



Not Green against Orange but class against class!

Ireland: anti-violence campaign no solution

Down with emergency measures North and South!

After witnessing the demise of its second attempt at "power-sharing" in Northern Ireland (the ill-starred Constitutional Convention) last spring, the British Government has mounted a new offensive in Ulster primarily directed against the "Provisional" wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA). A vital adjunct to stepped-up repression in the North was the passage in early September in Dublin of a package of "emergency measures" aimed at suppressing the Provos in the southern republic as well.

At the same time, the ruling parties and bourgeois media, both in Ireland and Britain, have enthusiastically greeted a campaign of mass anti-violence marches in recent months by Catholic and Protestant housewives and clergy in Northern Ireland as evidence that the paramilitary groups are increasingly isolated. Although the founders of the "Women's Peace Movement" have sought to keep it apolitical, their refusal to demand the removal of British troops has given the anti-violence marches a one-sidedly anti-Provo slant. Thus a healthy mass revulsion at the unending cycle of sectarian murder and retaliation is being manipulated by British authorities and the church hierarchies into support for strength-

ened "security forces" and yet another experiment in sharing out provincial executive posts among a handful of self-serving politicians.

The Republic suppresses the Republicans

The immediate pretext for the state of emergency in the South was a series of bombings. On July 15 the Special Criminal Court of Dublin was blown open by bombs in an escape attempt by five Republican prisoners. Six days later the British ambassador, Christopher Ewart-Biggs, was killed when a land mine was detonated under his limousine. Simultaneously an IRA-linked bombing campaign in Britain threatened to sour relations between the Republic and its major trade partner.

At the time Prime Minister Liam Cosgrave warned the Dail (Ireland's parliament) that the two bombings challenged fundamental powers of his government: "the conduct of our international relations" and the "the administration of justice". Bourgeois "justice" in the South already provided up to two-year prison terms for membership in the outlawed



Continued on page two Betty Williams (left) and Mairead Corrigan lead peace rally.



Mao's legacy: the flag of US imperialism unfurled in Peking - for Nixon's visit in 1972.

Who mourns Mao?

A nation-wide day of mourning was declared for China's Mao Tse-tung - all government buildings were closed, all flags flown at half-mast; the only bourgeois regime to bestow such honour on Mao. Some "Third World anti-imperialist" regime, or one of the "non-aligned" nations? No, this tribute came from Pinochet's Chile, one of the most hated, reactionary, blood-soaked military dictatorships in history.

Joining the junta generals was the mass murderer of the Vietnamese workers and peasants, Richard M Nixon, who mourned the loss of "a unique man in a generation of great revolutionary leaders" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 September). Anti-communist union-basher Malcolm Fraser echoed the sentiments, calling Mao "an outstanding figure in world history". The tone of the bourgeois press obituaries and official condolences reminded one of the utterances which greeted the death of venerable bourgeois warrior-leaders like DeGaulle and Churchill.

Had Mao died five years ago, the imperialist response would have been rather different. The obituaries would have been more coolly critical, the official condolences more formal. Effusive praise for a "great revolutionary leader" would have been limited to the Maoist movement and "Third World" nationalist demagogues.

But in the past five years the atmosphere of relations between Mao's China and imperialist America has shifted radically. Labelling the Soviet degenerated workers state "social-fascist", Mao has brought China into an ever more open alliance with American imperialism. As Gerald Ford put it:

"Americans will remember that it was under Chairman Mao that China moved, together with the United States, to end a generation of hostility and to launch a new and more positive era in relations between our two countries."

So today imperialist public opinion which a few years ago presented Mao as a fanatical, totalitarian dictator now praises him as a great statesman. And the condolences issued by Washington, Bonn and Tokyo are by no means diplomatic hypocrisy. The imperialist rulers are genuinely apprehensive that Mao's successors might change course and seek a detente with the USSR. This is Mao's legacy to the Chinese masses and international proletariat: he committed the resources of the Chinese deformed workers state to a counterrevolutionary alliance with the most powerful reactionary force of this epoch, US imperialism.

Mao's Stalinist nationalism

If the imperialist bourgeoisie is paying homage to the "great revolutionary", various revisionist "Trotskyists" are also seeking to exploit his prestige. The French section of the United Secretariat lauded Mao as "one of the greatest political figures of the proletarian revolution of this century ... this historic figure who contributed to opening the paths of hope for all oppressed peoples" (communique in *Le Monde*, 10 September). The English Healyites hailed "Mao's great revolutionary past" (*News Line*, 10 September).

Ireland . . .

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IRA, and some 600 persons have been sentenced on no more than the testimony of a police chief.

Now, following declaration of the state of emergency, measures have been passed by the Dail extending "preventive" detention from two days to seven, establishing longer sentences for IRA membership (including up to ten years for "incitement to join") and authorising use of the army for police functions. The *gardai* (police) were particularly eager to extend the detention period to allow them longer time to brutalise and break down suspected Provos.

It is ironic the Irish Republic should unleash such draconian repression against the Republicans, whose aim is to "recuperate" the six counties of Ulster for the fatherland. Despite a certain degree of pseudo-socialist rhetoric, the Provos have always been for forced reunification of the "six counties" with the present-day clerical/Tory-dominated capitalist Irish Republic. In the past, sections of the Catholic bourgeoisie (particularly in the Fianna Fail party of former prime minister Jack Lynch) have covertly provided military aid to the Provos in the North. But now the spectre of civil war growing out of the sharpened communal violence in Ulster has sent tremors of panic through the Green Tories.

Repression in the North

Frustrated by Protestant intransigence in its latest attempt to reconstitute a Northern Ireland executive of "moderate" Loyalist/Unionist and Catholic politicians, the British Government dissolved the Constitutional Convention on March 5. Shortly thereafter it announced plans to continue the military occupation indefinitely. This led to the Provos' decision at the beginning of July to resume attacks on the police and British army. (The tenuous truce negotiated with representatives of the Labour Government last year was partly based on British statements holding open the possibility of withdrawal of the troops in the future.)

Even before the Provisionals' change of tactics, however, Westminster had dispatched units of the hated anti-guerrilla Special Air Service (last assignment: Oman) to occupy overwhelmingly Catholic South Armagh. London is now preparing new refinements to the repressive powers of the Emergency Provisions Act under which its more than 15,000 troops operate in Northern Ireland.

The smug British ruling class and its administrators in the Labour Party Government pose as disinterested and civilised arbiters between incorrigible Ulster Protestant and Catholic ruffians. In fact, following savage Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) attacks on the Northern Civil Rights Movement marches in 1969, the Catholic minority -- including self-described revolutionaries like Bernadette Devlin -- welcomed the British imperialist army as protectors.

But the British troops' brutal occupation of the Catholic ghettos, the 1972 "Bloody Sunday" massacre and the wire-cage internment camps (most notably Long Kesh) crammed with Republican supporters -- as well as the exclusive reliance on the RUC and Ulster Defense Regiments (UDR) to "restrain" ultra-rightist paramilitary Orange gangs -- soon punctured the veil of imperialist "neutrality". Today a broad sector of the British left has realised that the British troops in Ulster are inimical to the interests of the oppressed Catholic minority and must be withdrawn.

In late 1969 the IRA Provisionals won broad support among the Catholic population of Belfast for their determined defense of the Catholic ghettos against marauding Orange gangs and Protestant police. However, the Provos' indiscriminate sectarian violence has led to their growing isolation and provided a convenient pretext for the far more massive terror of the police and army.

The "peace" movements

A new element in the Ulster political equation has been the emergence in recent months of "peace" movements against the sectarian violence, particularly the "Women's Peace Movement". This petty-bourgeois, pacifist-inspired movement was started after the deaths of three Catholic children in Belfast in August. The Maguire children were crushed against a wall when a Provo driving a car was shot dead by British troops and the auto lurched out of control. Although responsibility clearly lay with the army killers, the press (and evidently many residents of the Catholic neighbourhood) directed their wrath solely at the IRA. A few days later, 12-year-old Majella O'Hare was shot down in Ballmoer. A British spokesman initially claimed that the girl was killed in an army-Provo crossfire, although the RUC subsequently reported that she had been killed with an army bullet.

In this context, Betty Williams, a witness to the death of the Maguire children, began circulating a petition in Andersonstown, an IRA stronghold on the outskirts of Belfast, calling for an end to the violence. She was soon joined by Mairead Corrigan, an aunt of the slain children, and by the end of a week a demonstration of 10,000, mostly Catholic women, marched through the Upper Falls district demanding "peace". They were joined by a few score Protestant women from the traditionally bitterly hostile Shankill district.

The Women's Peace Movement continued to mushroom, bringing out 25,000 in Belfast on August 28 while 50,000 marched in sympathy in Dublin on the same day. (Soon after the campaign drew 12,000 to the Craigavon Bridge separating Protestant and Catholic neighbourhoods in Derry.) In Belfast the marchers went up the Shankill Road and reportedly received a friendly reception from Protestant bystanders, with "particular applause for women from Andersonstown and other Catholic districts" (*Irish Times* [Dublin], 30 August).

Secretary of State Rees hailed the "peace" marchers as "one of the most significant things of the last few weeks" and the press generally played it up as a new dawn of brotherly love. The marches had no common political program, however, and the only highlights of the demonstrations were the singing of traditional ballads ("When Irish Eyes Are Smiling") and non-denominational religious songs ("Amazing Grace") and the reading of the "Declaration of the Peace People".

The "peace people" rejected "the use of the bomb and the bullet and techniques of violence" for everybody (and not just the IRA, they now emphasised). Everybody, that is, but the Ulster police and British army. The two organisers issued a statement (*Irish Press* [London], 26 August) which graphically revealed the incapacity of such political naivete to provide answers on the decisive questions and sources of conflict in Ulster:

"There are also those on both sides who want to drag us into condemning or supporting the security forces.... We have begun to realise that a minefield surrounds these questions, how differently different people want us to answer them. We have been overwhelmed by the amount of work for peace that is necessary. We are now saying that we are not going to get into any of these political security questions."

Meanwhile, if Williams and Corrigan refused to take a position, a prominent peace movement supporter, Rev Eric Gallagher of Belfast, told the World Methodist Conference (which sent a contingent to the Dublin demonstration), "I know that in England there is a movement to bring the British out overnight: to opt out would be a callous act of irresponsibility" (*Irish Times*, 30 August). Moreover, press accounts of the Belfast march describe a heavy troop deployment along the route, amounting to official endorsement and encouragement of the "peace" movement.

The Officials and the unions

Thus despite its organisers' desire to stay out of politics, the anti-violence marches objectively became anti-Provo demonstrations at least benevolently neutral toward the British army and police. This led the Provisionals to denounce Betty Williams as a "tout" (collaborator) and to announce defiantly, "The war will go on. We will not be deterred by the hysterics of the peace-at-any-price brigade" (an IRA officer quoted in the *New York Times*, 22 August).

The IRA Officials, on the other hand, endorsed the "peace" movement, although one of their leaders, Tomas MacGiolla, warned that "if

middle class do-gooders remain in the leadership they will kill it with endless prayer meetings...." The Officials -- along with the Communist Party of Ireland (CPI), the left wing of the Irish Labour Party and the leadership of the Northern Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) -- claim to oppose sectarianism (as do the Provos), but they hope to douse it with nothing but trade-union economism.

The vehicle for this is the "Better Life for All Campaign" started by the Northern Committee of the ICTU after the Armagh killings last January. The political program of this campaign was summed up by Officials leader Des O'Hagan: "From the British Government we demand immediate action on the crucial issues of democratic rights, jobs, houses and an end to sectarianism." How the British state could deliver "an end to sectarianism" was not explained.

For the unemployment and poverty that fuel the communal hatreds in Northern Ireland, the Officials and their co-thinkers offer nothing more than a mouldy social-democratic program of a progressively larger "public sector" administered by the existing bourgeois state apparatus:

"We therefore call for the establishment of an Irish Economic Development Board composed of representatives of the commercial and development ministries, North and South, representatives from the State sector industries and from the ICTU, charged with the development of Ireland's natural resources through a planned comprehensive expansion of State sector enterprise...." (*United Irishman*, July 1976)

But the capitalist state, particularly in the period of imperialist decay, is incapable of guaranteeing full employment and economic prosperity for working people. Already there is a considerable development of state-owned industry and welfare schemes in Northern Ireland, affording both Catholics and Protestants in the province an appreciably higher standard of living than in the Republic. But nonetheless, unemployment in the North still stands at over 11 per cent, and thus the competition for jobs will inevitably exacerbate sectarian conflicts. Only in a workers republic which has expropriated the bourgeoisie can a truly planned economy be established; consequently, only under workers' rule can the material conditions be created for a democratic solution to the communal conflict in Ulster.

British "Trotskyists" face Ulster

Within the ostensibly Trotskyist movement the polar positions on the Ulster question -- and much else -- are represented by the incredibly philistine, Kautskyan Militant group around Ted Grant and the petty-bourgeois radicals of the International Marxist Group (IMG, British section of Ernest Mandel's "United Secretariat").

The position of the Militant group can be described as social-democratic Unionism, agitating for unity between Protestant and Catholic workers on the most minimal economist issues. The Grantites oppose the withdrawal of British troops until an anti-sectarian workers' militia can be established to suppress the Orange and Green terrorists. Unlike the Grant group, we are unconditionally for withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland. But we recognise that in the absence of anti-sectarian workers' militias, withdrawal will simply lead to further communal violence. This is a reality that the "Troops Out" movement denies.

In contrast, the IMG pushes the nationalism of the oppressed, seeking to give it a more popular character and left rhetorical cover. The IMG's *Red Weekly* (19 August) offers the following friendly advice to the Provos:

"If more women and men are not to be captured by hypocritical peace groups then the Republican movement and the anti-imperialist organizations must begin to outline a strategy for victory based on mass participation of the *nationalist working class* [our emphasis] and abandon the strategy that relies on a small 'army' of the people which is forever prone to isolation from the people."

For these Pabloist enthusiasts of "progressive" communal warfare, from Lebanon to Ulster, the Protestant section of the working class is at best irrelevant. What counts for the IMG is broadening the base for a petty-bourgeois nationalist movement which considers the bulk of the Ulster proletariat as mere lackeys of British imperialism and, hence, perfectly suitable targets for mass slaughter.

The internecine sectarian/communal strife in Northern Ireland cannot be equitably resolved through forcible reunification with the capitalist/landlord/church-ruled Republic, as the IRA and its IMG camp followers propose, nor through simple economism, however militant. Only in the course of a revolutionary upsurge attacking the very foundations of capitalist rule can unity between the Catholic and Protestant working people be forged, and for that the key is leadership of a Trotskyist vanguard party. ■

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Marxism and homosexual oppression

Historically Marxian socialism has ruthlessly polemicalised against all those who seek to escape the class struggle through "socialism by example" -- from Robert Owen's New Lanark to William Lane's "New Australia" in Paraguay (1893) to the New Leftists of the 1960s and 1970s who sought social change through personal "liberation". The New Left has largely been discredited. But the belief that oppressive human attitudes like authoritarianism, male chauvinism, racism and consumerism -- and not the material relations of production -- are the motive force of capitalist society, still remains.

This is particularly true for radical homosexuals who have often claimed that the persecuted homosexual lifestyle is itself an attack on bourgeois society, undermining or "subverting" traditional sex roles, the nuclear family as a heterosexual unit, capitalist values etc -- a claim uncritically accepted by wide sections of the left. Its most recent expression is the Socialist Homosexuals (a coalition of Communist Party of Australia (CPA) members like Craig Johnston and Lance Gowland and a number of "independents") who use such a justification to fashion a pseudo-Marxist perspective specifically for homosexuals. Their "Manifesto of the Socialist Homosexuals" combines a few abstractly correct positions on the key role of the working class and the need to smash the capitalist state with a false belief that homosexual oppression,



or homosexuality itself, is a central, strategic question for socialist revolution. Their position: "No homosexual liberation without a socialist revolution! No socialist revolution without homosexual liberation!" Thus the key tasks they propose include the "subversion" of sex roles, homosexual "caucuses" in the unions and an "independent" revolutionary homosexual movement to establish homosexuality as a "valid form" of sexual expression and guarantee homosexual rights both before and after the revolution.

Not that the Socialist Homosexuals believe that homosexuality is necessarily revolutionary -- at an initial forum held in Sydney on 19 September they agreed on the whole that civil rights could be "co-opted" by capitalism. According to their lead speaker Jeff Hayler, homosexuality could be revolutionary only to the extent that it could combat authoritarian, competitive and sexist attitudes within society and undermine the family through subverting sex roles. Spartacist speakers in discussion pointed out the fundamentally idealist thrust of such an outlook and the futility of attempting to exorcise capitalist values through voluntarist attempts at "liberated" lifestyles. Communists do not take a position on the value of any particular form of personal or sexual relations. This is counterposed to petty-bourgeois moralism: both the Healyite/Stalinist conception that homosexuality is something necessarily "sick" ("against nature") and to the opportunist views of those like the CPA or the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) who climbed on the bandwagon of "gay liberation" in the early seventies to curry popularity in petty-bourgeois radical circles. The CPA/SWP only reflect the other side of the coin: for them homosexuality is *inherently good* ("gay power").

On a programmatic plane homosexual oppression is primarily a democratic question. Communists are opposed to all forms of discrimination and persecution of homosexuals, to all laws which

curtail sexual freedoms and implacably argue against reactionary attitudes and propaganda that portray homosexuality as "deviant" or "degenerate". Such vicious garbage, like all anti-homosexual bigotry, acts as an ideological prop for the bourgeois nuclear family. In particular we combat and expose opportunist philistines like the Healyites who parrot and glorify these bourgeois social prejudices prevailing in the working class. Such slimy opportunism is no different in its capitulation to bourgeois ideology than the Stalinist "theories" that homosexuality represents "bourgeois decadence" or "fascist perversion", theories which are used to justify the persecution of homosexuals in the deformed workers states.

Because they are not fundamentally at odds with bourgeois democracy equal rights for homosexuals could, in principle, be established completely under capitalism, eliminating most overt forms of homosexual persecution. Thus the reformist SWP's claim that the demand for "gay rights now" is inherently revolutionary (let alone the SWP strategy of a "classless", ie, class-collaborationist movement around this demand) is utterly false. But such rights, like all democratic rights under capitalism, are and always will be formal, restricted and *reversible*. Deeply ingrained sexual prejudices cannot be stamped out by parliamentary writ. Even after a generation of post-revolutionary society such

hangovers from centuries of oppression will still linger on.

However, homosexual oppression is neither a decisive class question nor is it a strategic obstacle to the proletarian revolution. Many homosexuals, like many others who suffer special oppression under capitalism, are likely to be sympathetic to the working class in its struggle to overthrow bourgeois society. But it is wrong to say, as does the SWP's "fraternal" opponent in the fake-Trotskyist "United Secretariat", the Communist League, that "*Like racism, anti-semitism and sexism, anti-homosexual prejudice serves to divide the working class and fragment its unity with oppressed groups*" (*Militant* supplement -- undated; our emphasis). For example the ineradicable link between women's oppression and the class struggle makes the construction of a communist women's movement a crucial tactic in the struggle for socialism; no such necessity or possibility exists for a communist homosexuals' movement. Women's role as wife and mother in the nuclear family plays a vital part in maintaining capitalism. And working-class women have always been used under capitalism as a vast reserve pool of labour, to be absorbed into the workforce when needed and laid off during recession and slump. The doubly oppressed status of women workers and the sexist ideology justifying it are used to attack the material conditions and combativeness of all workers. It is used by the bourgeoisie to maintain divisions between men and women workers by exploiting women's generally more backward consciousness, the result of isolation in the home and to reinforce male workers' reluctance to see women workers as comrades in struggle and to fight for their rights. Unlike women, migrants or blacks, while homosexuals are often viciously degraded and victimised as individuals, they are not an identifiable group used to divide the class; nor are they systematically set off as a group within the class.

The Socialist Homosexuals claim to "stake [their] lives on socialism". They admit that the Bolshevik Party has historically been the only

ruling party to take a principled stand on homosexual rights. Following the October Revolution, all anti-homosexual laws were immediately repealed, conscious attempts were made to emancipate women and replace the family as a social institution and the state practised total non-interference in sexual matters. But the Socialist Homosexuals do not mention the question of the revolutionary party; their own grouping is an unprincipled amalgam of members of different and opposed organisations. Their proposed "homosexual caucuses" in the unions, even if their formation could ever be seriously projected, would be nothing but pressure groups limited to fighting for homosexual rights, implying the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy can be reformed. And their line for the women's and gay movements is not socialism and class partisanship but feminism and "autonomy". In fact they want an "independent" homosexual movement to "protect" homosexuals from the revolution.

SWP rejects Trotskyism -- again

Of course the staunchest ally these fake socialists have, especially in their advocacy of "autonomous" movements, is the Socialist Workers Party. In fending off Spartacist criticism at the 19 September forum SWPers Deb Shmookal and Geoff Payne had no hesitation in throwing overboard any vestige of Trotskyist orthodoxy. According to these "best builders" of single-issue sellouts, Stalin's reversal of the historic gains for women and the re-institution of anti-homosexual laws in Russia could have been prevented -- if an "independent" women's movement had existed!

Trotsky always combated such idealist delusions, explaining that it was the economic and cultural backwardness of the nascent Russian workers state -- isolated, famine-stricken and encircled by the imperialists -- its inability to provide the material means to *replace* the family, that led to its resurrection, in "socialist" garb but with all its oppressive trappings, by the counterrevolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy. Furthermore, as Spartacist supporters pointed out to these "consistent democrats" at the forum, a mass women's movement *had* existed in Russia -- but it split along class lines in 1917, the most politically conscious and the masses of working women going over to the Bolsheviks. Where, comrades of the SWP, was this miracle-making "independent" women's movement supposed to have come from in the 1920s -- the Mensheviks? the Social Revolutionaries? the anarchists?

This insistence on independence from the class and its revolutionary vanguard represents a fear

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For a labour-student mobilisation!

Students strike against cutbacks

Students in all capital cities boycotted lectures to demonstrate their opposition to government cuts in education spending on September 30. In Melbourne 4000 students rallied in City Square, well over 1000 marched through Sydney, while 2000 protested in Adelaide and 1500 in Brisbane. The Campus Spartacist leaflet reprinted below was distributed before and during the student strike. One extra point should be noted. Leading "left" LaTrobe SRC members walked out of a September 28 strike committee meeting which voted to build the City Square rally and effectively split the strike by continuing to build their counterposed "alternative university" at LaTrobe.

The Fraser Government's move to slash expenditures in education and other social services is part of a general program of social austerity and wage-cutting designed to fatten the capitalists' coffers. What this means for students is the maintenance of TEAS (Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme) at near-starvation levels, the re-introduction of fees for second degrees, post-graduate studies and possibly overseas students and the threat to scuttle TEAS entirely. These attacks must be defeated. All students must support the national student strike called by AUS for September 30 around the demands: free tertiary education for all students, no replacement of TEAS by a loans scheme, no cuts in education spending and a living wage for all students. *All out on September 30! Smash the capitalist austerity drive!*

Student meetings at universities and colleges of advanced education (CAEs) across the country have overwhelmingly supported the strike. The thousand-strong demonstrations in Adelaide and Brisbane against the present \$32 TEAS pittance and the siege of Fraser at Monash University last month clearly show that students are willing to fight. No one should be fooled by Education Minister Carrick's attempt to head off the mobilisation with his announcement that there will be some (unspecified) increase in TEAS -- whatever it is, it is sure to be minimal. It is necessary to organise and agitate amongst students to make the strike as effective as possible and to ensure mass, militant demonstrations at the planned city rallies. On the day of the strike students must be mobilised to agitate at campus entrances and classroom buildings to ensure the widest possible support from students, staff and campus workers. It is particularly crucial to tap the social power of the labour movement by calling on all campus unions to join the strike.

Students can expect little from the AUS leadership, their new-found "militancy" notwithstanding, or from their SRC counterparts. When Spartacist Club members at LaTrobe put forward the tactics outlined above, they were opposed by the SRC, which is controlled by anarchists and supporters of the Communist Party of Australia, in favour of plans for an "alternative university" and a "strike night". The SRC bureaucrats at NSW have consistently described the strike as a "stoppage" and have failed to build the city Hyde Park rally until the last moment, instead promoting a pre-rally teach-in/seminar at the university ... with the Vice-Chancellor as guest speaker!

Until now the AUS campaign around TEAS has consisted of petitions, surveys and submissions in the hope of squeezing a few more dollars from the government -- an impotent knee-scrapping strategy epitomised by the June 2 "day of lobbying" in Canberra under the slogan "Speak to the Liberals"! With the memory of the low attendance at their poorly organised rallies around TEAS in July still fresh, the AUS executive only endorsed

the national strike call after it became clear it was gaining widespread support.

The AUS leadership's failure to mobilise an effective response to the cutbacks comes as no surprise given their stated willingness to accept any sops the government might throw them. For TEAS they have demanded -- "as an interim measure" -- implementation of the 1975 Williams Committee report, which would raise the TEAS maximum allowance to \$54 (with indexation) by March 1977. Likewise their other "interim" (real) demands include "an extension of the provisions for (TEAS) eligibility ... a rise in the cut-off point for applying the means test, a reduction of the time required to demonstrate independence" etc etc (our emphasis -- AUS Budget Action [sic] Paper No 1).

SYA panders to "student power" illusions

Despite calls for continuing action to follow the one-day strike, the strategy of the AUS bureaucrats is doomed to failure. Fraser's cutbacks, linked as they are to a generalised campaign to drive down living standards, can only be defeated by unleashing the vast social power of the organised working class. Yet, the AUS has done nothing to orient the anti-cutbacks struggle towards the labour movement.

Nor, for that matter, have the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and its youth affiliate, the Socialist Youth Alliance (SYA), whose supporters at Macquarie University initiated the strike call. Throughout their heavy involvement in the campaign around TEAS, these "socialists" have nowhere pointed out the limitations of student protest politics. On the contrary, they attempt to justify their "student power" rhetoric by claiming that students are workers -- studying, after all, is "real work" (SYA leaflet, "All Out September 30!"). This caricature of Marxism ignores the working class's distinct relationship to the mode of production and its power to shut down capitalist production and profit. Students as a group have no direct relationship to the means of production and thus "withdrawing their

labour" by missing a day's lectures has no impact on capitalist profits at all.

A socialist perspective for the universities and colleges must start with the right of all to tertiary education. Student activists must raise the demand for open admissions and the abolition of all admission requirements, the degree system and dismissals for course failures. This must be linked to demands for a TEAS allowance at least equal to the minimum wage with an automatic cost-of-living adjustment and no restrictions on eligibility and free quality child-care for students with children. The pervasive class bias of tertiary education must be combated by a struggle against class, race and sex discrimination in primary and secondary schools. And to break down the capitalist state's direct control of the campuses students must fight for student-staff-worker control of the universities and CAEs.

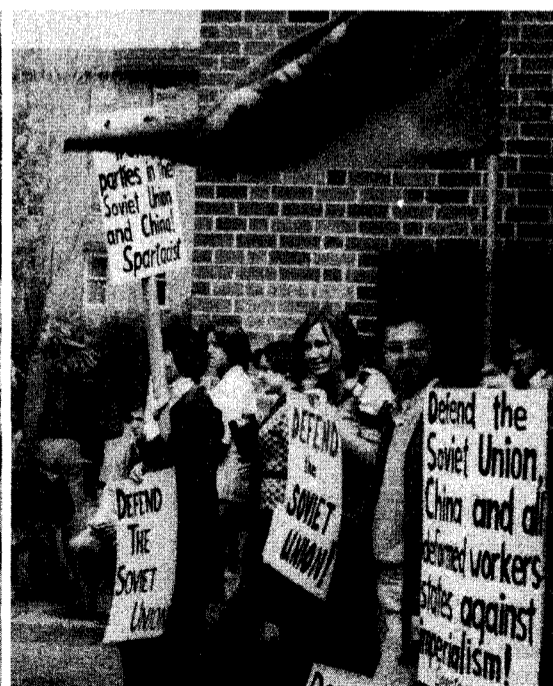
But a socialist perspective cannot be restricted to the campuses. Increasing numbers of school leavers find themselves in the ranks of the unemployed. Those who do find work realise early on that decaying capitalist society offers little opportunity to apply what is learned in colleges or universities to socially useful ends.

Even the struggle for the AUS strike demands, quite significant reforms, can only be successful if linked to the struggles of the working class against capitalism. It is wrong and criminal to pretend that fundamental reforms can be won in the narrow framework of campus politics and impotent student protests. The fight for free, quality universal education, the fight for full employment require the construction of a Leninist vanguard party which can lead a successful proletarian revolution. Class-struggle oppositions to the reformist union bureaucracies must be built to struggle for revolutionary leadership in the labour movement. Those students who wish to struggle against the conditions which cause cutbacks like the ones now being shoved down their throats by the capitalists must be won to the perspective of workers' revolution. That is the perspective of the Spartacist League. ■

Demo against Maoist anti-communism



ASp photo



ASp photo

"Down with Stalinism, Fight for Socialism" was the response of Spartacist League supporters to the rabid anti-Soviet hysterics of Maoist and right-wing students at NSW University 15 September. When the Maoist-dominated Students for Australian Independence leafleted campus for a demonstration protesting against the visit of Soviet academic Yuri Zamoshkin, the campus Spartacist Club immediately initiated a united-front counter-demonstration based on the slogans: Down with Anti-Communism! Defend the Soviet Union! The united front was joined by the Socialist Party of Australia and the Communist League and endorsed by leading members of the campus ALP Club and Communist Collective.

Conspicuous in its abstention was the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party, whose supporters stood pleading plaintively from the sidelines of the opposed demonstrations for Zamoshkin's "right to free speech". For these constitutional cretinists every question confronting the workers movement -- from defence of the Soviet de-

generated workers state to the struggle against fascism -- is reduced to one of democratic rights. Yet as the Maoists made clear (see photo above) they -- and their right-wing and Zionist friends -- were not concerned with abstract questions of free speech but with smashing the Soviet state. In explicitly refusing to solidarise with the unambiguous and unconditional military defence of the Russian workers state, the SWP once again made clear its distance from Trotskyism.

Inside Zamoshkin's lecture, it was only the Trotskyists of the Spartacist League who counterposed to Zamoshkin's feeble pleas for detente and the Maoists' pro-imperialist patriotism a proletarian strategy for defence of the Russian and Chinese workers states. Standing under the red banner of the Fourth International, an SL spokesman called: "For International Communist Unity Through Political Revolutions! For International Proletarian Revolution!"

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The myth of "Soviet social-imperialism"

Maoists front for imperialism

Radical youth recruited to Maoism a decade ago were the most ardent worshippers of "Third-World" anti-imperialist movements like the Angolan MPLA and the Latin American Guevarists. By last year, those who remained loyal to Mao found themselves cheering on the racist murderers of their erstwhile heroes in Angola as China collaborated directly and openly in an anti-Soviet military alliance with Pretoria and the Pentagon. How has Mao-thought led professed Leninists, like supporters of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) (CPA(M-L)), to routinely burn the red banner of the revolution Lenin led while lauding the anti-communist jingoism of a reactionary bourgeois politician like Malcolm Fraser?

The CPA(M-L) justifies its actions with an "analysis" noteworthy only for its anti-Marxist shallowness and dishonesty. CPA(M-L) Chairman E F Hill's recent book, *Imperialism in Australia -- The Menace of Soviet Social-Imperialism*, purports to demonstrate how the Soviet Union was transformed from a bastion of full-fledged "socialism" under Stalin to the most dangerous, "dark fascist", imperialist superpower on earth after his death. But it does not even attempt to analyse the class nature of the Soviet economy as capitalist, much less explain why the supposed restoration of capitalism in the world's first workers state went unnoticed by the world bourgeoisie, not to mention the Russian proletariat. Nor can Hill demonstrate a qualitative difference in Soviet policies before and after the "counter-revolution".

The focus of Peking/Hill's myth is the 1956 Twentieth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (CPSU). There Khrushchev and his clique of "capitalist roaders" (all Stalin's henchmen), having waited for Stalin to die, allegedly declared a "programme for the rebuilding of capitalism in the Soviet Union and ... for Soviet social-imperialism". But Khrushchev's "programme" of peaceful coexistence between the USSR and the imperialist powers -- now labelled "detente" -- and a peaceful, electoral road to socialism for the capitalist world scarcely differed from orthodox Stalinthought. Hill admits that even the "Marxist-Leninists" were not "clear exactly" how "sinister" an event they were witnessing. After all the Chinese had just promulgated their own "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" a year earlier at Bandung!

The Chinese Communist Party has never been concerned with the fundamentally anti-Leninist character of Khrushchev's "peaceful road to socialism". Attacking quite correctly Moscow's treachery in advocating a peaceful transition through Allende's Unidad Popular in Chile, Hill conveniently forgets to mention that Peking itself endorsed Allende's "gradual", "step by step" road to disaster (in a 3 February 1973 letter from Chou En-lai to Allende quoted in *Chile Hoy*, 3-9 August 1973). And the Maoist thesis that capitalism can be peacefully restored through ideological manoeuvres by "capitalist roaders" within the ruling party is simply a "peaceful transition" in reverse, permeated by the notion that the state need not be physically smashed in order to effect a change in class rule.

The Maoists' belated polemics against the line of the Twentieth CPSU Congress were rather a necessary and convenient ideological cover to defend the Chinese bureaucracy's own pursuit of "socialism in one country", especially when its narrow nationalistic interests began to conflict with those of the neighbouring Russian bureaucracy.

Mao's peaceful road to Washington

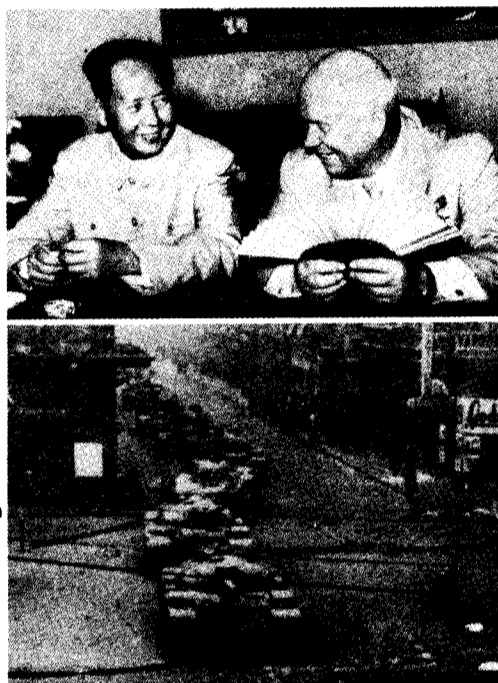
By the mid-fifties, US imperialism had reconciled itself to the Soviet Union's continued existence (based in no small measure on Russia's development of the hydrogen bomb). At the same time it maintained an implacable hostility to the more isolated and militarily weaker Chinese workers state. The Russians, in turn, favoured a thaw in the cold war so they could concentrate on raising the standard of living of the disgruntled Russian masses -- Khrushchev's "goulash communism" was an apprehensive response to the anti-bureaucratic uprisings in Eastern Europe. Thus the greater verbal militancy of the Chinese vis-a-vis US imperialism was a product of circumstances, not principle, for during the same period the Chinese were promiscuously prone to detente with any bourgeoisie which was willing.

Though increasingly impatient with Moscow's foot-dragging in strengthening China's economic and military security, Mao continued to acknowledge the Soviet Union as "head" of the "Social-

ist camp" (quoted in David Horowitz, *Imperialism and Revolution*, p 211) as late as November 1957 (more than a year after Khrushchev had supposedly restored capitalism!). When Peking faltered in its trade commitments to Russia and demanded increased aid to cope with the disastrous consequences of the "Great Leap Forward" and assistance to develop its own nuclear capacity in 1960, Khrushchev's criminal response was to slash Soviet trade and withdraw all Soviet technicians from China. Moscow widened the now open rift two years later by maintaining arms shipments to the "anti-imperialist" Nehru regime while Indian troops were shooting down Chinese soldiers in a border war.

In response to the 1965 US escalation in Vietnam, a section of the Chinese bureaucracy (Peng Chen, the armed forces chief of staff Lo Jui-ching) pressed for improved relations with Khrushchev's successors in Moscow, Brezhnev and

Mao with "imperialist" Khrushchev (1958) two years after Mao backed Russian suppression of Hungarian workers' uprising.



Kosygin, to undertake joint military action in support of the Vietnamese. Mao decisively rejected any move towards rapprochement, maintaining de facto military neutrality during the Vietnam War and scarcely (and sometimes not at all) permitting the USSR to send military aid via Chinese territory. China assured the imperialists that it would "never take any united action with the new leaders of the Soviet party" (*Red Flag*, 10 February 1966).

It was only in 1968, with continuing Sino-Soviet military encounters along the Siberian border following the brutal Russian suppression of Czechoslovakia's "independent" stance that Peking apprehensively declared the Soviet Union had "long since" passed into the camp of "social-imperialism and social-fascism" (*Peking Review*, 26 August 1968). In denouncing the Russians for overturning the "soft"-Stalinist Dubcek regime, Peking let the imperialists know that it was more committed to lining up with any anti-Russian tendency than to maintaining an orthodox hard-Stalinist stance.

Simultaneously the US bourgeoisie was coming to realise that the main strategic military obstacle to its imperialist rapacity was the Soviet Union, not Peking's empty threats of world-wide "people's war". It was clear that the existence of Castro's Cuba a mere ninety miles from Florida and the military successes of the Vietnamese were, in the final analysis, based on the strength of the USSR. The stage was set for a US-China "detente".

By 1971, Peking had modified its call for a "Third World" united front against US imperialism to one against the "two superpowers" (*Red Flag*, August 1971). Short months after welcoming arch anti-communist and mass murderer Richard Nixon to Peking with champagne and open arms, as American bombs rained down upon Hanoi, Mao notified his sycophants of the new line: Soviet Russia was now "more dangerous" than "old-line imperialist countries" (*Peking Review*, 6 October 1972) ... like the US!

Defend the gains of October!

Maoist epithets notwithstanding, the economy of the Soviet Union, like China and the other deformed workers states, is based on proletarian property forms characterised by centralised state planning and the nationalisation of all means of production. Investment is based on parameters set by the plan, not on capitalist competition for the highest rate of profit return. While

imperialist countries are driven to export capital overseas to maximise profit rates, for the Soviet Union overseas investment is a drain on resources available to the planned economy.

The paltry \$18 million invested in Australian real estate by the Moscow Narodny Bank which so scandalises the CPA(M-L) and other such instances are completely peripheral to the Russian economy. Soviet arms sales and loans (at interest rates arbitrarily fixed below world capitalist standards) to countries like Egypt and India are politically motivated attempts -- ultimately unsuccessful -- to buy the "neutrality" of these small-time bourgeois regimes. They are no more imperialist ventures than Chinese financial assistance or arms aid to Pakistan, Ceylon and even Pinochet's Chile. In both cases, they represent the bureaucracies' bankrupt alternative to spreading the revolution internationally.

Hill describes the East European countries as "colonies or semi-colonies" of "Soviet social-imperialism". Military domination and mutual self-protection against capitalism, not imperialist exploitation (at least, according to Lenin's definition of imperialism) are, however, the essential features of Russia's relationship with Eastern Europe. Brezhnev/Kosygin's strategy of filling the Warsaw Pact countries with Russian tanks and troops is no different in motivation than Stalin's dismantling of factories and plunder of capital from these countries after World War II -- the aim was and is to protect and reinforce Russia's "socialism in one country". COMECON, the Soviet/East European economic bloc, is primarily an inadequate attempt to protect the less productive economies of the deformed workers states from being undercut by cheaper capitalist goods through mutually guaranteed trade commitments.

Hill also applauds the "resistance" of countries like Albania, Rumania and Yugoslavia to Soviet "colonial" domination, again conveniently forgetting that Yugoslavia broke from Stalin's Russia, not Khrushchev's, and that Mao denounced Tito for it! And he completely ignores the Hungarian workers' uprising in 1956 -- because Mao enthusiastically supported the "capitalist" Khrushchev in crushing that struggle for soviet democracy.

Maoist guerrillas sacrificed for China's "detente"

Peking is today pursuing a conscious, if perverse, recapitulation of Stalin's alliance with Britain, France and the US against the "more dangerous" imperialisms of Germany and Japan during World War II. To cement their "united front against fascism" during the war years, Stalinists in the countries allied with Russia acted as the most loyal, jingoistic lieutenants of their respective capitalists in suppressing independent working-class action. Mao's own continuing readiness to "compromise" was demonstrated most recently when Peking granted Filipino dictator Marcos freedom "to deal with any insurgency, subversion or rebellion" (quoted in *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 11 July 1975) in return for a treaty. Two months ago, the bourgeois press gleefully reported that Marcos' troops had captured the top leadership of the Maoist Communist Party/New People's Army, thereby decapitating the guerrilla movement.

Continued on page six

Reply to the Guardian

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Mao . . .

Continued from page one

Those who claim that Mao was not a Stalinist bureaucrat but a genuine, if flawed, revolutionary usually appeal to three arguments: Mao in 1949 led a popular revolution which resulted in the overthrow of capitalism; around 1960 he broke with the Kremlin and denounced its leaders as "revisionists"; in 1967 he mobilised the students and youth under the banner of combating bureaucracy.

The overthrow of capitalism by Mao's peasant armies was indeed a progressive event of great historic import which wrenched the Chinese masses free from capitalist exploitation and imperialist domination. We therefore give unconditional military support to the Chinese deformed workers state against imperialism and internal counter-revolution, despite the absence of soviet democracy, the suppression of any independent workers' organisation and the Mao regime's counterrevolutionary foreign policy.

But the progressive nature of the Chinese revolution and the class character of the Chinese state do not make Mao a revolutionary. He was a treacherous Stalinist bureaucrat balancing between the Chinese masses and imperialism. His narrow nationalistic policies were an obstacle to the consolidation of the Chinese revolution and its international extension.

Throughout his political life, both before and after the taking of state power, Mao was a practitioner of Stalinist class collaboration. In January 1946 the Maoists concluded an agreement with Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang which guaranteed the Kuomintang control of a coalition government and absolute military superiority over the Communist forces. Only Chiang's intransigent hostility to any collaboration with the Communists and his commitment to their total annihilation compelled the Chinese Stalinists to take power in 1949 in order to accomplish their simple physical survival.

In assessing Mao's role in the world Stalinist movement, it is useful to compare him with Yugoslavia's patriarch, Tito. Like Mao, under the conditions created by the second imperialist world war, Tito led a guerrilla army to power, defeating not only Hitler's occupying army but the equally bloodthirsty nationalists of the Serbian Chetniks and Croatian Ustashi. Like Mao's China, Tito's Yugoslavia broke with Kremlin domination and aligned itself diplomatically with US imperialism. For nearly 30 years, Tito has governed Yugoslavia in the spirit of narrow nationalist parochialism, carefully manoeuvring between Washington and Moscow. But Mao's own break with Moscow, motivated by essentially similar considerations of nationalist Stalinist policy, was masked by rhetorical appeals to the authority of Lenin and bombastic denunciations of Khrushchevite "revisionism".

In one sense, Mao's longevity is of service to the revolutionary (Trotskyist) movement. Had Mao died around 1970, before consummating his alliance with US imperialism, the myth that he had ever been a revolutionary communist would have been far harder to debunk.

Mao's "anti-bureaucratic" stance is equally spurious. The Maoist regime, which fully displayed the personality cultism and totalitarian suppression of criticism from below which are hallmarks of Stalinism, is the antithesis of soviet democracy, which means the determination of government policy and leadership by the organised workers and poor peasants.

The "Cultural Revolution" of 1967 was an intra-bureaucratic struggle, in which the decisive pro-Maoist force was the People's Liberation Army of the late Lin Piao. The Red Guard youth were cynically exploited through the demagoguery of Mao's circle. When in 1968 the Red Guards were no longer useful to the Mao clique, and some were getting out of hand, Mao had them violently suppressed. At the same time, conservative officeholders, under attack by the Red

Guards, were often able to mobilise workers who feared the Maoist austerity program (for example, in the Shanghai general strike of January 1967).

The perpetual and frequently violent inner-party strife which has wracked China since the "Hundred Flowers" campaign of 20 years ago testifies to the brittleness of the Maoist regime. Mao's personal bonapartism, bolstered by a quasi-religious personality cult, has been key to maintaining the shaky unity of the clique and faction-ridden party, army and government hierarchies.

Everyone now anticipates tremendous political turmoil. It is reported that -- after the successive deaths of Chou En-lai and Chu Teh, the riot in central Peking by supporters of the beleaguered officeholder Teng Hsiao-p'ing, followed by cataclysmic earthquakes -- people in China are now saying that the "mandate of heaven" has been withdrawn from the Maoist dynasty.

In the political convulsions which lie ahead, the working class must not simply act as cat's-paws for one or another bureaucratic faction or clique. The mission of the Chinese proletariat is to oust the parasitic bureaucrats who are the obstacle to working-class political power, exercised through the democratic rule of soviets. It is with the aim of leading this anti-bureaucratic political revolution that a Chinese Trotskyist party must be forged.■

Homosexual . . .

Continued from page three

of the proletarian revolution. In its distrust of proletarian power it accepts the bourgeois and reformist assumptions that the prejudices and social backwardness foisted on the working class by bourgeois ideology are in fact innate. Marxists must struggle to root out that false and corrupting ideology. As Lenin repeatedly hammered home against the Economists of the early 1900s: the proletariat must be trained in all-sided political activity and won to a consciousness of itself as vanguard fighter for all the oppressed. The revolutionary party, as "tribune of the people", must fight against all manifestations of bourgeois ideology and prejudice, in practice demonstrating that the working class has a material interest in fighting for a society in which exploitation and oppression will be eliminated.

Beyond the victory of the international proletariat there are no guarantees of liberation for the oppressed. Only in the struggle to build a Trotskyist vanguard party can the program and consciousness capable both of leading a successful socialist revolution and of defending it be forged. The place for communist homosexuals is in that struggle, not in an "independent" "socialist homosexual" movement.■

Maoists . . .

Continued from page five

Stalinist cadre during World War II could at least rationalise their treachery in the name of fighting Nazism, a particularly repulsive ex-crescence of capitalist decay. What consolation do today's Maoists have when they abandon the courageous Omani guerrilla fighters for a bloc with the notoriously reactionary Shah of Iran? Or when they betray the black masses of Angola for an alliance with the racist police state of South Africa? Or when they sell out their Filipino comrades for a deal with dictator Marcos? All in the name of crushing the Russian workers state!

Sharpening rivalries between capitalist states are once again laying the basis for a world war to redivide the world into imperialist spheres of influence. US imperialism, its reactionary allies and puppets are intent on destroying the Soviet Union not to defeat "Brezhnevite revisionism" but to obliterate the threat of the non-capitalist states and to regain the vast markets and territories to which they are now denied access. A military defeat of the Soviet Union would rapidly be followed by an imperialist re-occupation of China, Vietnam and the other anti-capitalist countries. By providing a "left" nationalist cover for popular anti-communism Hill's book, like the CPA(M-L)'s endless hosiannas to "the stand taken by Fraser against the expansion of the Soviet Union", directly assists the imperialists in their strategy of conquest.

The Sino-Soviet states must be defended unconditionally against imperialist attacks. The necessary international communist unity to preserve and extend the proletariat's gains cannot be forged by the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies. These betrayers must be ousted through working-class political revolutions. That is a task which awaits the rebirth of the Fourth International.■

Usec . . .

Continued from page eight

to renounce "labels" (such as "Fourth International") if ever they should get in the way.

That a split is an accomplished fact in all but name was demonstrated at last month's SWP national convention, as the byplay of mutual provocation reached ludicrous proportions. Again this year the SWP had smugly disregarded the facade of Usec "democratic centralism" by inviting the OCI (and, this year, also Lutte Ouvriere) to attend. The leadership of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR) reacted to this affront by announcing a boycott of the convention and threatening dire consequences for any LCR member who attended in defiance of the boycott. Apparently intimidated, the LCR members at the SWP convention did not attend the sessions. Uninitiated observers must have been quite flabbergasted at the spectacle of French comrades who had journeyed all the way to Oberlin, Ohio, presumably for the sole purpose of playing frisbee and sunbathing on the lawn outside!

The timing and pretexts of an open break, however, are anyone's guess and depend in good measure upon the imminence of prospective realignments with extra-Usec forces. Ultimately the allure of new marriages of convenience will become irresistible, but there are advantages to postponing a formal separation. The components which constitute the main power blocs are themselves markedly unstable and hostility to a common antagonist has played no small part in keeping them stuck together.

An important indicator of the lack of unity in the IMT is the proliferation of factionalism within important sections. There were no less than five tendencies within the British IMG at the time of its congress last May. At present, shortly after the opening of a discussion period preparatory to the upcoming LCR congress, there are three declared tendencies, while the "majority" (which has not yet formed a tendency) is itself split into three major groupings.

USEC PST splits from LTF


The LTF has gone beyond disunity, with the Argentine PST carrying out an all-sided campaign to isolate its former ally, the SWP. In the Mexican section last year, the forces backed by the PST carried out a spectacular Stalin-style purge of the SWP supporters in order to pursue unhindered its policy of sucking up to the Stalinist Communist Party. The pro-PST group thereupon entered into a popular-frontist formation whose political basis included an explicit affirmation of "peaceful coexistence". In line with the political rapprochement of the PST with the IMT over Portugal and Angola, a fusion between the PST and IMT groups in Mexico has been announced in *Inprecor*.

There is also some dickerings about a fusion between the corresponding organizations in Portugal, although the pro-PST PRT (whose slogan was a Soares government) is the most right-wing of the three Usec groups there, while the highly unstable pro-IMT LCI occasionally takes positions somewhat to the left of its international backers. After the debacle of its ill-prepared attempt to run its own candidate in the June 1976 presidential elections, the LCI gave critical support to the Stalinists but on the day before the elections announced it was not supporting any candidate. Characteristic of the political confusion reigning in Usec majorityite sections, three separate lines on the Portuguese elections emerged within the IMT's star section, the French LCR, but the Portuguese group's final position corresponded to none of them.

The vicarious petty-bourgeois guerrillaism of the Europeans, which first drove the ultra-respectable SWP into opposition, has been largely supplanted by another hoped-for short-cut to the "big time": centrist umbrella-groups of the so-called "broad vanguard" in which the IMT can practice the old Pabloist strategy of "entrism sui generis". The political basis of such "re-groupments" is the shared centrist appetite to

correction

The box on the Kerr demonstration in last month's *ASP* (no 35) failed to explain the photo depicting the banner: "US bosses get out, Russian bosses stay out, independence for Australia". This banner was of course carried by the self-confessed "patriots" of the Maoist-dominated Students for Australian Independence, a group dedicated to the whipping up of national chauvinism and anti-Soviet hysteria in their never-ending search for a bloc with the "patriotic", "anti-imperialist" Australian bourgeoisie.



**CHINA'S
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function as the tail of the popular fronts of the future.

In the 1930s, with the intensification of the level of class struggle and Stalin's abandonment of "third period" ultra-leftism in favor of popular frontism, many self-proclaimed partisans of Trotsky also moved to the right. Their capitulations took many forms -- from the French Trotskyists' temporary use of the slogan "for a fighting popular front" to the Vietnamese Trotskyists' long-term bloc with the Stalinists, which included publication of a joint newspaper. The most infamous example, however, was the fusion of Nin's Communist Left with Maurin's Workers and Peasants Bloc to form the POUM. Trotsky's sharp denunciations of this centrist regroupment were definitively confirmed when the POUM entered the bourgeois popular-front government of Catalonia in 1936.

In the recent period, sharp outbursts of working-class militancy have again given rise to renewed attempts by the bourgeoisie and the Stalinists to contain the workers by new popular fronts: the Allende government in Chile, the succession of Portuguese military governments following April 1974, the French Union of the Left, the Italian Stalinists' "historic compromise". The question of popular frontism has again become, as Trotsky put it some 40 years ago, the dividing line between bolshevism and menshevism.

The logic of the class struggle is relentless. The USec's 1970 refusal to characterize the Allende coalition as bourgeois signalled the appetite for participation in popular-front formations (and lies behind its continuing inability to draw a balance sheet on Chile). In the summer of 1975 the inauguration of the Portuguese FUR, with the stamp of approval of the MFA, offered the USec an opportunity to get in on the act. Welcoming this class-collaborationist bloc between the "far-left" groups and the left wing of the bourgeois officer corps, the IMT's LCI went so far as to endorse the FUR's program of political confidence in the bourgeois MFA (capitalist "austerity", military control of the organs of "people's power", etc).

At the time of the Italian elections last June, Livio Maitan's Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari (GCR) managed by the skin of its teeth to get into the Democrazia Proletaria (DP) slate. The French LCR waged a vigorously uncritical campaign for the DP slate, holding it up as a model of the appropriate way to "go beyond sectarian traditions" (*Rouge*, 19 June). The IMT, which maintains cozy relations with the "critical Maoist" Lotta Continua and lauds it in much the same manner that it used to suck up to the Chilean MIR, has followed Maitan in his adoption of the centrists' slogan of a "government of the lefts" -- a formulation deliberately left open to eventual bourgeois participation -- and Alain Krivine did not rule out participation in such a government in a prominent interview (*Politique Hebdo*, 10 June).

The GCR is aiming higher than an electoral bloc, and longs to turn the DP conglomeration into a new "revolutionary" organization. The GCR has called for the continuation of DP as an on-going formation in which to debate "the fundamental matrix of problems of a revolutionary strategy in developed capitalist countries" (*Bandiera Rossa*, 5 July).

For 25 years, Maitan has been the vanguard of Pabloist capitulation, but Alain Krivine and his LCR are not far behind. The LCR's December 1974 congress set forth a perspective of a fusion with the left-social-democratic Parti Socialiste Unifie (PSU) to form a "common revolutionary organization based ... on a practice which sets aside any sectarian spirit" (*Rouge*, 27 December 1974). A more recent display of the same "spirit" was Mandel's offer to abandon any reference to Trotskyism "in 24 hours" to placate queasy left-reformists.

The LCR leadership has now made its main practical perspective the formation of joint elec-

toral lists with the PSU for the 1977 local elections, prefiguring legislative elections in 1978. Recent polls indicate that if a general election were held today, the Union of the Left would obtain a majority. Accordingly, the LCR-PSU pact is based on voting for the Union of the Left at least on the second round. When a local by-election was scheduled in Avignon for September 12, "the LCR took the initiative of discussing with the PSU the possibilities of presenting a common candidate." An electoral bloc today, a common organization tomorrow, hopes the LCR, which termed the Avignon agreement a "test" which "takes on national importance" (*Rouge*, 31 August).

It is poetic justice that the USec revisionists who for years have howled that the charge of "Pabloism" was a meaningless label (after all, they and Pablo himself parted company in 1965) now find themselves negotiating with Pablo, *eminentia grise* of the PSU left wing and personification of the strata with which the USec is trying to regroup. Mandel's pooh-poohing of "labels" recapitulates Pablo's abandonment of those "labels" some four years ago and coincides



Michel Pablo: leading figure of revisionist current that destroyed the Fourth International in 1952-3.

with sentiment of some elements within the LCR that references to Leninism are too "authoritarian" or "sectarian"!

A letter from Pablo to Mandel on February 11 referred to a meeting at which the two "shared" an "assessment of the European situation". Pablo noted that "the LCR ... approached the PSU with a request to open discussion with a view to possible unification, a perspective we support." But he cautioned:

"However, we see this eventual unification in the framework of a new organization that would not at the outset be part of any international formation, but would admit tendencies supporting the idea of joining one or another international organization at the proper time."

A few months later Mandel obligingly proclaimed his willingness to drop the "label" of "Fourth International".

There is no Trotskyist pole in the USec. The SWP's polemics against the IMT's popular frontism and capitulation to Stalinism are simply an "orthodox" cover for opposition from the right, in the direction of liberalism, as shown by its defense of the "right of free speech" for fascists and its calls for using the imperialist American army to "protect the rights" of US blacks (would the LCR call on the French army to protect Algerians in Marseilles?). In the bewildering array of eclectic opposition groups in the USec none offers a political opposition to the capitulationist and maneuverist methods which have thus far kept the USec pasted together. Only a consistent struggle to defeat Pabloist revisionism can generate a programmatically centered, authentically Trotskyist alternative. ■

(reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 126, 24 September 1976)

From Pablo with love

"Sous Le Drapeau du Socialisme"
Revue de la Tendance Marxiste
Revolutionnaire Internationale
Paris, February 11, 1976

Dear Comrade Ernest [Mandel],

We are confirming in writing for your convenience the main points we discussed in Brussels.

Proceeding from our evaluation of the present conjuncture in Europe, we stressed the need to build united revolutionary Marxist organizations in time that have a serious mass base and are armed with a transitional program that is correct also in relation to the traditional Socialist and Communist mass organizations. This task is particularly urgent in countries such as Portugal, Spain, Italy, France and Greece. We stressed our assessment -- which we believe you share -- of the European situation, where for the first time in a long while, real possibilities are shaping up for revolutionary openings that could lead to the victory of the socialist revolution. We mentioned the case of France, where there is at present the PSU on one hand and on the other the LCR, which approached the PSU with a request to open discussions with a view to possible unification, a perspective we support.

However, we see this eventual unification in the framework of a new organization that would not at the outset be part of any international formation, but would admit tendencies supporting the idea of joining one or another international organization at the proper time. This point, it seems to us, is essential to really clearing the way for both discussions about unification, and unification itself. Looking at it realistically, we cannot in the short run succeed in building an organization that would be revolutionary Marxist in its entire program. Rather, what is possible are organizations rapidly evolving toward such a program, especially in the context of an objective situation favorable to such an evolution.

We believe that the conditions of long-term crisis of European capitalism in particular favor such a perspective. Therefore, we insisted that questions of principle of an organizational character that would obstruct the discussion and unification should not be raised, if our common goal remains creating in time substantial united organizations of the type to which we refer.

If we take the revolutionary perspectives in Europe seriously as well as the Portuguese experience, which was disastrous from the point of view of the state of preparation of the revolutionary left, we must lose no time in seizing the opportunities for such a regroupment in various European countries, beginning with France.

We also stressed our more general interest in the development of the Fourth International, from which we were so rashly expelled in 1965, and on the way the crisis within its ranks is evolving.

We emphasized that on important questions of assessing situations and of tactics, we feel ourselves to be closer to the tendency known as "European" but that we have no intention whatsoever of exploiting your internal differences, hoping rather that the Fourth International as a whole will come to correct positions. We repeat: our approach at this stage is conditioned by the urgency of the objective situation in Europe.

We have also stated that we are prepared as an international tendency -- over and above more exhaustive and deepgoing discussions about forming revolutionary Marxist tendencies with a serious mass base everywhere -- to consider all forms of practical collaboration among forces that are converging ideologically, without raising any prior conditions of "principle".

We hope that the contact begun in Brussels will be continued, even if for the time being it is only at the level of joint practical work as in the campaign we are conducting through the Russell Foundation Committee for the freedom of Portuguese prisoners, support to Angola and Mozambique, etc....

With fraternal greetings,
Michel Pablo

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Two, three, many splits?

USec on the brink

As the "United" Secretariat (USec) begins preparations for its Eleventh World Congress, the hostilities between its components are increasingly bitter and the smoke in the back rooms increasingly thick. Proposals to reunify split national sections persist at the same time that new splits testify to the inability of the counterposed tendencies to peacefully coexist in the same country. Bizarre organizational provocations alternate with rotten compromises while multi-sided nationally-limited factional polarizations proliferate within particular sections. Conflicting opportunist appetites toward mutually exclusive "regroupments" with forces outside the USec continue to pull this international rotten bloc apart.

The USec's Tenth World Congress (February 1974) had resulted in a stalemate between two main blocs of roughly equal size. The centrist

defending leadership was composed centrally of the Europeans (Ernest Mandel, Pierre Frank, Livio Maitan) who had been Michel Pablo's seconds in the 1950-53 split which organizationally destroyed the Fourth International. The reformist minority was based on the American Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Argentine Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST). Numerous national sections had already split between supporters of the main power blocs and the outcome of the Tenth Congress was an organizational deal aimed at preserving the USec's scotch-tape "unity".

The pre-revolutionary situation in Portugal beginning in May 1974 confronted the fragile USec bloc with a flat contradiction of political appetites. The European-based International Majority Tendency (IMT) shamelessly tailed after the "progressive" military and the Stalinists while the

SWP-dominated Leninist-Trotskyist Faction (LTF) embraced the CIA-funded Socialists of Mario Soares as the wave of the future. If strong USec groups adhering to the lines of their international brain trusters had existed in Portugal in the summer of 1975, they would literally have found themselves on opposite sides of the barricades.

Both sides apparently realized that even their limitless penchant for organizational horse trading could not guarantee the USec more than a very limited life expectancy, while a clear power struggle would undermine the stability of the respective blocs. This fundamentally sensible assessment was followed by a series of maneuvers which included byzantine machinations over finances and factional representation. Following the Tenth Congress the IMT launched a semi-factional public paper, *Inprecor*, to counter the SWP's publication of its and its co-thinkers' factional documents in *Intercontinental Press*.

More important, both sides apparently resolved that diplomatic considerations should not impede the attempted expansion of their blocs through rapprochements with forces outside the USec. The SWP flaunted its growing affinity for the French Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI) while IMT luminary Mandel proclaimed willingness

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Joseph Hansen.



European IMT leaders: Alain Krivine, Ernest Mandel and Tariq Ali.

Defend Greek militants!

Karamanlis regime prosecutes 14 for May 25 anti-labor law protest

The upcoming trial of 14 leftist militants in Greece at the end of September must be protested by socialists, trade unionists and defenders of democratic liberties throughout the world. The accused, almost all supporters of Maoist and ostensibly Trotskyist organizations, are facing frame-up charges by the reactionary Karamanlis government, which accuses them of "moral responsibility" for the massive strikes and anti-government demonstrations which occurred in Athens and elsewhere in Greece last May 25.

... [The] "Committee Against the Prosecution of Organizations and Militants for the Events of May 25" ... composed of the ostensibly Trotskyist KEM (Communist Front), the Maoist KO "Machitis" ("Militant"), the OKDE (Greek section of the United Secretariat) and the OPA (Group for a Proletarian Left) [has issued an international appeal for protest and solidarity against the trials]. In addition, several other left organizations in Greece, including the Ergatiki Protoporia (Workers Vanguard) group, have sponsored rallies and meetings in defense of the victims of this outrageous police frame-up.

The May 25 events were touched off by the passage of Bill 330/76, a vicious anti-labor act which, in effect, outlawed all strikes not authorized by the government-controlled GSEE (General Confederation of Labor of Greece). This law is part of the systematic attack which the Karamanlis regime has waged against the Greek working

class since coming to power, with the blessings of the general staff of the Greek armed forces and of US imperialism, in July 1974. In the few months since 330/76 has been on the books, it has provoked numerous 24 to 48-hour protest strikes and has served as an excuse for the firing of many militant workers.

The government's charge of "moral responsibility" flows from its attempt to depict the May 25 events as the work of a handful of provocateurs, a view which is shared by the Greek Communist Party. In contrast, we wrote at the time, "whether or not provocateurs were present, the demonstration became a massive expression of militant opposition to this latest outrage [the anti-strike bill] of the Karamanlis government" ("Workers Battle Cop Attackers in the Streets of Athens", *Workers Vanguard* no 112, 4 June 1976).

Efforts to rally support for the imprisoned militants have been met with massive brutality on the part of the government. One militant caught distributing the leaflets of the defense committee was reportedly sentenced to 16 months' imprisonment. Defense rallies have been harassed by the police, and Committee members arrested and tortured.

On July 28, at an outdoor rally in Omonoia Square in Athens, the police attempted to arrest a Committee member, as they had done on two previous days. But on this occasion, some 150 workers and students encircled the cops and helped the Committee member to escape. Upon nabbing a second Committee supporter, the police decided not to take chances -- this time they locked him up in a nearby store and called in 15 reinforcements to help with the arrest, but they were still unable to take him in. In response to appeals by the Committee, some 300 passers-by surrounded the store, chanting: "Down with Karamanlis terrorism!" and "Hands off the militants!" Only when 50 additional club-wielding cops ar-

rived on the scene was the meeting finally broken up and the Committee member taken to the police station, where he was subjected to brutal mistreatment and charged with "abusing the authorities" (*Ergatiki Pali*, 31 July).

The prosecution of these 14 militants on trumped-up charges of "moral responsibility" poses a grave threat to left and labor militants, who are the government's primary target, and to democratic rights for all. A broad-based defense campaign must therefore be waged to *drop* the charges against the militants and to *abolish* the police-state laws on which they are based!

Hands Off the Left Militants!
Down with Anti-Labor Laws!
Down with Karamanlis -- For a Workers and Peasants Government in Greece!
(reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 126, 24 September 1976)



Police arrest striker during May 25 riots in Athens.

Solidarity messages and cheques should be addressed to:

Giannis Felekis
Ergatiki Pali
Themistocleous St. 38
Athens, Greece.

With mention: "For the Committee"