



## The Labor Govt crisis and the slump

# Reformism in panic

The Labor Government crisis, brought to a head by the ALP's decisive electoral defeat in the Bass by-election in June and the Great Overseas Loan Scandal, is a direct manifestation of the complete bankruptcy of reformism confronted with the capitalist recession. The loan scandal itself is only a by-product, inflated by the demagoguery of the bosses' direct agents in the Federal Opposition. In spite of the melodrama, the government crisis represents a consolidation of developments long since set in train by the economic recession rather than a fundamental change either in the orientation of the Labor Government or in the general relation of class forces.

The ALP tops panicked when, in the by-election for the formerly strong Labor seat of Bass, there was a substantial swing away from Labor not confined to the middle classes but also among workers dissatisfied by inflation, retrenchments, and Whitlam's wage freeze policies. The Labor Party in the South Australian state elections which immediately followed the Bass by-election managed to retain office narrowly -- only by renouncing the Federal Government. Desperate to regain electoral support Whitlam has acted to tear the conciliatory mask from his government and to claim for himself the role of "tough" disciplinarian of the working class. But far from preventing electoral defeat he will only further alienate his working-class support. Indeed Whitlam will not in this way even regain support from the capitalist class, as on the whole it does not find the ALP useful as an *open* disciplinarian because as such the ALP reformists stand exposed before the proletariat, destroying their ability to contain the class struggle. For the bourgeoisie, a Liberal government is more practical when the ALP is no longer able, or no longer needed, to sufficiently restrain the working class.

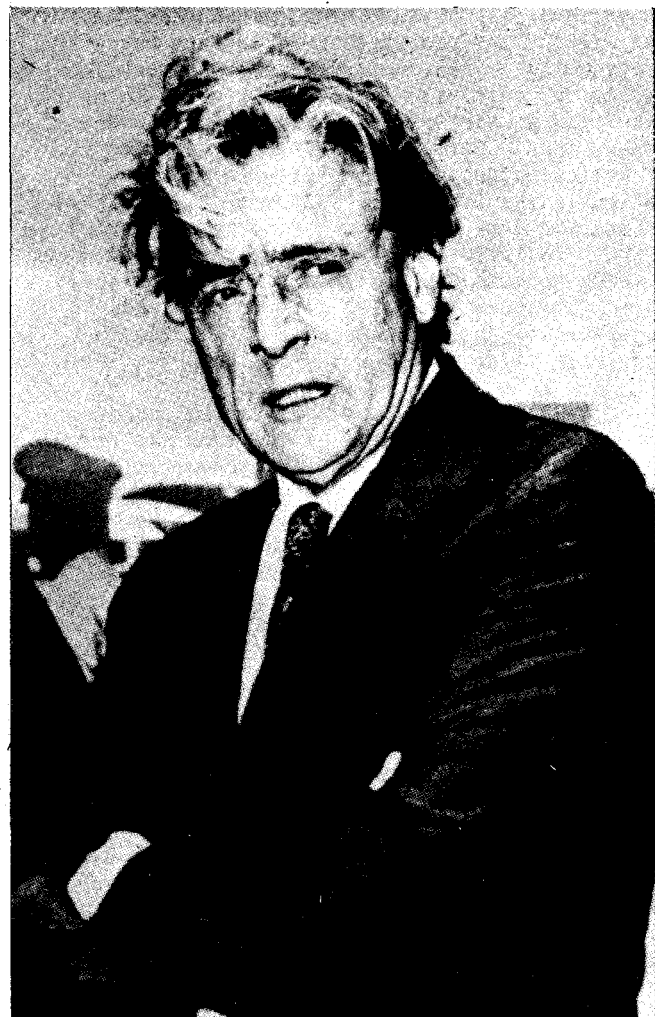
The loans affair was strictly a sideshow. The ALP's "unorthodox" methods for raising finance overseas were attacked on the essential grounds (despite the rhetoric and suggestions of venal corruption) of simple governmental incompetence. Out of all the overblown controversy only two substantive issues are raised: (1) What is the political character of the loans operation? (2) Why was Cairns sacked? What is the

significance of his dismissal, and of the two rounds of Cabinet reshuffling which have taken place?

Cabinet was after the Arab money, it seems, as a reformist gimmick, summed up in the slogan of "buying back the farm". Connor's pet nationalist schemes for buying out foreign interests in Australian raw materials, with the broad aim of reducing foreign capital investment and increasing Australian "self-reliance", are simply crackpot schemes for national economic autarchy demagogically exploited by Whitlam, and are no answer whatever to the problems of Australian workers, the victims not of foreign investment *per se* but of the capitalist system as a whole. National economic self-sufficiency is a utopia for *any* country in the modern capitalist world, even for the United States, the most powerful imperialist nation. The irrationality, the sacrifice of workers' lives and needs to capitalist profits, foreign and domestic, can only be overcome by the *expropriation* of *all* the big capitalist enterprises, to be run under workers' control and according to a *central economic plan* with priorities determined by the working class and oppressed through workers' councils. Economic planning on an *international* scale is necessary for any planned economy to lay the basis for socialist economic development.

Despite Cairns's apparent incompetence in his methods of pursuing the loans, it is clear that his dismissal was in fact part of a general change in the personnel of the Labor Government, from one suited to and identified with the promises and initial reforms of a social-democratic government elected in an economic boom to one which is willing to carry out the harsh measures the ruling class demands in the recession. Whitlam's move for a tough budget and a new crackdown on wage rises evidently ran into some token opposition from Cairns who, concerned for his base in the ALP "left", wanted more token reforms and a bigger budget deficit, and Cameron, who, closely tied to the trade-union bureaucracy, was for a more conciliatory face to be shown towards the key metal trades wage claim.

On the other hand, this conflict within the reformist ALP hierarchy was in no way fundamental, but was simply a tactical difference between



Backbencher Dr Jim Cairns.

reformists on how best to run the capitalist state. There was undoubtedly a conspiracy against Cairns; but equally beyond doubt is that Cairns was and is engaged by choice fully in the general conspiracy of the bourgeois state against the working class. No tears for this class-collaborationist traitor or his bruised ego! What Cairns now calls his "People's Budget" proposes *nothing* that would even begin to break from capitalism or represent any significant gains for the working class. After all, Cairns backed Whitlam's program of "defend business" to the hilt at the ALP Terrigal Conference in February, and that is still the *essence* of his political program.

Nevertheless the right turn by the Cabinet is real and clear, as indicated by its proposals so far made public associated with the federal budget to be brought down this month, including:

-- large increases in "indirect" taxes, ie *regressive* taxes such as sales taxes, which discriminate against workers and the poor, including an 80 percent rise in postage stamps and a large rise in telephone fees.

-- substantial cuts in government programs such as education, social welfare, the Regional Economic Development (RED) scheme and other employment relief schemes such as NEAT, transport aid to local government, and pensions (proposals of the Cabinet's Expenditure Review Committee published in the second week of July).

These measures, supposed to stem inflation and end the slump, will do nothing of the sort. No budgetary manipulations can rescue the economy from a worldwide recession caused by contradictions within the basic workings of production for profit. However, this particular budget is designed to drive down living standards in order to raise the rate of profit enough to make new investment profitable again, to put the whole cost of economic "recovery" onto the working class. Thus the "tough budget" goes hand in hand with an attempt to impose a freeze on wages, in the face of an inflation rate now at 17-18 percent per annum.

The budget plans embody the Labor Government's changing approach to its task of selling out the working class. Last year, Crean's "tough budget" proposals were revised to placate the union bureaucracy, in an attempt to win a respite on wage demands (the "social contract" of the ACTU Conference last September). The recession (and inflation) continued and intensified; the "social contract" failed; the union bureaucracy failed to contain wages struggles enough. But the bureaucracy has been effective in paralyzing workers' struggle to the extent that there has been virtually no action against unemployment, and to the extent that alongside the continued



After striking for ten weeks ninety AMWU members in Western Australia were issued with summonses under the penal clauses of the Industrial Arbitration Act. These workers as a gesture of defiance burnt copies of the summonses.

# Free Chilean class-war prisoners!

The harsh reality which the great majority of the imprisoned comrades in Chile are experiencing is the truth which the communications media do not tell. The bloody and implacable persecution unleashed upon the working class has not been halted. Behind the bars, torture, death, hunger and cold assault comrades who best express the will of the proletariat. For them there is no recourse to aid, not even the slightest legal attention, neither appeals nor trials. There is even less possibility of inclusion in the deportation lists. For them there is no economic aid or medical attention, no visits from international organizations. They are not permitted to receive family visitors or carry on correspondence. Their fate does not depend on influential friends because their strenuous, anonymous efforts were always carried out in the ranks, together with their own people during the most difficult times.

It is because they are proletarian leaders, union officials, founders of the *cordones industriales*, the core of the miners' councils, peasants' councils and communal (slum) councils as well as militant fighters within the armed forces that they are singled out as the principal enemies of the bourgeois Military Junta. The tens of thousands of our class who have already been massacred and the present desperate blows render the situation of the imprisoned comrades extremely dangerous.

The dramatic starvation not only affects their families but the entire country, allowing the cruel capitalist executioners to eliminate ever more comrades, silently and with impunity.

The most class-conscious leaders of the proletariat today are in need of true internationalist solidarity. Their lives and future are now in the hands of their comrades in struggle who understand the magnitude of the injustice they suffer.

The sailors who have been tortured since July of 1973, with Sergeant Cardenas at their head, must be saved: their combative example in opposing the military coup, their revolutionary loyalty in defense of their class, their sacrifice inside the most reactionary sector of the Armed

Forces, the navy, must receive the response of solidarity they deserve. They underwent ferocious torture from July to September of 1973 and have suffered even worse since then. Defenseless, these men were experimented on by the butchers using fascist methods which were later generalized.

Every electric shock, each fingernail extracted, every sexual organ destroyed, every rape in front of children, every bloody beating, all the mental and physical disabilities which result, every death under torture is a direct outrage to the working class as a whole: a lesson which must never be forgotten.

These Chilean political prisoners represent the historically indestructible working class. Although after the defeat they are persecuted, cheated, betrayed and beaten today, tomorrow they will be able to draw the lessons and advance more consciously and with greater determination toward decisive victory in the future.

The bourgeoisie is also becoming aware of this. Its military police-state regime in Chile is increasing repression, despite what its fascist-like demagogic propaganda pretends.

It is the duty of every proletarian party, of every trade union, of every individual worker, as well as of every human-rights organization, to provide support in this emergency. This initial list includes the names of some of those who have been located. Many others remain. Organizations can assume the defense of one or more of the comrades and apply pressure so that they may leave the country. In order for some of them to appear on the deportation lists it is indispensable that a jurist with international support manages to reach them and take charge of their cases. After that a government willing to receive the prisoner is necessary. In general a job offer is necessary to open the borders of certain countries. Only in this manner will the doors of asylum be opened, together with the arms of their class comrades in struggle who await them in exile.

We must remember that every imprisoned working-class leader represents many comrades who are concerned for his fate. Every jailed activist represents thousands of affected comrades, every barbaric torture concerns the entire proletarian movement. Every death of a working-class militant signifies a danger and a lesson.



Santiago National Stadium in September 1973.

Every consistent proletarian fighter thus saved is a step toward socialism.

THE PROLETARIAT OF ALL COUNTRIES WILL ANSWER THIS CHALLENGE!!!

FOR THE UNITY OF THE CHILEAN WORKING CLASS!!!  
FOR UNITED ACTION BY THE WORLD PROLETARIAT!!!

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OSCAR ALEXIS SILVA VIDAL -- miner (ENAMI), 30 years old, arrested 16 September 1973; in the Santiago Penitentiary.

JOSE ANTONIO ALVAREZ RIFFO -- miner (ENAMI), 29 years old.

ADOLFO OLIVARES HEVIA -- construction worker, 53 years old; prisoner in Chacabuco concentration camp.

PABLO MUNIZ LEDEZMA -- union leader, member of the Socialist Party, 26 years old.

LEANDRO ESPINOZA -- working-class leader, arrested in March 1975.

ERMINA GEORGINA CONCHA GALVEZ -- worker, 35 years old, arrested in December 1973; being held in the Santiago Women's Prison.

VICTOR CALDERON -- leader of the FTR (trade-union group led by the MIR) at Valparaiso customs house, arrested in Santiago in November 1974.

DOMINGO SEPULVEDA -- leader of SOQUIMICH (chemical workers' union), 52 years old.

RUBEN ALCAIDE -- port worker, arrested 11 September 1973; in the Valparaiso jail.

LUIS LOPETEGUI -- worker, arrested in San Fernando in September 1973, 19 years old.

CARLOS MORALES CUBILLOS -- elementary school teacher, 50 years old; moved from Chacabuco to the hospital of the Santiago Jail.

VICTOR TORO -- slum leader, member of the Political Bureau of the MIR.

SERGIO LIDID CESPEDES -- Spanish teacher, leader of SUTE in Los Angeles (Chile), 32 years old, arrested 13 September 1973; being held in Chacabuco.

FRANCISCO MORENO -- journalist, arrested 11 September 1973.

HUGO LENNI -- administrator at Valparaiso Gas Company, 60 years old, being held at Valparaiso Jail together with his three sons since before 11 September 1973, for violating the Arms Control Law of the Popular Unity government.

DOMINA CHELEN ROJA.

JUAN CARDENAS -- sergeant of the navy, arrested in July 1973.

ERNESTO SUENZEN -- sergeant of the navy, arrested in July 1973.

JUAN RAMIREZ -- corporal of the navy, arrested in July 1973.

Comrades Cardenas, Suenzen and Ramirez are being held together with at least thirty sailors arrested in July 1973; the Law of Internal Security was used against them by the government of that time for opposing an attempted coup d'etat.

COMMITTEE TO DEFEND THE WORKER AND SAILOR PRISONERS IN CHILE

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CORRECTION -- ASp no 22

Due to a technical error in production, in one paragraph of the reprinted leaflet "Maoist gangster attack causes serious injury" sentences have been jumbled so as to make the paragraph nonsensical and misleading. The affected section of the paragraph -- page seven, top of column two, beginning line three -- should read as follows:

"The Spartacist Club moved a motion which condemned RSM's use of violence, but vigorously opposed and voted against the move to disaffiliate the Maoists, pointing out that violence and intimidation in the workers and left movement must be dealt with [with]in the workers and left movement by both political exposure and the formation of defence guards for workers' democracy. The disaffiliation of the RSM for violence will provide the University administration with a convenient precedent for future attacks on the left groups [when], for example, defending picket lines against cop attacks or preventing Fascists from spreading their filth."

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## Revisionists tail black separatism, reformism

# Black defence in danger

Recently Aboriginal Liberal Party Senator Neville Bonner concocted a claim that the "violence" of many young black militants was caused by hard drugs, supplied to them along with arms by "subversive elements", mainly "Trotskyists" (*The Australian*, 14 June 1975). Bonner's scurrilous red-scare frame-up attempt is only a part of the general step-up in the harassment and oppression of blacks. His crude slander is intended to discredit all those, including the Trotskyist Spartacist League (SL) and the fake-Trotskyist Communist League (CL) and Socialist Workers League (SWL), who have been involved in the defence of black militants and in organising opposition to black oppression.

One example of this fight has been the defence of black militant Denis Walker and his co-defendants, Lionel Lacey and John Garcia, against frame-up charges of "attempting to obtain money with menaces" and "conspiracy", and opposition to Walker's extradition from NSW to Queensland to face these charges. In Sydney defence activities have been conducted by the united-front Queensland Act Confrontation Committee (QACC). (For earlier reports of the defence campaign see *Australasian Spartacist* no 10, July 1974; no 11, August 1974; no 14, November 1974; no 16, February 1975; no 17 March 1975). Despite defence efforts, on 20 June the Sydney Magistrates' Court ordered Walker's extradition, after the High Court in Sydney on 10 June had refused to hear his appeal.

Prior to this final High Court hearing, Walker had announced publicly his intention to attend the hearing carrying an unloaded rifle "for protection against police" and as a symbolic gesture "to demonstrate to all oppressed groups in the country, especially the workers that they should be prepared for armed struggle" (*The Australian*, 10 June 1975). When he appeared outside the courthouse with an unloaded .22 rifle, he was immediately seized by police, bodily carried away and charged with possessing a rifle while having been a person convicted on a summary jurisdiction, resisting arrest, and using "unseemly" language. These charges are further examples of the persecution of black militants. All class-conscious militants must defend Walker in respect to both the frame-up Queensland charges and the gun incident.

\*The SL defends the right of blacks to self defence, including the bearing of arms, against racist and state repression, and in general the democratic right for the oppressed and working class to possess weapons. Nevertheless Walker's action was a stupid and wasteful confrontationalist stunt which it was clear could only give the state an excuse for his further victimisation. It was politically comprehensible to the majority of workers and to militant blacks only as an appeal to the latter to imitate his flaunting of bourgeois legality and to take on the bourgeois state now. Billed as the "Black Nation v. High Court of Australia" (the heading of an anonymous leaflet calling for a demonstration to support Walker on 10 June ("armaments optional") and paralleling Walker's politics), his gimmick was not only disastrously adventurist but promoted dead-end, petty-bourgeois, illusory nationalism.

Faced with a long prison term, Walker was understandably desperate; in this sense his action is not just folly, but also reflects the oppression and despair of blacks who are victims of systematic racism in Australia's bourgeois courts. But this cannot excuse the likes of the CL, which boasts that Walker is a "sympathiser" (*Militant*, 3 July 1975) and mindlessly enthuses over just such examples of futile confrontationalism. The CL failed to criticise (or even mention in its press) the gun incident while boasting of its close connections with Walker and other black militants. Through this opportunism, together with the "armed struggle" rhetoric which it bandies about thoughtlessly and unseriously, the CL shares political responsibility for Walker's dangerous adventurism. (The CL's cowardly, Menshevik practice belies its rhetoric. Thus despite all its talk about "laying bodies on the line", the CL had no significant organised presence at the demonstration outside the Court on 10 June which was broken up by cops (reacting to Walker's stunt), resulting in six arrests.)

An attempt has been made to link the defence of Walker to defence of the Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS) through the Black Defence Committee (BDC), initially based on the demands to defend Walker and the ALS. Funded by the federal government through the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and run by councils of "community representatives", the ALS represents a minimal reform, providing legal representation and advice to blacks who previously would not have had easy access to such services. The SL defends the ALS against its harassment by police (who find it an

obstacle to their general victimisation of blacks) and against the threat of cutbacks, and has participated in the BDC in agreement with the aims it originally set itself.

For most of the participants in the BDC, including the CL, SWL, the various liberals associated with student race relations bodies and the black leaders of the ALS, defence of the ALS is important primarily on the grounds of "community control", which they see threatened by the federal Labor Government's proposed Australian Legal Aid Offices (ALAO). The SWL for example says

"The independence of ALS and its control by the black community itself is now in doubt. Supporters of the ALS are demanding guaranteed and continuing financial independence for the service and control by the Black community." (*Direct Action*, 26 June 1975)

Clearly the Labor reformists and the government bureaucracy resent the "political" activities of those who run the ALS; and it is quite probable that an attempt will be made to disguise a cutback in funding through its submersion into the ALAO. The ALS is not however *intrinsically* superior to the ALAO; far from being "independent", the ALS as much as the ALAO is a minimal



Denis Walker at Darlinghurst Court, 10 June.

reform service with an umbilical cord to bourgeois state financing. The "community control" of the ALS is simply a token gesture designed to give the service a fake "democratic" garb. It will be no real defence against cutbacks in ALS funds (doubtless inadequate even at present), because the capitalist state controls the purse strings at the source. In practice, "community control" only serves as a vehicle for aspiring petty bureaucrats. Exemplified by the ALS, a strategy of "black community control of black affairs" is intrinsically reformist and/or utopian, counterposed in the final analysis to the revolutionary mobilisation of the working class and the oppressed against capitalism.

The BDC has suffered from the unprincipled and opportunist impulses of almost all its participants. The liberals, naturally anxious not to "tell the blacks what to do", simply end up tailing the black nationalists. One of the latter, ALS officer Paul Coe (apparently now deposed from his ALS job), argued that a demonstration proposed for 31 July should be based on demands for land rights, self-determination, black control of black affairs and everything else blacks might support -- a program appropriate to a black nationalist political party (or vicarious nationalists like the SWL/CL) but not to a united front defence campaign.

At its recent conference the CL proclaimed that the need for "a fully co-ordinated national and international campaign" to defend Walker, Lacey and Garcia is "critical" to the class struggle (*Militant*, 3 July 1975), but it did not even send representatives to some of the meetings (nor did the SWL, though they too insist on the importance of the defence campaign). Building a "co-ordinated national and international campaign" was left to a CL sympathiser who presented to the BDC a draft leaflet for circulation in the name of the BDC supporting separate black trade unions and "self-determination" ("encapsulated in the demand for land rights"), and declaring "There can be no rights, decent standard of living for blacks until BLACK CONTROL OF BLACK AFFAIRS is put into practice." Not only would the adoption of such a program, by politically

excluding broad layers of potential support, destroy any possible effectiveness of the BDC in organising defence of blacks; this separatism can only reinforce the isolation of blacks from the only force with the *potential* of fighting racial oppression, the working class. By supporting these policies the CL actually impedes the working-class struggle.

The majority of the BDC agreed to call a demonstration for 31 July (later abandoned) around the demands: For land rights; An end to police victimisation; Release of political prisoners such as Walker, Lacey, Garcia and Meredith; in defence of the concessions gained (eg, the medical and legal services). The SL agreed to participate in the demonstration despite its ambiguous demand "For land rights". While revolutionary Marxists recognise the demand for land rights as legitimate in a number of concrete circumstances, Coe, the liberals and the ALP government see land rights as a form of "self-determination for all blacks", an idealist notion of freedom from all forms of oppression through real or ersatz separatism, totally alien to the Leninist understanding of the right of self-determination as the right to establish a separate state (which can only be based on the existence of a nation which the blacks in Australia are not, judged by materialist criteria). Both the CL and the SWL, who sometimes pretend to be Leninist, go along with this, though the CL embellishes it with the more "militant" "unconditional land rights", an appeal to idiot liberal moralism suggesting a black right to the whole of Australia.

As a basis for clear agreement on a concrete demand the SL counterposed the demand for the immediate return of all reserves and missions to the ownership and control of the blacks living on them. This demand does not cover all legitimate black claims to land rights. For example, ownership rights to land needed for religious practices currently or recently observed must be recognised. Moreover the black question goes far beyond land rights. The right to adequate health care, education and employment (blacks have a rate of unemployment ten times as high as the rest of the population); the end of all discrimination; the expropriation of the stations under workers' control; and in some non-metropolitan areas with a majority of blacks the right of regional autonomy, are key elements of a program to end black oppression as part of the transitional program for workers' revolution.

Plagued by opportunist manoeuvring and the internal wranglings of the ALS, the BDC has virtually collapsed. There is still a plan for a picket of the Queensland Tourist Bureau on 14 August, but any defence campaign will be crippled as long as it is not established on a clear united-front basis for specific actions against black oppression aimed at mobilising the social power of the working class, at the same time allowing each participant full freedom to propagate its program.

No pleading with the capitalist state (be it run by the ALP or the Liberal/CP coalition) for more social welfare crumbs or phoney black nationalist solutions spiced with CL-type "revolutionary" rhetoric will significantly alter the terrible conditions forced on blacks by racist capitalism. Only by mobilising the working class to fight against all manifestations of black oppression and linking this fight to the struggle for proletarian revolution to overthrow capitalism can the racism infecting the working class itself be overcome and all oppression and victimisation ended. ■

## correction

The article "Dead End for Portuguese Maoists" in *ASp* no 21, July 1975 states that the 19 May *Hsinhua Weekly* article on the Portuguese Communist Party Marxist-Leninist was "the first time that the Chinese have mentioned any Portuguese group in their news agency dispatches". In fact the daily *Hsinhua News Bulletin* of 5 April published an article entitled "Delegation of the Portuguese Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) Feted in Peking", which confirms our earlier inference that the rightist PCP-ML had won the favour of the Chinese bureaucracy over the more militant MRPP. The article also erred in saying that the *Republica* had been reopened. In fact, the government had declared its willingness to let the newspaper resume publication under its Socialist Party editor. But when it attempted to reopen the premises on June 17 there was a confrontation between SP supporters and the printers who are supporters of the Communist Party, and the paper remained closed. ■

# French Pabloists outlaw Trotskyist views

## LCR purges Central Committee member

For the first time since the formation of the Ligue Communiste in 1969, the French section of the United Secretariat (USec) has expelled a member of its central committee, Lafitte, solely and explicitly for his political views. Threatened by the formation of the only consistent left opposition tendency to emerge within a French Pabloist organization since the 1950's, the leadership of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR) resorted to time-honored methods of bureaucratic suppression in order to silence Comrade Lafitte.

This Stalin-style operation provoked considerable resistance from the LCR ranks. Three key trade-union sections voted down the expulsion. Krivine & Co were able to get rid of the troublesome oppositionist only after the organization's star Renault shop cell (of which Lafitte was a member) was dissolved on orders from the Political Bureau, and abstainers on the central committee were threatened with expulsion unless they could produce a good explanation for their vote.

Nor is this frenzied campaign to crush Lafitte an isolated phenomenon. As the international faction fight in the "United" Secretariat drags on, it becomes increasingly difficult for anyone to take seriously the USec's masquerading as "The Fourth International". In country after country the reformist minority Leninist-Trotskyist Faction (LTF) and centrist International Majority Tendency (IMT) have already split into separate organizations.

Thus the most-dangerous opponents -- whose willingness to "say what is" threatens to explode the fraudulent facade of unity -- are those who declare openly that the Fourth International does not exist, that it was destroyed by Pabloist revisionism, and that it must be recreated through a principled struggle for the Transitional Program. Both minority and majority sections of the USec have moved quickly to expel Trotskyist oppositionists who commit this blasphemous "crime of opinion". In 1973 supporters of the Revolutionary Internationalist Tendency (RIT) were peremptorily driven out of the USec in the US and Australia, and last month the Bolshevik-Leninist Tendency (B-LT) was similarly purged from the Canadian Revolutionary Marxist Group....

The cynicism behind [the LCR] hatchet job was spelled out by the LCR leadership itself, in a PB statement of 25 April:

"Tolerating Lafitte's statement in the organization would logically entail serious consequences.... If Comrade Lafitte, an alternate member of the Central Committee, stays in the organization, it goes without saying that his opinions have to be debated throughout the organization as a precondition to any other discussion (trade-union, CP/SP, Army, Women, Portugal, etc ...).... It would certainly be grotesque to discuss seriously this or that tactical or strategic question before being sure that the discussion is indeed taking place among revolutionaries.... if we start to discuss seriously the question of whether we have spent all our time since 1945 capitulating, whether the Inter[national] is centrist, whether it has to be rebuilt because it was destroyed... then it is hard to see how we would stop the massive entry of the OCI, LO, the Spartacists, the LIRQI, etc."

And since one thing the leadership cannot afford is to discuss whether the USec is centrist, there is -- to paraphrase a favorite LCR slogan -- "only one solution, expulsion".

Unfortunately for the LCR leadership, however,

Comrade Lafitte and two other comrades who share his political positions formed the Bolshevik-Leninist Faction for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (B-LF) before he was railroaded out of the organization. Thus in order to complete the purge, the central committee meeting of May 10-11 passed a motion which in essence orders cells of the LCR to expel all present members of the B-LF and anyone who in the future may come to agree with its positions!

This blatant suppression of political debate is by no means a recent development in the United Secretariat.... in 1963, the US Socialist Workers Party (SWP) expelled its Revolutionary Tendency (forerunner of the Spartacist League/US) for "disloyalty", a charge "proved" by the fact that RT leaders had characterized the SWP as centrist....

Just as the SWP was forced to throw overboard any semblance of Leninist democratic centralism in order to get rid of the RT, the LCR leadership resorts to Stalinist arguments in order to justify Lafitte's expulsion. In its April 25 "explanation" the PB states:

"No legalistic quibbling about the program can get us to accept that the program of any section might include [the statement] that the Fourth International is centrist and must be rebuilt."

By this logic the LCR would have justified Stalin's expulsion of Trotsky from the Third International, since the Left Opposition argued that the Comintern was "centrist" and had to be "rebuilt"! Or, at the very least, had Trotskyists won the leadership of any section, according to the USec revisionists Stalin would have been justified in expelling that section!

The membership did not accept this Stalinist reasoning, however. Although the central committee suspended Lafitte on April 5, requesting that his cell expel him, an expulsion motion was defeated in the Renault cell a week later. The next week, cells in the LCR's most important area of trade-union work (the banks) were instrumental in passing a motion at a general assembly of sections 31 and 32 condemning the CC for its "unacceptable" bureaucratic methods.

The resolution charged that Lafitte "is being expelled for his views since the comrade has not been accused of any factional activity, any break with democratic centralism". Calling on the CC to reconsider its action, the motion was passed 59 to 14. Shortly afterwards, another trade-union section (23) voted in a general assembly by 14 to 0 that "a comrade should not be expelled for the internal expression of political differences which do not necessarily constitute a break with democratic centralism."

Seeing the mounting opposition, the Political Bureau resorted to more "energetic" measures the next day. While the section leadership was dissolving the Renault cell, the PB prepared an announcement at its April 24-25 meeting that members of the cell could be "reintegrated" if they individually signed statements agreeing to "construct" (ie, not "reconstruct") the Fourth International! The expulsion of Lafitte was not even mentioned in the PB statement.

The LCR central committee tried to justify this outrageous bureaucratic expulsion on the grounds that Lafitte's conception of "reconstructing" the FI is "incompatible" with being a member of the Ligue. In a statement submitted to a bank workers' cell by future members of the B-LF on April 8, the absurdity of this claim is pointed out:

"Who does not recall the application of some members of the PSU [Parti Socialiste Unifié, a social-democratic group] (several of whom are currently on the Central Committee) to our organization which clearly argued that the present Fourth International was merely a springboard to construct the Fifth!! But perhaps the LCR leadership can accept wanting to construct the Fifth International while refusing to condone wanting to reconstruct the Fourth?"

The real reason behind the political expulsion of Lafitte is that the LCR leadership is afraid to debate its bankrupt political positions with a principled oppositionist who has a Trotskyist historical analysis of the United Secretariat and the determination to wage an unrelenting fight against Pabloist revisionism. The centrists cannot bear to be called by their true name. As the B-LF put it in a statement to the central committee of May 6:

"The LCR leadership is able to accept even

sharp criticisms by left tendencies in the LCR, except on the point which constitutes the basis of the central mystification by the IMT and the LTF: the supposed existence of an International. If you deprive the LCR of the usurped title 'French section of the Fourth International,' there are no programmatic differences between the LCR, Revolution, and the PSU. An important member of the B-LF has been expelled for having said: 'The emperor has no clothes'."

Realization that the faction fight within the USec was not between revolutionists and revisionists, but rather between centrists and reformists, was crucial to the B-LF's break from the centrism of the LCR leadership (and from the centrist hodge-podge of the now-defunct Tendency 4). The "Declaration" of the Bolshevik-Leninist Faction correctly characterizes the International Majority Tendency as "more to the left than the LTF, but just as distant from the revolutionary Marxist program." In his original statement to the CC (for which he was expelled), Lafitte commented on the "crisis" in the USec:

"... whether one votes for the candidate of the popular front, Mitterrand, after having liquidated one's sections in Latin America via guerrillaism [IMT]; or whether one calls on the armed bands of capital to protect blacks and fight racism in Boston, while at the same time participating in attempts to set up a popular-frontist bloc in Argentina [LTF] -- in both cases it is the same rejection of the *Transitional Program* which these two unprincipled factions have in common." (*Centre de Recherches Socialistes*, no 27)

The B-LF "Declaration" subjects the Pabloists' capitulations to non-proletarian forces to sharp attack, linking them to the politically liquidationist policies of Pablo in 1951-53. Both minority and majority are condemned for capitulating to class-collaborationist popular fronts, for supporting Castroism and Vietnamese Stalinism, for failure to call for political revolution in Cuba and Vietnam, for their abandonment of the Transitional Program.

The revisionists' distortion of the Leninist tactic of united front, something never understood by Tendency 4, is also criticized:

"It is extremely significant that in countries where strong Stalinist parties exist, the revisionists -- whether the LCR or the OCI leadership -- always pass off their capitulation in the form of the united front. The latter calls it a strategy in order to justify the capitulationist practice of fetishizing the bloc of working-class organizations (without bothering about its programmatic basis); the former rejects the united front and, in fact, the program, pretending (wherever possible) to ignore the popular front in order to support it, either by indifference (by not denouncing it) or more concretely by voting for it in the name of the dynamic."

Finally, the B-LF denounces the leadership's tailist conception of trade-union work and the LCR's disgusting capitulation to national chauvinism in its "work" in the French army, which "in no way represents an attack, on a proletarian basis, against the bourgeois army" (statement to the CC, 6 May).

The struggle waged by the Bolshevik-Leninist Faction for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International represents the potential for a qualitative step forward in the fight to build a Trotskyist organization in France as part of a regenerated Fourth International. The expulsion of Lafitte comes a year after the resignation of Leueur, another central committee member of the USec's French section (then called the FCR), to join the Spartacist tendency. Both Leueur and Lafitte played a leading role in the 1973 bank strike and were instrumental in building the LCR's bank workers' fraction. In 1973 Lafitte was an FCR candidate in elections for the French National Assembly, and as a member of the national leadership of Tendency 4, he was elected alternate member of the CC at the LCR founding conference last December.

Although its documents contain a few ambiguous formulations, the political positions of the B-LF represent a qualitative break with both the infantile/degenerate centrism of the IMT and the bold-faced reformism of the LTF, and a return to authentic Trotskyism. Unlike a number of eclectic left Pabloists (Tendency 4 in the LCR, the "third tendency" of the USec, German Spartacusbund) who continue in endless maneuvering and intrigue with the USec minority and majority, the

Continued on page seven

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# Trotskyist groups founded in Italy and France



## Interim Secretariat communique on Spartacist European summer camp

The political and organizational consolidation of the international Spartacist tendency (iSt) was highlighted by the iSt's recent European summer camp. Over fifty comrades from seven countries gathered to discuss the tasks and perspectives of the iSt, in particular its European sections, based on the advances of our tendency since last year's European camp. From the supporters who subscribed to the "Declaration for the Organizing of an International Trotskyist Tendency" in July 1974, the iSt has made a qualitative leap in Europe to functioning sections and sympathizing groups in Austria, Germany, France and, most recently, Italy.

The 1974 "Declaration" had been written necessarily in the light of a historical background originating in the United States. The Spartacist tendency has been struggling to transform its living internationalist commitment into a truly international organization. The recent summer camp demonstrated that the national sections of the iSt, strengthened by principled regroupments with cadres who have broken away from the declining centrist conglomerations of fake-Trotskyists, are forging authoritative national leaderships as part of a disciplined international collective. Comrades being won in a series of countries are emerging as leaders of the iSt and are a living promise for the International Executive Committee of the future Trotskyist International.

The breakthroughs and consolidation achieved by the Trozktistische Liga Deutschlands (TLD -- Trotskyist League of Germany) were codified by its acceptance as a full section of the iSt. Through its active intervention against the left-Pabloist Spartacusbund (Sb), the TLD was able to win the supporters of the Trotskyist Faction (expelled from the Sb in February 1975) to its political positions. This regroupment helped drive a further wedge into the disintegrating Sb, as the internal campaign of slander waged against the iSt by the Sb leadership was unable to prevent serious militants of the Sb from dealing with the politics of the TLD.

This accretion of forces to the TLD facilitated the geographical expansion of the TLD through the establishment of an Organizing Committee in Cologne in April of this year. The TLD has for some time stabilized its press, *Kommunistische Korrespondenz*, as a regular bi-monthly.

The generally rightward motion of the United Secretariat (USec) over the past few years is expressed especially by its capitulation to the

popular fronts in France and Chile and to the "revolutionary" Portuguese officers and by the USec Majority's overtures to the French PSU and to Lotta Continua in Italy. This will no doubt exacerbate the factional divisions between the still centrist international Majority and the overtly reformist Minority led by the American SWP. In Germany, the "Kompass" tendency within the USec's Gruppe Internationale Marxisten (GIM) will no doubt become increasingly demoralized by its failure to capture a majority of the GIM and by the disruption of its international connections (France, Italy), and should provide a fertile ground for the tactic of revolutionary regroupment through polarization, splits and fusions.

In addition, China's recent open support for strengthening NATO is creating unrest in the German Maoist groupings. We can look toward the possibility of left splits occurring in some of these groups over the questions of support for a stronger NATO (in Germany!) and of China's espousal of a "democratic stage" in Portugal. Such developments would pose the possibility for regroupments of subjectively revolutionary elements breaking from Maoism toward the authentic Trotskyist program.

In France the iSt supporters have fused with the Bolshevik-Leninist Faction (B-LF) which had been expelled from the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR), the showpiece section of the Majority faction of the USec. The B-LF was expelled from the LCR for its position that the Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution founded under the leadership of Leon Trotsky in 1938, no longer existed and must be re-forged in the struggle against Pabloist revisionism. The emergence of the B-LF was the result of a protracted struggle for programmatic clarity within oppositional groupings of the LCR over the past year or more. Comrade Lafitte, the leading figure in the B-LF, thus joins Comrade Lesueur as the second member of the Central Committee of the French USec section to join the Spartacist tendency.

The fusion of the B-LF with the iSt was the basis for an important step forward for our tendency, the formation of the Ligue Trotskyste de France (LTF -- Trotskyist League of France). Its foundation was proclaimed at the summer camp and it was recognized as a disciplined sympathizing section of the iSt.

The formation of the LTF comes at a time when the other organizations claiming to be Trotskyist in France have been moving rapidly to the right. As the founding proclamation of the LTF states:

"The main accusation the LTF makes against the pseudo-Trotskyists is their inability to draw the class line against the popular-front Union de la Gauche, both in their general intervention as well as in their trade-union work. The strategic axis around which Trotskyists must intervene is the independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie, an independence which is erased when the workers parties and the unions enter into the popular front. The central axis of any trade-union work by consistent revolutionists must aim at the question of the popular front and the need for the unions to break from the popular front."

In Italy, a small group of comrades emerged in opposition to the combinationist rotten bloc method which had characterized the Italian USec "Third Tendency", the Frazione Marxista Rivoluzionaria (FMR -- Revolutionary Marxist Faction). These oppositional comrades had previously broken with the classical Bordigist organization in Italy toward what they thought was Trotskyism -- the USec. Their recognition of the primacy of program enabled them to break rapidly and clearly from the USec and to assimilate the positions of the Spartacist tendency.

These comrades came into contact with the Spartacist tendency only after the expulsion of the FMR from the Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari (GCR -- Revolutionary Communist Group), the Italian section of the USec, headed by Livio Maitan. The oppositional comrades recognized that the FMR leadership was building another rotten international bloc, not a principled formation. In their application for membership in the iSt, they point out that although a cornerstone of the international "Third Tendency" is its

characterization of European social-democratic parties as bourgeois parties, the leader of its Italian grouping, the FMR, "even recently stated that he had not read the Kompass analysis concerning the nature of social-democratic parties". The comrades also saw that whereas the FMR put forward no consistent analysis of the history of the Fourth International and its revisionist degeneration, the Spartacist document "Genesis of Pabloism" provided a coherent explanation and a political alternative to the FMR document "Le origini storiche del centrismo sui generis" ("The historical origins of centrism sui generis").

From this point, intensive discussions between these Italian comrades and the iSt rapidly demonstrated decisive programmatic agreement. The iSt at the summer camp accepted the application of the Nucleo Spartacista d'Italia (NSI -- Spartacist Nucleus of Italy) for membership as a sympathizing section of the iSt.

The Osterreichische Bolschewiki-Leninisten (OBL -- Austrian Bolshevik-Leninists) held its national conference at the summer camp as well. The conference drew the balance sheet of the development of the organization in the past year and projected the tasks of its continued organizational and political consolidation. Particular attention was paid to the increased opportunities for coordination of the work of the OBL with the augmented forces of the TLD in Germany.

In addition to the national gatherings, the camp had two central foci. The first was programmatic discussions necessary to further the political work of the iSt as a whole through the development of its national sections. The occasion of the coming elections in Austria was the basis of a lively discussion of the conditions under which critical support to reformist workers parties (in this case the Socialist Party of Austria) may not be appropriate, even though there exists no formally constituted popular front. Similarly, the discussion of the tactical problems involved in working in Stalinist-dominated trade unions in France (where industrial unionism does not exist as it does in Germany or North America, for example) illustrated again the development of the revolutionary Marxist program through a sharpening and testing process as the national sections become more deeply involved in class struggles.

The second main concern of the summer camp was the struggle to consolidate national leaderships as part of the selection of a representative and authoritative international collective, as the highest body of our organization. The assimilation of the valuable political experience of the leading comrades of the iSt is crucial to the continuing transformation of the iSt into a disciplined, political cohesive international organization functioning according to the norms of international democratic centralism. The fulfillment of that transformation will constitute a qualitative step forward on the path to the rebirth of the Fourth International through the earliest formation of the International Trotskyist League.

FORWARD TO THE INTERNATIONAL TROTSKYIST LEAGUE!

FOR THE REBIRTH OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL!

Interim Secretariat of the iSt  
23 July 1975

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**Kommunistische Korrespondenz**  
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Sommer 1975

**SPD, "linke" Wahlpolitik und Kommunismus**

Die Arbeiterbewegung in der BRD ist heute in einer Situation, die seit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg nicht mehr vorgekommen ist. Die Arbeiterklasse ist durch die Integration in die imperialistische Weltwirtschaft und die Integration in die imperialistische Weltwirtschaft und die Integration in die imperialistische Weltwirtschaft...

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# Freney backs Stalinist murders

Denis Freney, the self-appointed Trotsky "expert" of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA), has issued a 22-page pamphlet entitled *In Defence of the Vietnamese Revolution: against its 'trotskyist' detractors*. The pamphlet spends its time defending not the Vietnamese Revolution -- which Trotskyists have always fought for -- but Vietnamese Stalinism, imitating the historical Stalinist equation of defence of the USSR with defence of Stalin and the bureaucracy. Rejecting all criticisms of the "Vietnamese Communist Party" (VCP), Freney "defends" them by brazenly falsifying history in order to justify the murder of Vietnamese Trotskyist workers in 1945 and Ho's class-collaborationist policies in general.

Freney's main target, the Socialist Workers League (SWL), has drawn his fire by daring to mention some of Ho Chi Minh's past betrayals. But he singles out the Spartacist League as the most consistent and principled defender of the Trotskyist heritage, challenging the SWL to be equally "definite" in its positions. Freney's historical arguments, such as they are, are directed against the Trotskyism which the SWL claims to support but is discomfited by and systematically betrays.

Freney assails Trotskyists for ignoring the "concrete context" of the VCP's past betrayals, but Freney's version of the "concrete" consists mainly of lies, falsification, and slanderous innuendo. After trying to belittle the mass influ-

ence of the Vietnamese Trotskyists, he crudely insinuates they just might have collaborated with (or at any rate failed to seriously resist) Japanese imperialism during the war: "No doubt they did resist the French and Japanese, but any resistance must have been minimal." In fact, most Trotskyist leaders spent the war in Vichy French colonial jails because of their Leninist policy of revolutionary defeatism on both sides of the imperialist war. Reconstituted underground in Saigon in August 1944, the Trotskyist International Communist League (ICL) issued a manifesto (24 March 1945) in response to the Japanese direct takeover of power (replacing the Vichy French) in that month (John Sharpe, "Stalinism and Trotskyism in Vietnam -- part II", *Workers Vanguard* no 20, 11 May 1973). Yet Freney lyingly claims there was no sign of any Trotskyist activity until August 1945 -- and then speaks only of the class-collaborationist "National United Front" formed by the centrist "Struggle" group led by Ta Thu Thau. He does not even mention the People's Committees formed by workers in Saigon beginning in August 1945, and predominantly led by the Trotskyists.

On the other hand, Freney praises the "extreme flexibility" (ie total lack of principles) of Ho, who during the war openly sided with the same "democratic" imperialist butchers who later launched three decades of brutal wars against the Vietnamese; the Trotskyists had consistently

warned the masses against these criminals. At the end of August 1945, Saigon Stalinist Nguyen Van Tao declared: "Whoever encourages the peasants to take over the landed properties will be severely punished.... This government is only a democratic government, and therefore it cannot undertake this task, I repeat, our government is a democratic and bourgeois government, even though the Communists are in power" (quoted in Sharpe, op cit). The Trotskyists, of course, were the strongest supporters of the poor peasants' struggles. It is easy enough to see who was on which side of the masses' spontaneous rising against their oppressors.

As for the slaughter of the Trotskyists by these admirers of imperialists and landlords, Freney says:

"This was a critical situation, with the actions of the Trotskyists, Cao Dai and other groups threatening to have the whole nationalist movement labelled pro-Japanese, and bringing the whole strength of the allies down on them." (p9)

Perhaps then the Bolsheviks should have called off the October Revolution because the British, French and US imperialists (as well as Kerensky) labelled them agents of the Kaiser! While Freney's slanderous amalgam of the Trotskyists and the feudalist Cao Dai religious sect leadership has not the slightest basis in fact, his touching concern for the chauvinist sensibilities of the blood-thirsty allied imperialists accurately reflects the VCP's strategy of trust in the most implacable enemies of the masses.

According to Freney, murdering Trotskyists was the way to prevent the British from "crushing the Vietminh government and reinstalling the French". In fact, as anyone can see from the events that followed, it paved the way for the British to do precisely that! The whole available strength of the allies was brought to bear in spite of the Vietminh's energetic attempt to do their dirty work for them. Even so, Freney's logic in itself is a marvel: one should "prevent" the imperialists from crushing the revolution... by crushing it yourself first! But Ho, you see, supposedly believed in the democratic allies, in the "Labour Government" in Britain, and "hoped" General Gracey would "follow orders". Anyone who really trusts imperialist mass murderers is indeed guilty of "political idiocy" of the first order, from a Marxist standpoint. But what then can be said of Ho's alleged "immense tactical skill"? According to Freney, a revolutionary upsurge was premature -- it was necessary for Ho to "gain time". But it was in reality the imperialists who needed time to defuse a spontaneous mass upsurge and to shore up their extremely shaky position on a world scale, and it was Ho, with Freney's belated applause, who gave them that time.

Certainly there was no guarantee of a victory "in a few weeks in 1945", as Freney slanderously misrepresents the SL's position, or for that matter in any specified period of time. But what is absolutely clear is that the VCP policy ensured that the revolutionary movement of the masses in 1945 would be smashed, as it was. Freney "misses" the point. Whatever the tactical wisdom of any open armed confrontation (and sometimes premature battles cannot be avoided), the clear duty of any revolutionist in Saigon 1945 was to warn the masses of the coming imperialist attack, to attempt to arm the working masses to prepare for an uprising before the imperialists could entrench themselves, and to take the side of the masses when they rose up, even if prematurely. Only cowards and traitors desert the struggle once it is joined. It is with such cowardly treachery that Freney solidarises!

In any case, though, Freney's presumption (defending the VCP's crimes) of Vietnamese weakness and the "combined might of the victorious allied armies" is historically illiterate and full of petty-bourgeois contempt for the fighting spirit and revolutionary energy of the oppressed. The military and political situation of the Vietnamese masses was far more favourable in August 1945 than in December 1946 when the French, having consolidated their foothold with Ho's assistance, contemptuously threw him out of Hanoi. In 1945 neither French nor British imperialism was in any shape for a major struggle; US imperialism was not yet interested in fighting a colonial war in Southeast Asia, with rioting US troops in Europe demanding to be sent home; and the Chinese Kuomintang regime was visibly disintegrating. Not the Stalinists' general efforts to shore up a world capitalist system shaken to its foundations in the aftermath of the world war, but the postwar worldwide revolutionary upsurges -- that was the real "total world context" which opened up the prospect of victory for the proletariat in Indochina as well as in the imperialist countries. ■

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

## Reformism in panic

resistance of workers to inflation there is a certain demoralisation, reinforced by fear of unemployment. This gives Whitlam the hope of imposing cutbacks with little organised resistance by the working class, enabling him to feel safe in putting pressure on the trade-union bureaucracy to submit to semi-statutory wage controls through the "conditions" attached to the Arbitration Commission's wage indexation fraud. Whitlam began increasing this pressure early this year with the indexation hearings (see "Labor tops back wage cut", *ASP* no 17, March 1975). But Whitlam needed a solid front in the Cabinet against wage rises -- hence the demotion of Cameron and the demotion and eventual sacking of Cairns. Within the ALP framework, their replacements, McClelland and Hayden, with their "far right" reputations, are fully Whitlam's men.

Whitlam, by insuring that the Arbitration Commission refuses even semi-adequate wage rises, removes the easy option of the bureaucrats and forces a choice between capitulation and a greater mobilisation of the rank and file than the bureaucrats would like. He is also giving moral backing to the employers in the resulting industrial disputes. Thus there was not a peep from the government on the Master Builders' Association lockout of the building workers throughout Victoria, even though the MBA tried this provocation in the name of Whitlam's indexation "guidelines". If a spontaneous outbreak of the union rank and file occurs against the wishes and partially outside the control of the bureaucracy, as is possible, or if a section of the bureaucracy is forced by rank-and-file pressure into open conflict with the Labor Government, then it is quite possible that Whitlam will attempt to use the penal powers. However, there are not yet signs of such an upsurge; the working class is confused, fearful of unemployment. Whitlam counts on avoiding such a confrontation (to seek it would be political suicide); but as we said last year ("Whitlam opens anti-strike campaign", *ASP* no 12, September 1974):

"As the situation worsens, the labour movement may face a repeat of the betrayal of Labor Prime Minister Ben Chifley, who used troops to smash the 1949 miners' strike -- unless the Whitlam government is first brought down by internal dissension fostered by the resistance of trade-union officials under pressure from the ranks."

There is a marked change in the situation since August last year, although not a qualitative one. There have not yet been decisive class battles; but the Labor reformists have exhausted most of their immediate options, the bourgeoisie has become impatient, and the working class is disorganised and demoralised by the absence of resolute class-struggle leadership.

The misleadership of the reformist bureaucrats could be decisively crippling as the working class faces a substantial increase in ruling-class attacks. While in individual factories the bosses have used the threat of the sack to beat back struggles for over-award wages and to impose speed-ups, attacks began on a wider scale with the assault on the NSW BLF and the campaign

against NSW power workers early this year, and now the Master Builders' Association in Victoria has conducted a six-week-long industry-wide lock-out aiming to force building unions to renounce over-award wages. In Western Australia the Liberal-CP state government tried to use penal powers against striking workers, an attempt temporarily repulsed by the threat of a state-wide general strike. And the centrally important metal trades unions award campaign has met stiff resistance from the employers, now with open support from the Federal Labor Government. The campaign has been systematically sabotaged by both right- and left-wing union bureaucrats, who have opposed any significant national strike action. The metal trades case is now before the Arbitration Commission again, certain to be knocked back as violating indexation "guidelines". In defence of their claims the metal trades must launch a national strike but this must be made into a political strike against the indexation fraud and the threatened budget cutbacks, setting the pace for other workers involved in wage struggles. For political strikes against the wage freeze and budget cutbacks; for an immediate 35-hour week for all with no loss in pay and a full, UNCONDITIONAL monthly cost-of-living adjustment to all wages!

Because the ALP retains the allegiance of the vast majority of Australian workers, expressing the influence of bourgeois ideology and reformist illusions in the working class, the Spartacist League gives critical support to the ALP against the bosses' parties in elections so that the working class can learn in struggle that a reformist Labor Government is not their government at all, that their misleaders who administer the state apparatus of the class enemy must be thrown out. But to enable these lessons to be drawn, the revolutionary vanguard must constantly explain that a real workers government -- one that can expropriate the capitalist class -- cannot be achieved through bourgeois parliaments, that a workers government based on workers' organisations is necessary, because the institutions of the bourgeois state, which is nothing but the repressive apparatus for the protection of the ruling class's property "rights", must be smashed. Failure to raise the demand for a workers government is (at best) a gross capitulation to reformist false consciousness.

The Whitlams, Hawkes, Cairnses, and Hartleys must be thrown out of the leadership of the labour movement and replaced with a new, revolutionary leadership. The key to the fight for such a leadership, for the building of the revolutionary workers party, is the formation of communist caucuses in the unions -- clearly standing on the full transitional program linking immediate struggles to the need to overthrow capitalism, and providing leadership in concrete struggle. Among the elements of such a program are -- sliding scale of wages and hours; factory occupations to prevent mass sackings; open the books of the corporations, workers' control of production; nationalise all basic industry and finance institutions without compensation under workers' control; defend the rights of the specially oppressed; down with protectionism, for international working-class solidarity; factory committees; for a leadership of the labour movement pledged to expropriate the bourgeoisie; for a workers government based on workers' organisations to carry this out. ■

## Maoist gangster . . .

Grumont (former LaTrobe student and ex-Maoist activist) as a "non-student", and "yankee"-baiting John Sheridan. RSM spokesman and leader of the demonstration Barry York attempted to justify the thuggery by claiming that our holding of communist banners was a "Trotskyist provocation" at a demonstration which [he claimed] had nothing to do with "capitalism" and "communism".

This gangsterism is only the latest example of the typical operational methods of the RSM. In order to silence political opposition, reformist organisations such as RSM must systematically violate workers' democracy by resorting to intimidation, slander, exclusion and physical attack. In *Campus Spartacist* (24 March) we condemned the RSM for its attempts to physically intimidate members of the LaTrobe Revolutionary Communist Club (RCC), campus supporters of the Socialist Workers Action Group (SWAG), and the Socialist Workers League/Socialist Youth Alliance (SWL/SYA). We pointed out that such intimidation can only aid the capitalist class as only *open political struggle* among the various tendencies competing within the workers movement will develop the necessary programmatic clarity for a successful fight against capitalist oppression.

Yesterday's assault was not just a criminal violation of workers' democracy but indeed, in their determination to prevent the wretched bourgeois Hamer from being exposed before the working-class public, the Maoists sought an open *military bloc* with the capitalist class for the suppression of communism. Wednesday was a clear manifestation of RSM's willingness to act as conscious agents of the "patriotic" ruling class in the physical suppression of revolutionists.

As a direct consequence of this gangsterism a motion was moved at the Clubs and Societies Council meeting calling for the disaffiliation of the RSM from that body because of its history of violence on campus. This motion, which was moved by Women's Abortion Action Group (WAAG) spokesman

Meredith Lawrence (also a member of the SYA) and supported by SYA and the Feminist Club, was carried with a majority of 20 to 10. The Spartacist Club moved a motion which condemned RSM's use of violence, but vigorously opposed and voted against the move to disaffiliate the Maoists, pointing out that violence and intimidation in [when], for example, defending picket lines against cop attacks or preventing Fascists from

the workers and left movement must be dealt with [with]in the workers and left movement by both political exposure and the formation of defence guards for workers' democracy. The disaffiliation of the RSM for violence will provide the University administration with a convenient precedent for future attacks on the left groups spreading their filth. The RSM must be exposed as the wretched national-chauvinist reformists that they are through *open political struggle* not by acts of bureaucratic political censorship and suppression by the Clubs and Societies Council. The Spartacist Club wants the Maoists on campus where we can politically destroy them. The motion disaffiliating the RSM must be revoked at once!

The loud denunciation of the RSM's latest attack on workers' democracy by the SYA, while welcome, is an act of the most disgusting hypocrisy on their part. Their own repeated violation of workers' democracy is a matter of record (see *Campus Spartacist*, 24 March). With regard to workers' democracy this organisation is not *qualitatively* different from the Maoists. This is shown in the willingness of SYA and the Feminist Club to substitute purely administrative suppression of the RSM for principled political struggle. The Communist Club *abstained* at last night's meeting while the RCC did not even bother to attend.

[We of] the Spartacist League are not pacifists and we will defend ourselves against physical attack. *We will not be intimidated by Wednesday's Stalinist thugs.* The Spartacist Club calls on all tendencies and individuals in the workers and left movement to repudiate and actively oppose the use of violence, slander and exclusion against political opponents within the

movement. We also call on all left groups and students to energetically oppose the disaffiliation of the RSM from Clubs and Societies as a dangerous attack on the right and ability of all left groups to advocate their political views.

AGAINST EXCLUSIONISM, VIOLENCE AND SLANDER  
WITHIN THE WORKERS MOVEMENT!

FOR WORKERS' DEMOCRACY!

DEFEND THE RSM AGAINST DISAFFILIATION!

FOR PROGRAMMATIC CLARITY THROUGH POLITICAL  
STRUGGLE!

FOR THE REBIRTH OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL!

31 July 1975

Authorised by A Georgiou for the LaTrobe  
Spartacist Club ■

CONTINUED FROM PAGE FOUR

## LCR purges . . .

B-LF declares its determination to struggle to reforge a politically homogeneous, democratic-centralist Fourth International.

The international Spartacist tendency is committed to waging the "difficult, long, and, above all, uneven" struggle for the rebirth of the FI ("Declaration for the Organizing of an International Trotskyist Tendency," *WV* no 49, 19 July 1974). An essential part of this struggle will be the regrouping of valuable forces from ostensibly revolutionary organizations through a process of splits and fusions. In a number of countries this is already occurring and we hope that the Bolshevik-Leninist Faction will follow the path taken by the RIT, B-LF and individual comrades in Australia, Austria, Canada, France, Germany and the US who have broken with Pabloism to make common cause with the international Spartacist tendency.

FOR A TROTSKYIST ORGANIZATION IN FRANCE!

TOWARD THE REBIRTH OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL!

reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 69, 23 May '75

## The document the U Sec majority refuses to print

# Appeal of the Bolshevik-Leninist Group of Vietnam

The following letter was sent to last year's "Tenth World Congress" of the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International". This poignant appeal is itself a devastating comment on the liquidationist consequences of the USec's capitulation to Vietnamese Stalinism. If, as USec leaders allege, the "Vietnamese Communist Party" is "empirically revolutionary", and the "Vietnamese leadership as a whole has assimilated the decisive implications of the permanent revolution for colonial and semi-colonial countries" (Pierre Rousset, *Le Parti Communiste Vietnamien*), what interest can Ernest Mandel & Co have in building a Vietnamese Trotskyist party?

It is small wonder, then, that to this day the Bolshevik-Leninist Group of Vietnam has received "no help whatsoever from the International or from the Ligue Communiste". Not only does the BLVG's letter remain unanswered, but the top leadership of the French Ligue (now LCR), the USec majority's star section, has refused to "publicise" the existence of the Vietnamese group even by publishing this letter in its internal bulletin or discussing the matter in its Central Committee!

The BLVG asks pointedly, "Should the International concern itself with a Vietnamese Trotskyist group" loyal to the USec under difficult conditions? And "Should we work towards the creation of a section of the Fourth International in Vietnam?" Following the taking of Saigon, the professional tailists of this fake-Trotskyist fake International have in effect responded to the questions of their Vietnamese comrades ... in the negative.

In articles and statements celebrating the military victory of DRV/NLF troops over the puppet Thieu regime, both the guerrillaist majority and the orthodox-posturing reformists of the minority "Leninist-Trotskyist Faction" have downplayed the assassination of several thousand Vietnamese Trotskyists by the followers of Ho Chi Minh in 1945-47. To the minorityite groups which bother to mention them, such as the Australian Socialist Workers League, these murders are simply an episode enabling them to maintain a distance from the Stalinists without drawing revolutionary conclusions, calling for neither a political revolution nor a Trotskyist party in Vietnam.

It has been left to the international Spartacist tendency to uphold the struggle of our martyred Vietnamese comrades and call for the formation of authentic Trotskyist parties in Indochina as part of a reborn Fourth International. While unconditionally defending the new deformed workers states of South Vietnam and Cambodia against imperialism, we have called for extending the revolutionary conquests and opening the road to socialism by political revolution to replace Stalinist bureaucratic rule with the democratic rule of the working class (supported by the exploited peasantry) through soviets.

"Dear Comrades,

"The Bolshevik-Leninist Group of Vietnam (BLV), sends you its fraternal greetings and wishes the Congress great success in keeping with our great hopes.

"We know that serious subjects are presently being discussed in the International, especially the Vietnamese problem. We deeply regret that for material reasons (date of the Congress became known too late, passports, visas...) the BLV is absent from your debates. We regret it all the more because our group does not have the same position as the International nor the comrades of the opposition. We could contribute original ideas as Vietnamese Trotskyists, having been able to read many Vietnamese documents hardly known outside of the country.

"Our BLV group was constituted as a section of the International in 1947, by joining the International. It has a long history behind it. It was our group that had successfully led, during the 1946-1953 period, the movement of 20,000 emigrant workers in France... Our group was able to resist the most brutal repression of French imperialism during the first war in Vietnam.

"... a small group remains in France and carries on in spite of a thousand difficulties. It is the present defender of Vietnamese Trotskyist traditions and ideas.

"Although for tactical reasons we don't officially identify ourselves in our press as Trotskyists, all the Vietnamese political circles in France know of our existence, especially the North Vietnamese ruling circles. We are seeking to constantly intervene in the struggle against American imperialism through

all sorts of actions taking many different forms.

"In the very special historical conditions in Vietnam, where the enormous weight of the VCP ["Vietnamese Communist Party"] crushes all the organisations to its left, maintaining a Trotskyist group, even a propaganda group, is an extremely difficult task. We have been able to do this during these last years with no help whatsoever from the International or from the Ligue Communiste.

"In the political debate now unfolding in the International, we note two opposite errors. The first consists of prettying up the VCP to the point of labelling it a Revolutionary Party, thus forgetting the entire past historical development of this party, and not taking into account its present opportunistic and empirical policy which could cause serious setbacks for the Vietnamese Revolution. The second error is wanting at all costs to stick to the old schemas and refusing to see the evolution of this party in the new conditions and the fact that it has successfully led the national liberation struggle.

"The BLV group is constantly careful to not fall into either of the two errors. It constantly attempts to keep in touch with reality, to understand it and to draw the lessons from it for action, never losing sight of the fundamental principles of Trotskyism and Leninism.

"Comrades,

"We request that you make our existence known to the sections and that you debate out the following questions.

"1) Should the International concern itself with a Vietnamese Trotskyist group which has remained loyal to the International and which has carried on against great obstacles, in the most difficult of conditions?

"2) Should we work towards the creation of a section of the Fourth International in Vietnam?

"An answer to these two questions would already resolve half the debate under way on the Vietnamese problem.

Our very fraternal greetings,

the BLVG  
February 5, 1974"





ATV-O Eyewitness News

Left: A member of the RSM shoves SL supporter Andrew Georgiou into plate glass window. Georgiou was lucky to escape with deep lacerations to the back which required 50 stitches.

Right: Stalinist thugs grab SL supporter and AMWU militant David Grumont. From the left, facing the camera the goons are Ian Coulter, Jim Morris and Brian Boyd. Grumont, like Georgiou, is an ex-Maoist and a former LaTrobe/WSA activist. Meanwhile, SLer John Sheridan was repeatedly kicked and punched by four Stalinist goons.



ATV-O Eyewitness News

## Murderous Stalinism at LaTrobe

- Maoists defend Hamer, attack Spartacists
- LaTrobe fake-lefts cross class line to ban Maoists

The Melbourne Spartacist leaflet reprinted below describes the savage, unprovoked assault, only narrowly missing a fatality, by members and supporters of the Maoist Radical Student Movement (RSM) on members and supporters of the Spartacist League (SL) at LaTrobe University on 30 July. The pseudo-Trotskyist Socialist Labour League, which resorts to the same methods of physical intimidation under cover of identical slanders of the typical Stalinist variety ("provocateurs", FBI/CIA baiting) (see *ASP* no 21, July 1975), has helped to create a cover for this Stalinist thuggery. The brutal Maoist assault is a grim lesson in the Stalinist nature and dangerous consequences of the SLL's "methods".

Since the attack, the RSM has resorted to further threats. When SL supporter Bruno Mascitelli arrived at the Thursday 31 July SRC meeting he was told by Sam Monaco (an instigator of the previous day's attack): "you are as good as dead". Barry York, a senior spokesman for LaTrobe Maoism, has threatened the editor of *Rabelais* (LaTrobe student newspaper) with violence should he publish any photographs or names with regard to the 30 July attack.

The response of the Socialist Youth Alliance (SYA), youth group of the Socialist Workers League (SWL), and the Revolutionary Communist Club (RCC), campus supporters of the Socialist Workers Action Group (SWAG), illustrates clearly that the approach of these groups to workers' democracy and open political struggle is by no means healthier than the Maoists'. The successful SYA-initiated motion to disaffiliate the RSM from the Clubs and Societies Council was subsequently endorsed by the RCC. Disaffiliation is a bureaucratic, administrative act of repression which makes no useful political point and will certainly not prevent violence; but by depriving the Maoists of the measure of protection afforded

by legitimacy in the student body (available even to the most openly reactionary organisations) it thereby lays the basis for an attack on the Maoists, potentially including exclusion from the university, by the university administration -- the direct agency of the bourgeois state -- or by the openly bourgeois political tendencies on the campus (eg Liberal Party and DLP fronts). Disaffiliation is *at best* a quite conscious attempt to suppress political struggle in the workers and left movement every bit as decisive in principle, if not as spectacular, as that of the RSM with their violence.

The SYA, confronted with the utter hypocrisy of its condemning the Maoist violence while continuing its own practice of politically excluding SL supporters from its "open public" forums, has argued that there is a qualitative difference between "mere" exclusionism and physical violence. In fact both flow from the common need of these fake revolutionary organisations to suppress the open political fight for Bolshevik politics. Pandering to liberal/pacifist sentiments widespread among LaTrobe students, the SYA condemns *any* student violence. Clearly, however, left groups must defend a union picket line on campus from police or scabs, or attempt to prevent fascist scum and their student supporters from spreading their filth. The SL's argument with the Maoists is not over the question of violence in general, but that the RSM's violence is directed at left opponents as an act of cowardly political suppression.

The SYA, RCC, LaTrobe Feminists and Gay Liberation have circulated a joint statement condemning the RSM thuggery. The Spartacist Club was prepared to sign this provided it could qualify its support by adding to its signature a short, clear note registering its opposition to the disaffiliation of the RSM. In the circumstances to unconditionally support this statement meant to politically endorse the attempt, backed by the other signatories, to suppress the RSM's right to advocate their politics. The SYA and RCC *refused* this request to allow the SL to clarify its position (calling the SL "sectarian") -- proving the correctness of our reservation. At the general meeting of students convened as a result of an SYA/RCC petition, the Spartacist Club presented two motions, one condemning the Maoist thuggery (which carried) and one demanding that Clubs and Societies revoke the disaffiliation of the RSM (which narrowly failed).

The Communist Club (campus supporters of the Communist Party of Australia -- CPA) are primarily concerned with maintaining their standing "unity of the left" rotten bloc with the Maoists. Leading spokesman and SRC member Greg Norris has pontificated that it is not fair to blame only the RSM, for the differences between the RSM and the Trotskyists cannot be resolved peacefully. After all, he might have continued, Stalin must have been so "provoked" by Trotsky's insistence on fighting for world proletarian revolution that he just had to have Trotsky killed! (The CPA's Denis Freney also sees nothing wrong with Stalinist murders of Trotskyists -- see article on page six). It is not necessary to agree with Trotsky-

ism to see that the RSM's Maoist violence and all other such attacks are an attack on the workers movement as a whole, and on the democratic rights of all workers to decide what program to support. The SL, convinced of the correctness of its ideas, has steadfastly supported this principle, which the CPA's spokesmen cynically deride.

Violence in the movement must be fought both through political exposure and by the formation of defence blocs for workers' democracy. In view of the RSM's vicious physical attack and its subsequent further threats a joint defence bloc has been formed at LaTrobe including the Spartacist Club, the SYA, the RCC and the LaTrobe Feminists. It is urgent for all left groups and students to co-operate on defence of democracy in the pro-working-class movement.

### Maoist gangster attack causes serious injury

Yesterday in Function Room 2 of the LaTrobe Union building members and supporters of the LaTrobe Prisoners Action Group (PAG) and the Maoist Radical Student Movement (RSM) carried out a vicious, unprovoked physical attack on supporters and members of the Spartacist League (SL). The attack, which was filmed by ATV-O News and received national coverage, occurred during a protest demonstration against the Victorian Liberal Premier Mr Rupert Hamer. Demonstrators had entered Function Room 2 where Hamer was dining. Three SL comrades, Andrew Georgiou, John Sheridan and David Grumont participated in the protest with placards. One of the placards carried the call "Down with Hamer! Down with Capitalist Parties!", while the other slogan was "Oust Whitlam, Hawke and Cairns and all the labour bureaucrats! For a revolutionary leadership of the workers movement pledged to the expropriation of the Capitalist class!" These communist slogans apparently threw the RSM and PAG into a frenzy -- their own protest against the reactionary capitalist politician consisted solely of complaints about conditions at Pentridge Gaol. They attempted to destroy our placards, singling out the one attacking Hamer [and] thus defending a bourgeois politician. Hamer is not to be bargained with over reforms but is a sworn enemy of the labour movement. Failing in this [attempt to destroy placards] about 10 Maoists launched their cowardly gangster assault, punching and kicking the SL comrades. The attack was initiated by Sam Monaco with Brian Boyd and Jim Morris playing prominent roles. Andrew Georgiou was hurled into a plate glass window receiving a deep laceration that required hospital treatment and 50 stitches. John Sheridan was repeatedly kicked and punched by at least four of the Stalinist goons.

Throughout the demonstration RSM and PAG members attempted to finger the SL to the University authorities and the police by "exposing" David

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#### Young Spartacus pamphlet

### The Stalin school of falsification revisited

The Workers Vanguard articles replying to the New York Guardian attack on Trotskyism is now available in pamphlet form

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