoisie and its cops, but saying: "Comrade, this is not the way, you cannot substitute yourself for the action of the working class". Individual terrorism is a tactic which even if "successful" in eliminating a handful of bourgeois politicians -- who are personally responsible for systematic bourgeois violence and terror -- cannot possibly eliminate the system which they represent and which can find as many replacements for them as it needs.

Violence is inherent in the exploitation and oppression on which capitalism thrives. It is the violence of capitalism, through its special apparatus for systematic violence, the bourgeois state, that makes revolutionary violence inevitable. Marxists do not "deny" violence or terrorism "in principle" as do the cringing cowards of the Socialist Labour League -- a denial of history and the right of the oppressed to resist their tormentors. But to have revolutionary significance violence must flow from the will of the vast majority of workers and oppressed united against capitalism. Marxists do not embark on adventures which would only obstruct the political arming of the working class for victory. ■

CPA, SWL election campaigns: Left props for ALP reformism

In the elections the Spartacist League gave critical support to Labor, a tactic which enables revolutionists to stand with the ALP's working-class base against the class enemy, the openly bourgeois parties of the Lib/NCP coalition but at the same time to mercilessly expose the betrayals and class collaboration of the reformist Whitlam/Hawke leadership and advance a program for revolutionary class struggle.

But as for supporting other small organisations in the workers movement that stood for election, like the Socialist Party of Australia (SPA), the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) and the Socialist Workers League (SWL), our criteria are necessarily different. These organisations have no mass base in the working class; all they have to offer in counterposition to the ALP is their program. For revolutionists to give them critical support against the ALP they would at least have to campaign for an alternative, which, even if flawed, challenged in some fundamental way parliamentary reformism, and called for a break from its ALP representatives. The SPA/CPA/SWL answer none of the criteria; if more "radical" or "left" in tinge, they are still utterly reformist. To urge a vote for these organisations in preference to the ALP, no matter how critically, can only build the authority of more sophisticated aspiring sellouts.

The CPA/SWL do however, unlike the completely pro-ALP Stalinists of the SPA, have ambitions to compete with the ALP as a "left" reformist alternative and even to pass themselves off as "revolutionary". The SWL says it doesn't "believe that the ALP is the organisation which will bring socialism to this country" (Socialist Workers Election Manifesto) and the CPA "stands for a clear socialist alternative, which Labor will never implement" (*Tribune*, 3 December 1975).

Words and deeds for reformists however have an uncanny knack of never quite matching up. In the elections the CPA in fact advanced two programs. The first, "a people's action program to demand immediate radical reform" (election leaflet, "Political Crisis '75" -- our emphasis), was a hodge-podge with something for everyone -- a referendum for an Australian republic, tax reform, the nationalisation of "key industries", the implementation of Labor's totally inadequate child-care program, expansion of public works and a 35-hour week with no loss in pay to fight unemployment, democratic rights for migrants and blacks, ending with a demand for pensions to be raised to 30% (!) of the average wage. (Even the ALP offered and achieved 25%!) This "clear, socialist alternative" could be supported by any left-of-centre ALP reformist -- which of course is exactly its intention. The CPA's other "program" is no more than an elaboration of how the

CPA sees the socialist utopia. And for the CPA it is a utopia, for nothing links the two programs; in "practical politics" the maximum program is only for show.

The SWL's version of "socialist policies" is somewhat more ambitious -- their manifesto calls for lots of reforms, against unemployment, the wage freeze, for democratic rights, oppressed groups, education, environment etc. It also throws in some that are downright reactionary, such as preferential hiring for minorities and women, and stronger bourgeois laws as the solution to wife-bashing. But the political thrust is fundamentally the same as the CPA's.

For example, the SWL says that abolishing the Senate would eliminate "the instrument by which a reactionary minority can prevent a popular majority exercising its will through the House of Representatives". So -- do away with the Senate, and the bosses' parliament is in the hands of the people?! At least the SWL's hawking of this gross bourgeois liberalism explains why in the only allusion to the need for a "state of workers", the SWL's detailed manifesto equates this with a "society without classes" -- in which no state has any reason to exist!

Not unexpectedly the two issues that separate reformists and revolutionists, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the question of state power, did not enter into the campaigns of either one. The CPA/SWL are careful not to include in their "action" (ie minimum) programs a demand for expropriation of the banks and industry but only for "nationalisation" of "key industries" (CPA) or the "giant monopolies" (SWL). The additional tag of "under workers control" is just radical verbiage unless the question of state power is addressed -- which of course it isn't.

To the CPA/SWL reformists, there is no need for a workers government, separate from and in opposition to the bourgeois state and parliament. That workers must smash and destroy the existing state apparatus in order to take state power themselves is never even hinted at. In the spirit of Kautsky they see socialism merely as the end point of the continuous linear extension of "democracy" (or "self-management"). Not a word about the need to disband the bourgeois army and police, the need to prepare for workers' self-defence or workers' militias. But of course neither the CPA nor the SWL have the slightest intention of leading a struggle for state power.

The express purpose of both these campaigns, like that of the SPA, is to act as a "left" pressure on the Labor bureaucrats. Both the CPA/SWL ask for votes as a "protest" against Whitlam's policies, to push Labor "left": a vote

for the CPA "will show you want a Labor government to act for the majority, not for big business profits" (CPA election leaflet), a vote for the SWL will show "We want Labor to carry out the sort of policies advocated by the Socialist Workers campaign, not the right-wing policies of the past" (SWL "Election Manifesto"). The CPA/SWL would have workers believe that the capitalist state is essentially neutral, that with "militant action" or "mass mobilisations" and a Labor Ministry it can be forced to serve the interests of the working class and the oppressed.

The CPA, with more social weight than the SWL, is tailing bigger game, enabling the SWL, yet to gain a toehold in the labour bureaucracy, to safely criticise the CPA's worst excesses. *Direct Action* (4 December 1975) points out that "*Tribune* just opportunistically tails the Labor leaders and doesn't give any sort of lead... Tom Uren puts on a left face at a Balmain rally and the *Daily Tribune* reports it all as gospel". A clear case of the pot calling the kettle black. While the CPA bemoans the short-sightedness of the ALP leadership, their failure to give a "bold lead" to which the "workers and the majority would respond" (*Tribune*, 3 December 1975) the SWL slaps them on the wrist for their "timidity" and for refusing "to take advantage of the groundswell of support for Labor to call a general strike" (SWL "Election Manifesto")!

The working class must be won away from all the class traitors, not to a more "left" reformism but to a revolutionary program. If not, the working class, as in Chile, faces a potential bloodbath. The ALP and its "left" appendages, the SPA/CPA/SWL, are obstacles to the creation of the revolutionary party which, as a section of a reborn Fourth International, can lead Australian workers to victory. ■

From the CPA's *Daily Tribune*, 12 December 1975. We agree -- Jarvis and the SWL are in no way communist! Nor is the CPA. SWL-CPA programs are essentially the same.

INJUNCTION ON 'COMM.' CHARGE
SYDNEY: Socialist Workers League candidate, Helen Jarvis, is seeking an injunction to stop the Family Action Movement from distributing a How-to-Vote card describing her as a 'Comm.' She claims that this is an attempt to offset her advantage in drawing first position on the ballot paper by branding her as a Communist. CPA national organiser Joe Palmada has made an affidavit saying that Jarvis is not and never has been a member of the CPA.

"Melbourne Revolutionary Marxists"

Rest home for refugees from Trotskyism

"Small organisations which regard themselves as selective, as pioneers, can only have value on the strength of their program and of the schooling and steeling of their cadre. A small organisation which has no unified program and no really revolutionary will is less than nothing, is a negative quantity."

—Leon Trotsky, "Open Letter to an English Comrade", Writings 1935-6, p73 (Pathfinder)

Since September a pamphlet titled "A Call for the Revolutionary Regroupment of the Australian Left" has been circulated by a diffuse group calling itself the "Melbourne [!] Revolutionary Marxists" (MRM). One can look in vain through this document to find out where these mysterious Melbournians come from, but in fact MRM was formed by the former majority of the Melbourne branch of the Communist League (CL), the Mandel-ite wing of the fake-Trotskyist "United Secretariat". They walked out of the CL earlier this year when its national conference refused to accept Bob Dorning as a full member because of his non-defencist position on the Russian degenerated workers state, a longstanding position of his, certainly held throughout the whole eighteen months (!) of his "provisional" membership! The other members who split did not share these views but had some other formal political differences with the CL, though the CL's account in the *Militant* (Vol 4 No 5) suggests they left primarily as a result of grievances on questions of organisational practice. MRM, uninterested in its own political record, has not bothered to publish an analysis of the split. However, though the split is not mentioned, their "Regroupment" pamphlet makes it quite clear it was to the right.

The meanderings of Dorning-Mansell

This silence about the past is expedient for the leading lights of MRM, cohorts "economist" Bob Dorning and political grasshopper Ken Mansell. Both long-time meanderers through the Melbourne left, they arrived by slightly different courses in the 1970-71 quasi-Trotskyist *Toosin* group in Melbourne. In a ragged split, Mansell went with its left wing into the Socialist Labour League (SLL), soon to depart for a brief stay in the Socialist Workers Action Group (SWAG), and then to rebound in and out of the Spartacist League. (Offering a resignation from the SL with no stated political differences when he was assigned to get an industrial job in early 1974, he was finally expelled for threatening to use the courts against the organisation over a financial dispute.) He then joined old friend Dorning in the CL. While Mansell had been away in his "search" for a revolutionary organisation Dorning had been trying to "build" something through the Victorian Labour College and various study

corrections

In *ASp* no 25, November 1975, an SL reprinted leaflet "Answer to black oppression: Separatism or workers' revolution?" inadvertently contained a faulty formulation:

"The development of Australian capitalism, while historically progressive in establishing the conditions that make possible the ending of all oppression and exploitation through the elimination of their material basis in economic scarcity ..."

While Australian capitalism by developing the means of production, has created the material basis for socialist revolution it has not and cannot establish the conditions for the ending of all oppression. Indeed the development of society's productive forces stagnate within the confines of capitalist property relations and national state boundaries, and only by demolishing these restrictions through proletarian revolution and instituting a planned economy on the basis of a workers state will those conditions be finally met.

In *ASp* no 26, 25 November 1975, the article "Whitlam/Hawke sabotage workers' defence" said in relation to the Socialist Labour League (SLL): "However, their call for 'Labor to fight for the election on [unspecified] socialist policies' is retained to show the kind of government the SLL fights for -- a parliamentary Labor Government with a left face." The SLL does, of course, have their own specific "socialist policies" in the fine print, but the essential point remains true. Like even the craven reformists of the Stalinist Socialist Party of Australia, the SLL with calculated ambiguity calls for the Labor Party to adopt "socialist policies", as an agitational slogan. This can only have the effect of breeding parliamentarist illusions in reformism. ■

circles. The latter all collapsed, so Dorning, with nothing to lose, eventually joined the CL. Now at last they have something of their own, ironically the smallest, most inconsequential and impotent of the "sects" that they so despise.

MRM's pamphlet takes no clear programmatic positions but rather hides its real program behind rhetorical double-talk, evasion and smear tactics. One example, epitomising the heavy strain of crude Australian provincialism running through the document, is found in their comic-pretentious "Eleven Theses on Derivative Sects", where they magnanimously declaim that

"There is nothing inherently wrong in adopting a political programme which has originated overseas[!]. Capital and labour are both international, and a Marxist programme must necessarily be so. But each existing 'international' maintains that it is the embodiment of internationalism, and, on this basis, is given devoted, unquestioning loyalty by its adherents in Australia."

Aside from the cheap anti-communist smear about "unquestioning loyalty", this passage means that while there is nothing wrong with abstract, lifeless, in a word fraudulent "internationalism", any *real* loyalty to a program you believe to be the "embodiment of internationalism" is *inherently wrong*, whether that program in fact embodies internationalism or not. Dorning-Mansell do not attempt a programmatic analysis of the various contenders to see if they *do* embody internationalism. They think an International is perhaps a charming idea, but not very "practical", and they're not intending to help build it. Having "established" that collaboration with revolutionaries overseas is illegitimate, they go on to say "Revolutionaries in Australia have small resources and are not able to create the revolutionary international by themselves." How profound! Trotsky, who well understood the distortions of perception which result from viewing the world from any single corner, the interdependence of nations, and, above all, the general continuity of rhythm of the class struggle internationally, said:

"Without a Marxist International, national organisations, even the most advanced, are doomed to narrowness, vacillation and helplessness; the advanced workers are forced to feed on surrogates for internationalism. To proclaim as 'purely theoretical', i.e. needless, the building of the Fourth International, is cravenly to renounce the basic task of our epoch." ("The ILP and the Fourth International" *Writings 1935-36*, p68)

It is no accident that Dorning-Mansell should choose, as their *only* criticism of the Spartacist League, to attack our perspective of "building the party from the top down". The phrase, of course, we plagiarised from Lenin, who used it in the preface to *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* to differentiate the Bolsheviks from the perspective of a diffuse Menshevik party. Lenin pioneered the conception of a party built in a fight for *program* embodied in a *cadre* of *professional revolutionists*, a conception which in the imperialist epoch must, more than ever, be applied internationally, and which utterly horrifies MRM.

MRM thus prides itself on a fatal vagueness about what it stands for. Marxists know that all political programs, whether "imported" or "made in Australia", represent the social interests of classes, and any incompleteness in the revolutionary program represents a potential opening for the programmatic infiltration of alien class forces. And a conscious policy of subordinating program to organisational "unity" *guarantees* their domination.

Only a revolutionary program that expresses the objective interests of the working class can bring the revolutionary consciousness needed by the working class to enable it to smash capitalist state rule and establish its own. But such a program does not arise spontaneously out of the immediate experience of the class struggle in any single factory, city or country, but must be consciously developed on the basis of the lessons of the whole history of the class struggle around the world. And the class will not automatically accept the revolutionary program when set out before it, but will only be won -- the most advanced layers first -- in the course of a fight against the *bourgeois* politics of the organisations now leading the class, which restrain it within the bounds of the capitalist order. *That* is building the party from the top down. *That* is what MRM rejects.

MRM does not want to be tied to the communist program or the discipline that is crucial in

maintaining its revolutionary content. They certainly want to avoid the hard political struggle for programmatic clarity against the "devoted, unquestioning loyalty" of the "sects". They say that "to regroupment the attitude of the sects themselves is inimical. It will have to proceed in spite of them." And so their appetites are towards those who pride themselves on their "independence" (independence, one might ask, from what?), those who are not sufficiently serious to fight organisationally for a definite political program, those who are "repulsed by the doctrinal wars of the sects" (read principled political struggle), and those in "organisations" such as the left social-democratic Socialist Workers Action Group (SWAG), the syndicalist/reformist Link group and the mush around the opportunist/syndicalist Left Tendency within the CPA.

And the "principles of regroupment" on which they intend to unite, other than a list of vague generalities, are simply bankrupt. The nearest they get to posing a strategy for disposing of the existing misleadership of the class is to say that trade-union bureaucrats are bad -- no way is marked out for the fight against them. A characterisation of the ALP is simply avoided. The "counter-culture" is given a revolutionary potential, and there's a kind word of gentlemanly "respect" for the "autonomy" of feminism from the class struggle.

But probably the most disgusting and revealing of their "principles" is their agnostic position on the Russian degenerated workers state, explicitly tailored to beguile the "bureaucratic collectivist" turncoats of SWAG (according to MRM, these Shachtmanite reformists are "empirical" Leninists!). The military defeat of the Soviet Union by imperialism would not only in itself give international capitalism a new lease of life, but also almost certainly lead to the defeat of the far weaker deformed workers states in China, Eastern Europe, Cuba and Indochina. In any event it would set back the advance of the proletariat for decades if not forever. But for MRM, "in the concrete conditions of today" the question of imperialist war against Russia is "of more theoretical than practical significance"!!

Creature of the swamp

The need for a genuine regroupment of revolutionaries into a single Leninist organisation is indeed urgent. But the fragmentation and confusion on the left is not the result of "sect" mentality as MRM's crude, philistine psychologism would have it but a reflection of the crisis of proletarian leadership and the dominance within the workers movement of reformism and revisionism, stemming from the material and ideological power of the capitalists. Such a regroupment will only come about through the sharpest struggle for political clarity; only by concretely exposing the betrayals of inadequate programs can the revolutionary elements be split off from the political debris and regrouped through a series of fusions based on principled programmatic agreement. The result must be the nucleus of a Leninist party, not an opportunist swamp.

MRM now appears to have found itself an opportunist swamp to wallow in. In late November a 4-page tabloid, "Re-elect Labor", appeared, authored by the "Militant Action Caucus" (MAC), an "ad hoc organisation of groups and individuals", apparently made up of MRM, sections of Link and the LT and other "independents". The political line echoes the wretched reformist garbage of the *Daily Tribune*. Their broadsheet sums up: "We must demand much more commitment from the ALP to nationalise industries, support worker control, and shift government taxes from the bosses' pockets and back to services for the people"!! Like all reformists they believe that the capitalist state can act in the interests of the "people", at least with a little pressure. Their definition of socialism solely in terms of "real democracy" is then scarcely surprising. There is of course no mention of the need for the working class to be organised to smash up, through force of arms, the repressive apparatus of police and army that lies at the heart of the capitalist state, nor of the only instrument that can carry out such organisation, a revolutionary party.

The "principles" and the "unity" of the MRM are a fraud from start to finish, a front to build a shelter in which can gather cynics, dilettantes and refugees from the harsh world of reality. The revolutionary movement inevitably throws off burnt-out shells, unable or unwilling to handle the pressure and commitment demanded by serious communist organisations, who create organisations where they can still dabble in "revolutionary" politics. The Dorning-Mansell rest home is such an institution. ■

From Hansen to Healy to Hansen

Wohlforth crawls back

reprinted from Workers Vanguard no 86, 21 November 1975

Less than a year ago Tim Wohlforth -- for over a decade top dog in the American satellite operation of Gerry Healy's English-based "International Committee" -- found himself unceremoniously deposed from leadership of his own creation, the Workers League (WL). Smarting from the blow, he treated the radical public to a luridly accurate 39-page account of his removal ("The Workers League and the International Committee", 11 January 1975). This document was so devastating a portrait of internal life among the Healyites that it was reprinted in its entirety in four installments of *Intercontinental Press* (IP), the organ of the reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), edited by Joseph Hansen. In recent months Wohlforth has been observed lurking around public functions of the SWP/YSA, which had expelled him in 1964.

Now it appears that this homeless petty despot has come full circle. The 10 November 1975 issue of IP publishes without comment a document dated 19 October by Wohlforth and his close collaborator Nancy Fields which purports to demonstrate that the SWP has turned toward the working class and is putting forward basically correct politics in opposition to the sectarian, cultist WL. This fulsome application for SWP membership concludes:

"Those like the Socialist Workers party who turn toward these struggles, and are willing to learn from them, will reach the best fighters of our generation. It will be these fighters who will build the revolutionary movement to lead the American Socialist Revolution. We intend to be with those real fighters of our day!"

The document strings together a few correct criticisms of the Healy tendency, obviously cribbed from the pages of *Workers Vanguard* over the years (the timeless, ritualistic Healyite warnings of "the crisis", the sectarianism analogous to Stalin's "third period") with grovelling praise tacked on for some of the worst aspects of the SWP's reformist line (Portugal, the reliance on federal troops to protect blacks in Boston). The document also includes the requisite section on "philosophy" without which no Healyite or ex-Healyite literary venture would be complete.

Of the years preceding this conversion, Wohlforth has little of importance to say. After more than a decade in which his only rationale for political existence has been denunciation of the revisionism of the SWP as a cover for the more "leftist" Healyite brand of cynical opportunist zig-zags, Wohlforth now wants to crawl back into the fold. The SWP is certainly no less revisionist than it was when Wohlforth departed; in fact, it has locked onto a grossly reformist course. It is, however, bigger, and Wohlforth's tendency is considerably smaller -- two people, to be exact.

At the time of his ouster from the WL, Wohlforth declared with typical modesty that although his service to the Healyites was apparently terminated, "we have left a priceless heritage...." It has not taken very long for Wohlforth's imperishable contribution to perish. With consummate cynicism, Wohlforth styles his reconciliation with the SWP "In Defense of a Revolutionary Perspective" -- the same title, word for word, as the basic statement which codified the positions of the Revolutionary Tendency (which included Wohlforth as well as the founding leaders of the Spartacist group) in opposition to the SWP leadership some thirteen years ago!

The SWP is rapidly becoming adept at changing bloc partners in midstream. The marriage of convenience between the SWP-led rightist faction and the centrist majority of the so-called "United Secretariat" continues to come unstuck. The SWP wing and the French Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI) increasingly gravitate into parallel orbits, concretized above all over the issue of Portugal (where the centrist Usec majority backs the CP and the "progressive officers" of the MFA, while the SWP and OCI apologize for the CIA-financed Socialist Party (SP) as it fronts for the massing reaction). The bureaucratic SWP, which continues to hold at arm's length the supporters of the international majority expelled from its ranks, may have a use

for Wohlforth. A totally discredited element incapable ever of mounting any threat to the regime, his spectacular capitulation can be utilized to bolster the SWP's democratic pretensions as it seeks to become the all-inclusive party of revamped American social democracy.

Still, the "reintegration" of Wohlforth would pose certain tactical problems. He is uniquely the individual whose record of sectarianism, violence and slander has been exploited by the

"The Toad saw at once how wrongly and foolishly he had acted. He admitted his errors and wrong-headedness and made a full apology to Rat.... And he wound up by saying, with that frank self-surrender which always disarmed his friends' criticism and won them back to his side, 'Ratty! I see that I have been a headstrong and a willful Toad! Henceforth, believe me, I will be humble and submissive, and will take no action without your kind advice and full approval!'"

—Kenneth Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows*

SWP over the years to discredit left critics. Wohlforth, more than anyone else among the political bandits of the Healy tendency, has been Hansen's incarnate horrible example of the ignominious fate awaiting anyone who opposes the SWP from the left. In Hansen's long gloating comment on the original Wohlforth defection ("The Secret of Healy's 'Dialectics'", IP, 31 March 1975), he characterized the Healyite organizational method as using people like Wohlforth "until the last drop is squeezed out and they are dropped into the bin marked 'Vaporized Lemons'". We would be remiss if we failed to protest this amalgam of a

CONTINUED FROM PAGE FOUR

U Sec on Angola . . .

accomplished with only minimal purges in the state apparatus and certainly nothing approaching mass armed resistance, much less civil war. Such was the dismal end of the USec's fabled "workers and peasants government".

Faced with the debacle in Algeria, the USec began an elaborate cover-up seeking to excuse its treachery with a halting "self-criticism" and liberal doses of falsification and demagoguery. Shortly after the Boumedienne coup, SWP "theoretician" Joseph Hansen attempted to answer a scathing denunciation by the Socialist Labour League of Britain of the USec's capitulation to the petty-bourgeois Algerian nationalists (reprinted in *Spartacist* [US], November-December 1965). Hansen wrote sarcastically:

"We are told about the need for a Trotskyist party in Algeria. Wonderful! We are told that the national bourgeoisie cannot carry out the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Superb!" (*World Outlook*, 23 July 1965)

Anyone can "call for" a vanguard party, you see. But the USec occupied itself with the "new", more "profound" objective "dynamic" in Algeria. To simply insist on the need for the political independence of the proletariat from the exploiters, according to Pabloist pundit Hansen, is a "barren ultraleft approach". Although Hansen ridicules the affirmation of the need for a Leninist vanguard party as though this were an undisputed question, he dares not suggest that the USec upheld the need for a party and warned against any illusions in the national bourgeoisie. Moreover, Hansen stressed the possibility of a resurgence of the "left" forces still intact in the Boumedienne regime, which could transform the Algerian government once again into a "workers and peasants government".

Years later -- indeed, four years later! -- the USec, unable to any longer promote the fiction of an FLN "left", finally brought forth a "balance sheet" on Algeria, "The Algerian Revolution from 1962 to 1969" (*Intercontinental Press*, 16 March 1970). The Pabloists, after years of reflection, seem to have been seized with an insight. Listen: "The victory of the socialist revolution in Algeria was possible. But a decisive factor was lacking: the revolutionary party."

We might congratulate the USec for paying homage to at least one fundamental principle of Marxism, but this entire "self-criticism" is



Tim Wohlforth.

Workers Vanguard

rotten renegade and cynic with lemons, which after all serve useful purposes.

While we wait for the predictable howls of indignation from the Workers League/Healy cabal, let us observe that Wohlforth is only following out the counsels of his mentor, Healy, who some years ago dictated to the WL the opportunist strategy for the future: "the road to the American working class lies through the YSA [SWP's youth organisation]".

But what is Hansen going to do with a super-cynical squeezed lemon? ■

spurious from beginning to end. Thus the draft resolution, a classic model of circumlocution and evasion, asserts that the Boumedienne coup was a "qualitative expression of the erosion and the molecular changes occurring both in the state personnel and the organization and consciousness of the classes ... which the revolutionary party had not been able to counteract". What "revolutionary party"? Such cynical falsification was evidently more than Mandel thought he could get away with, so an amendment (by Germain and Charlier) was offered conceding that the absence of a party did make some difference after all: "a revolutionary party would have been able to quickly attempt to reestablish contact with the masses." The final version, however, only admits to the necessity of a revolutionary party because Ben Bella, unlike Castro, allegedly lacked broad support among the peasantry! Judging by Lenin's criterion -- "The seriousness of a revolutionary party is measured by the attitude it takes toward its own errors" -- the USec is revealed as totally unserious and fundamentally unprincipled.

The purpose of the "balance sheet" on Algeria was not to achieve Marxist clarity regarding the communists' attitude toward petty-bourgeois nationalist movements in the colonial and ex-colonial countries, but rather to cover up the USec's despicable role with a few drops of pseudo-orthodox verbiage and tons of obfuscation. Consequently, after years of "re-evaluating" their Algerian positions, the revisionists of both wings of the "United" Secretariat now end up repeating the exact same capitulation before the Angolan nationalists.

The USec tries to draw a parallel with Cuba, hoping that everyone will forget Algeria. But the lessons of both Cuba and Algeria are that petty-bourgeois nationalists coming to power through guerrilla warfare can establish nothing more than an anti-working-class bonapartist regime: a bourgeois regime oscillating between "progressive" and outright reactionary coloration, as in Algeria, or -- even in the best case, and only under highly atypical circumstances -- a bureaucratically deformed workers state, as in Cuba.

While episodic military blocs with nationalist forces may be necessary, the proletariat of the backward countries must maintain its class independence from the bourgeoisie and all petty-bourgeois formations. Organized independently and under the leadership of a Trotskyist vanguard party, the proletariat must mobilize behind its banner the peasantry and urban poor, thereby assuming hegemony in the anti-imperialist struggle. The Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution rests upon the principle of the independence of the proletarian vanguard. ■



Lisbon: right consolidates

Recent events represent a sharp setback for the left in Portugal. Press, radio and television were suspended in the Lisbon area (with the exception of government broadcasts), demonstrations prohibited, preventive arrests authorized, curfew imposed, and a blanket rejection of all wage demands decreed. The right-wing officers also scored an important military victory against the military units most closely identified with the civilian "far left" and General Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho. At the top levels of the military virtually all leftist and ostensibly radical officers (including Carvalho and Carlos Fabiao) have been purged or arrested.

Steps were taken against the military police regiment (RPM) and the Lisbon light artillery regiment (RALIS), both of which have large numbers of soldiers to the left of the Communist Party (CP) and which the high command has been unable to control for months. They have now been disarmed and disbanded, or dispersed around the country.

Confrontations with proletarian strongholds



Striking building workers blockade Lisbon government

were avoided and while the workers suffered an important defeat, it is far from decisive. The Lisnave and Setenave shipyards, Siderurgia Nacional steel plant, Sorefame and several other Lisbon-area factories, all went on strike against the declaration of a state of emergency and the attack on the leftist military units. The government made absolutely no move against the strikes.

The victory of the rightists was due primarily to the lack of common organization of the leftist forces and the treachery of the Communist Party who made it clear that they would in no way resist the state of emergency. They kept their word. The strikes which were probably mounted with the CP's toleration, since with the exception of Lisnave they were in CP-dominated plants, were kept isolated. The navy, reputedly the most Stalinist-influenced of the armed forces, remained conspicuously out of sight. -- From an eyewitness account datelined Lisbon, November 28, published in *Workers Vanguard* no 88, 5 December 1975.

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NOVEMBER 25 -- A major left-wing military revolt broke out in Portugal today. Approximately 1,500 paratroopers took over the four main air force bases of the Lisbon district -- Tancos, Monsanto, Montijo and Monte Real. They were said to have captured senior officers and called on units around the country to join them. Simultaneously rebel soldiers occupied the government radio and television stations and civilian leftists surrounded the main arsenal. As the revolt spread, Lisbon-area unions called a general strike and urged the takeover of public services.

In response to the parachutists' uprising, General Costa Gomes, who is both president of the

country and head of the Supreme Revolutionary Council, declared a state of emergency. All "loyalist troops" were placed on war alert under his personal command....

Initial news dispatches reported general support to the rebels from other units in the Lisbon region. The light artillery regiment, RALIS, set up self-propelled cannons to guard the northern approaches to the capital. UPI said that soldiers had begun handing out arms to civilian leftists and *Republica* newspaper stated that the revolt had the backing of General Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho, head of the Lisbon military region and of the COPCON security forces. A spokesman for workers at Lisnave shipyards, the largest and most militant industrial establishment in the country, declared solidarity with the paratroopers.

(Late reports announce that all of the bases have been occupied by troops backing Costa Gomes. At air force headquarters in the suburb of Monsanto, the parachutists surrendered when faced with a force of 20 armored cars. In addition, soon after the broadcasting stations were seized by leftists their power was cut off and the wave lengths immediately occupied by a pro-government station in Porto.)

Among the demands raised by the rebellious units were a purge of the air force high command and replacement of the Socialist Party-dominated sixth provisional government with a left-wing regime. A UPI spokesman quoted a "rebel spokesman" as saying, "We want true socialism and a government of people's power." Two other factors which are undoubtedly involved were the attempt by the Supreme Revolutionary Council to dismiss Carvalho as military governor on Friday, and an order by air force chief of staff General Moraes e Silva closing the Tancos training school and disbanding the unit.

The events of the last week represent the culmination of two and a half months of the Azevedo government. Having failed to silence left-wing opposition with the occupation of radio stations in late September, the Revolutionary Council ordered the transmitters of Radio Renascenca blown up.... In another test of strength, in October the cabinet was forced to accede to the wage demands of the metalworkers after a massive demonstration. This month Azevedo determined to make a stand against the construction workers; but after being trapped for a day and a half in government buildings besieged by tens of thousands of building tradesmen, he gave in.

Then came the demands for "guarantees of security". The Constituent Assembly threatened to leave for the conservative north unless the military provided it protection. The cabinet demanded law and order or it would "suspend its activities", which it did, with little noticeable effect. The attempted ouster of Carvalho from his key operational command on November 19 was the Revolutionary Council's answer to these demands.... But immediately after the MFA leaders ordered the replacement of Carvalho their orders were turned down by the 25 units in the Lisbon district.

The dispute with the paratroopers has a long gestation. Less politicized at first than the ground troops, who had been badly mauled in the African colonial wars, the elite parachutist units were used in the abortive March 11 Spinolista coup attempt earlier this year, and in the dynamiting of Radio Renascenca. In both cases, however, contact with soldiers from leftist units afterward convinced the paratroopers that they had been deceived by their superiors as to the purpose of their orders. The resulting ferment was concentrated in the "mother" unit of the training school, and as privates and sergeants began to discuss orders virtually the entire officer complement of the base (123 in all) walked out, demanding to be transferred to another unit. In response the air force command placed the rest of the base (some 1,600) on indefinite furlough. Rejecting the order, the troops stayed on.

The revolt today seems to be an outpouring of anger in response to this treatment by the command structure, tied in with generalized opposition to the discipline-minded Azevedo govern-

ment among the armed forces ranks. The Communist Party, which has been calling for the resignation of the sixth government since Friday, may have sought to take advantage of this moment to push its demands for a new cabinet. But it is highly doubtful that any of the principals intended anything like the insurrectionary assault on state power which the government charges them with. Militarily it was poorly planned, with the revolt isolated in a few easily definable targets.

It is not just Premier Azevedo who is "sick of playing games", and militantly leftist soldiers may well be tempted to pull a coup. Marxists must be prepared to bloc militarily with leftist units and officers against the "moderate" government's purge attempts -- ultimately aimed at building up a coherent strike force to massacre the workers. But the militant workers must not place the slightest political confidence in the demagogic "socialist" generals. It should be remembered that "Otelo" at first sided with the "Group of Nine" against CP-backed Premier Goncalves last summer, and if he follows the advice of one of the leftists' chants -- "Act Otelo, the people are in the streets" -- it is not at all clear against whom he would move.

As has been proven repeatedly over the months, the working class cannot rely on the MFA and must break politically with this political expression of the bourgeois officer caste in order to unite in independent organs of proletarian power. In the last month elected soldiers commissions have sprung up in most of the Lisbon units, usurping the role earlier played by the unit delegate assemblies (which included officers). The organizational forms themselves are empty, however, without the revolutionary leadership to politically prepare the conditions for successful struggle by mobilizing the mass of the workers and their allies behind a unified Marxist vanguard. Lacking this, the militant workers and soldiers will eventually fall prey to the Communist Party's treacherous reformist illusions or be driven to strike out in some desperate adventure.

Never has the crisis of revolutionary leadership been posed more sharply than in Portugal today. To defend the rebellious soldier ranks against the MFA tops' plans for a massive crackdown against "indiscipline", to prepare the working masses to resist the onslaughts of the forces of reaction, to unify the working class around a revolutionary program leading toward the seizure of power -- what is required is above all the forging in struggle of a Portuguese Trotskyist vanguard, section of a reborn Fourth International. ■

Walker, Garcia and Fogarty free!

On 25 November after 16 months of continual harassment Denis Walker, Lionel Fogarty and John Garcia (the Brisbane 3) were acquitted of the frame-up charges laid by the Bjelke-Petersen Government. Beginning with "demanding monies with menaces" (Walker) and "conspiracy" (Fogarty, Garcia) the actual charges were changed several times, concluding with the charge of "intention to extort services" (with a maximum prison term of 14 years). The three were acquitted due to insufficient evidence and, reportedly, because the "charge" violated no laws. But undoubtedly the united-front defence campaign, in widely publicising the blatant frame-up nature of the case, played a definite role in their acquittal. The SL from the outset has been a consistent participant in defence of these militants. Walker still faces 13 charges ranging from "defamation" (after protesting about his recent beating administered by police!) to assaulting a police officer. Also, it appears the prosecution may appeal against the acquittal. All charges must be dropped for good!