



Money rules

Murdoch's or Iraq's, it's all the same

Scandal provides smokescreen for Fraser's offensive

A breakfast tete-a-tete between the former Labor Prime Minister, the National Secretary of the ALP and two Iraqi government officials (one the head of Iraq's secret police) both armed with machine pistols and travelling under aliases, hosted by an ex-Liberal, anti-Semitic, pro-apartheid intermediary -- as the result of an offer by the Iraqi government, sympathetic to the ALP's demise in last year's "coup", to secretly give \$500,000 for campaign expenses. It all sounds like a plot from a cheap spy thriller. Nevertheless those are the allegations with which Labor Opposition leader Whitlam is being pilloried in a vendetta led by press baron Rupert Murdoch, a scandal that is destined to throw the ALP bureaucracy into another bitter round of internal factional squabbling and to divert attention from the Fraser government's anti-working-class plans for "economic recovery".

It has now been proven that the Iraqi officials were *not* armed (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 March) showing how dubious Murdoch's "revelations" can be. But despite the difficulty of disentangling hard fact from the gossip and slander in the daily press, it has been established that the Baghdad regime *did* offer the ALP \$500,000, that this offer was rejected by the party executive in February and that Whitlam and National ALP Secretary Combe had a series of discussions, prior to the 10 December "social breakfast", with the fringe right-wing businessman and intermediary Henry Fischer, who hosted the breakfast in his posh flat. But according to the norms of bourgeois politics, consistently applied, Whitlam has done nothing wrong. No one would have done more than raise an eyebrow if Whitlam had met with US or British government officials. Even to accept bribes -- implicit or explicit -- is normal practice; CIA funding to conservative bourgeois parties throughout the world is an established fact of life. Similarly Murdoch's own \$70,000 "donation" to the ALP in 1972 is an open secret (a "gift" on which perhaps he expected a return greater than he got). Straightforward bribery is merely one of the ways in which the capitalist class, with its monopoly on wealth and economic power, controls the most "democratic" of parliaments.

Given the racist anti-Arab prejudice previously whipped up over the "Khemlani affair", a strong Zionist lobby and the ruling class's hysterical anti-Labor campaign, Whitlam's crime in the wheeling-and-dealing terms of the labour bureaucracy was incredibly stupid misjudgment. And as a result the normally hidden intrigues and rottenness of bourgeois politics -- bribery, corruption, local and international perks and favours -- have been partially exposed to light, bringing down a wave of bourgeois hypocrisy on the subjects of "honesty", "principle" and "clean government".

The premises of the sometimes explicitly racist and anti-communist smear campaign linking Whitlam and the ALP to what is invariably described as the "terrorist-supporting", "Kremlin-backed", "pro-PLO" Iraqi regime have been accepted without a word by almost all the Labor reformists. The one major exception, leading member of the Victorian ALP's Socialist Left Bill Hartley, has attacked the anti-Arab chauvinism but defended the donation offer because it was from a "non-aligned revolutionary socialist country committed to socialist principles" (*The Australian*, 27 February). And he could scarcely do otherwise, for he was instrumental in the attempt to arrange the gift and especially in the involvement of Fischer!

Iraq: "revolutionary socialist"?

Both Hartley and, for diametrically opposite purposes, the capitalist press have attempted to create the myth that the capitalist Bonapartist Iraqi regime is "communist" -- the latter to aid its smear campaign, the former to obscure from more left-wing workers his key role in the whole shabby affair with a "revolutionary" facade. Iraq is an integral part of the capitalist world and its present Ba'athist regime, a clique of "left" nationalist officers, has shown its commitment to "socialist principles" by its genocidal campaign against its oppressed Kurdish minority. Zionists meanwhile are attacking Iraq for supporting the "terrorist" PLO, while Israel's mass terrorism against Palestinian refugees staggers the imagination. *Neither Zionism nor Arab nationalism but proletarian internationalism!*

The ALP has a democratic right to accept money from anyone it chooses. But any "donations" from a capitalist state, or individual capitalists like Murdoch to the ALP are in practice bribes, and for the pro-capitalist misleadership to accept them with their implicit obligations is an

Continued on page two



Gough Whitlam (top) and Bill Hartley: allies in adversity.



Former publication of United Secretariat supporters in Luanda.

MPLA: "Nationalists of a new type"?

See page 4

MURDOCH'S . . .

attack on the class independence of the ALP as the mass party of Australian workers.

The whole affair has also shed further light on the utter political bankruptcy of the Socialist Left in its backing of Whitlam since the elections. The man who led Federal intervention into the Socialist Left dominated Victorian branch in 1970, the chief spokesman for a Labor Government that did all it could to throw the burden of the capitalist recession onto the working class is now, in Hartley's words, a man of "impeccable honour and integrity" (*The Australian*, 27 February). And while Hartley, conceivably with some justification, talks of a Fraser/Murdoch/Fischer/CIA/Israeli intelligence/ALP right wing plot he cannot pass off his dealings with the creature Fischer as simply a "stupid political error".

Meanwhile Fraser, obviously long-informed of the brewing scandal, has sat back and let events unfold apart from minor provocations like seizing the diaries of Whitlam's bodyguards. Whitlam's efforts to revive the memory of "Kerr's coup" have been upstaged and badly tarnished. And the furore within the ALP will provide a convenient diversion as Fraser prepares to implement his union-busting austerity program. The preparations are well under way with an attack against "dole bludgers", reviews and cuts in government spending (primarily in social welfare) and ceilings on employment and sackings in the Public Service (complemented with a few subsidies for the bosses -- a 40% investment allowance and a suspension of company tax until 1977).

Fraser's precipitous entry into the February wage indexation hearings however, openly arguing for a 3.2% cut in real wages, focused on the heart of the matter. Despite the diplomatic granting of the full 6.4% by the Arbitration Commission, wage indexation in its present form is finished. Together with proposed legislation to institute state-controlled secret ballots for union elections, plans to revise the arbitration commission's terms of reference to emphasise "economic criteria" and barely concealed threats to reinvoke the penal powers, the package constitutes Fraser's central strategy for "restoring business confidence" -- the shackling and intimidation of the unions in order to cut real wages.

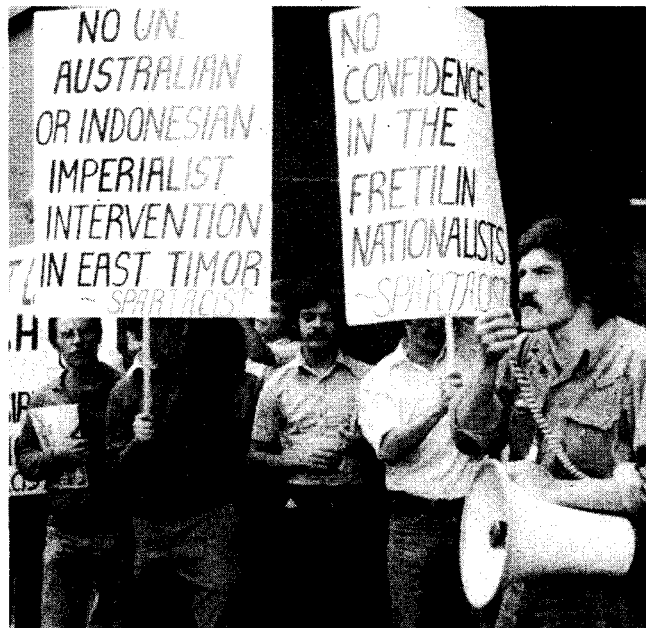
During the wage indexation hearings Hawke was counselled caution while Carmichael urged protest strikes, and his AMWU and Communist Party of Australia cohort John Halfpenny, along with BWIU chief Pat Clancy, promised rolling strikes if the full increase were not granted. But the opposition of the "left" trade-union officials to wage indexation (a de facto wage freeze) and the arbitration system of which it is part, has been purely verbal. The aim was simply to "pressure" Justice Moore and to provide an escape valve for militant workers.

Class-struggle militants in the AMWU and the BWIU (unlike the cowardly Communist League that called the weak-kneed Clancy/Halfpenny proposals an "adventure" (*Militant* 16 February!)) would have blocked with the "left" bureaucrats' calls for some sort of action but pointed out in the sharpest way their complete inadequacy. They would have argued not only for their extension into other industries but also for their transformation into *political strikes* that would centre on measures necessary to a real defence against Fraser and the bosses: *Smash the wage indexation guidelines! For a full monthly automatic cost-of-living adjustment on all wages! For a sliding scale of hours beginning with an immediate 35-hour week with no loss in pay for all workers!*

Capitalist conspiracies and the venality, corruption and hypocrisy of bourgeois politics will remain until capitalism is overthrown. In their efforts to appease an increasingly belligerent ruling class the present reformist leadership of the class will inevitably attempt to sidetrack

Timor moratorium shenanigans

Amidst chaos and confusion the second general meeting of the East Timor Moratorium Campaign (ETMC) on 23 February affirmed political support for FRETILIN as the basis of the committee and for participation in any actions the committee holds. The East Timor defence campaign (previously dominated by the Committee for an Independent East Timor (CIET) and the Australia East Timor Association (AETA) has so far been preoccupied with appeals to the United Nations and the Australian bourgeoisie to "do something" in a liberal/pacifist campaign directed at "humanitarian" public opinion. The independence of the



Wentworth Hotel, Sydney, 8 February -- Spartacists demonstrate against UN Secretary-General Waldheim, opposing UN or any imperialist role in East Timor, in counterposition to liberal CIET lobby appealing for UN action. The CL, although raising slogans against UN intervention, nevertheless joined the pro-UN picket!

East Timorese will not be guaranteed by any of East Timor's pro-imperialist "friends"; it will depend largely upon the action of the Indonesian proletariat. Labour action, both in Australia and Indonesia, against the invasion and support for the military victory of FRETILIN must be the central aim of any defence of East Timorese independence.

The ETMC is a bloc of the already existing Timor committees and left groups not previously in them, established on the basis of the following demands: All Indonesian troops out now; recognise the Democratic Republic of East Timor; Indonesia: no aid, no trade; and "as a general theme" solidarity with FRETILIN. The first two demands must necessarily be part of the basis for any defence of East Timorese independence. Trade bans can be given critical support, for in the short term they can be an effective demonstration of working-class solidarity; but in the longer term their effects will be mostly relayed to the oppressed. However the vague theme of "solidarity with Fretilin" implies political support for FRETILIN and therefore the continued subordination of the Timorese resistance to bourgeois nationalism to which Marxists could give no support.

At the 23 February general meeting the Spartacist League which had affiliated to the committee

the coming struggles. Only a rigorous struggle by programmatically based caucuses within the unions can oust these mercenaries of capital, and truly unite the class -- behind a class-struggle program for power. *Expropriate Murdoch and all the capitalist press barons! Abolish the arbitration system! Defeat Fraser's anti-union laws -- complete independence of the unions from the bourgeois state! Down with the Fraser Government! For an ALP Government pledged to expropriate the capitalist class!*

with the intention of clarifying a principled political basis for the committee put the following motion: "That the Moratorium committee meeting substitute the slogan 'For Military Victory to Fretilin' for the slogan 'Solidarity with Fretilin' which implies political support to Fretilin and has been used as a basis for exclusionism". When this motion was undemocratically ruled out of order by the chairman (Socialist Workers Party leader Gordon Adler) and the ruling upheld by the meeting, it was clear that "solidarity" meant political support to FRETILIN and that it was "out of order" even to fight against it within the committee.

But the meeting also had to deal with the political basis for participation in the activities of the Moratorium committee, a question that was generally equated with the political basis for participation in the committee itself. At the Moratorium Representatives committee (which acts as an executive between general meetings) on 17 February leading Communist Party of Australia (CPA) spokesman Denis Freney had argued for the exclusion, by force if necessary, of those politically opposed to FRETILIN from activities around the FRETILIN leaders' upcoming tour, slanderously attacking the Spartacist League as ASIO and CIA agents. Freney's frenzied, filthy lies followed the Spartacist League's demonstration against visiting UN Secretary-General Waldheim in Sydney on 8 February, where Freney and the CIET were trying to persuade the imperialist henchman to intervene in East Timor to "save" the Timorese from the Suharto generals! SL class-struggle placards and chants such as "No UN, Australian or Indonesian imperialist intervention in East Timor" and "Remember Congo, Korea" infuriated Freney who threatened SL supporters that "the next time you do this you'll get smashed."

At the chaotic debate at the general meeting Freney at least provided comic relief, three times storming out of the meeting calling on people to follow him, only to return minutes later. But it was the CPA along with the Stalinist Socialist Party of Australia's youth group, the Young Socialist League (YSL), that explicitly fought for the exclusion from demonstrations of anyone opposed to FRETILIN's politics. The YSL, while separating itself from Freney's threatened violence, moved that no-one should be allowed to carry anti-FRETILIN slogans but if they did the committee should publicly disassociate itself from them. The Communist League (CL), which sometimes makes half-hearted criticisms of FRETILIN, in a rather more sophisticated attempt at political exclusionism then moved that anyone "in agreement with the committee's orientation and slogans ... be allowed full participation in all actions of the committee and be able to raise their full program and political differences." Both these motions which on the surface are totally contradictory, passed in the confusion of the meeting. Both of them represent an attack on the principle of workers democracy, an attack which could seriously undermine the active defence of FRETILIN.

The Spartacist League's motion "that this Moratorium committee declares that all individuals and groups who oppose the Indonesian invasion, support the military victory of FRETILIN and stand for independence for East Timor, be allowed to participate in the activities of the Moratorium committee without fear of exclusion or political censorship", following the passage of the two previous motions, was never put. Despite the opportunist and exclusionist manoeuvres of the ETMC it remains the only principled basis to build a non-exclusionist class-based defence of East Timor. ■

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CPA militant won to Trotskyism

Reprinted below is the resignation statement of ex-Communist Party of Australia member Graeme Grassie. Comrade Grassie has now joined the Spartacist League.

The purpose and raison d'etre of a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary party is to prepare the working class and its allies to seize state power, destroy the old capitalist state, and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat nationally and internationally preliminary to the abolition of classes and exploitation throughout the world. The will and intention to carry through this great purpose are encapsulated in the theory, programme and organisational practices of such a revolutionary party. That the CPA is deficient in all these aspects is the reason for my resignation and my allegiance to the Spartacist League (Australian section of the international Spartacist tendency) which, I have decided, after long discussion, alone has the understanding, programme and organisational practices sufficient to this task.

My arrival at this decision is the fruit of four years' experience of trying to transform the CPA into a revolutionary party; my conclusion is that the CPA's continuing influence in the workers' movement and elsewhere in fact constitutes an obstacle to the building of a genuinely revolutionary party. When I joined the CPA in February 1972, after a couple of years in anarcho-syndicalist and Maoist currents of the student left, I did so in the somewhat naive belief that the CPA had made a qualitative leap to the left as a result of its criticism of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and its adoption of the ideas of workers' control and self-management. It was the departure of the SPA in December 1971 that precipitated my decision to join, for I regarded the pro-Soviet faction as a thoroughly reformist force oriented to bureaucratic control of the unions. It seemed to me that the revolutionising of the CPA depended on attracting new forces and convincing a rather old and cynical membership of the validity of the 1970 Congress ideas. This whole approach was based on the misconception, fortified by my lack of Marxist understanding and knowledge of CPA practices, that the "coalition of the left", "counter-hegemonic strategy", and other new ideas were revolutionary.

Leaning on the reformists

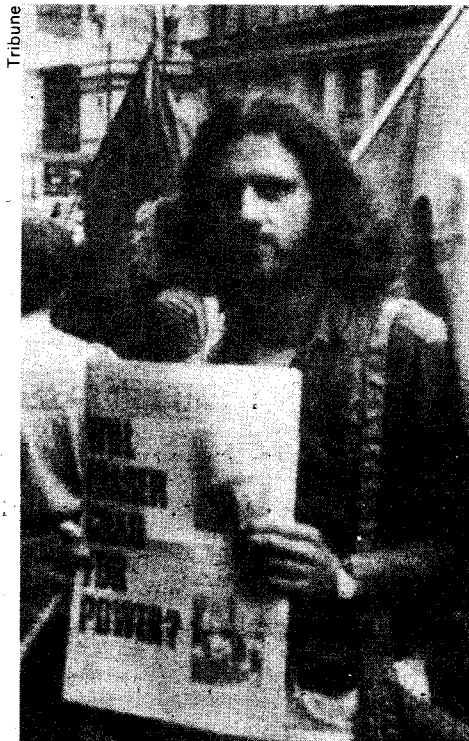
In fact, the "coalition of the left" is a slightly more militant expression of the former "united front with the ALP" strategy; it sees united front action as occurring with "left" ALP members and activists around the basic issues of concern to the working class, and is perhaps based on the leading role Laurie Carmichael played in the Penal Powers struggles during the '60s. While it may lead to economic militancy in the short-run, in the long-run it will never lead to revolution, since its whole purpose is not to win the working class away from its current reformist leadership to a communist leadership, (as the early Comintern advised at its 3rd Congress regarding the use of the united front as a *tactic*) but rather to pressurize the ALP to carry out pro-working class reforms. The only strategy flowing from this in practice could be parliamentarist, with extra-parliamentary mass movements to push a CPA-left ALP coalition along the road to socialism.

An illustration of the betrayals it can lead to concerns the metal trades' award campaign in the middle of 1975 when, after a rather weak attempt at co-ordinated national action, the metal trades leadership backed down under ALP pressure for wage restraint, and advocated guerrilla action in individual factories for over-award rises, which would, even if successful, leave behind the weaker shops. Halfpenny of the Vic AMWU supported this strategy, while Carmichael in the national leadership preferred national protest stoppages. *Tribune* wavered in between the two positions, which both sought to head off a real national strike -- and when the trade union negotiating committee's resolution was put to mass meetings no CPA member spoke against, and many spoke for, which left the CPA lagging behind the spontaneous and militant revulsion of a large section of the rank-and-file which almost toppled the official resolution.

The "counter-hegemony" part of the CPA strategy is designed to provide the extra-parliamentary mass movements to pressure parliament, and not a mass movement of the oppressed united under working-class leadership to smash the capitalist state. The CPA's notion is not at all Marxist or principled, for it is simply an adaption to the demands of the feminists, gay liberationists, ecologists, black nationalists and every other trend that looks "progressive". The conception of the vanguard party corresponding to the CPA's programme is simply that of an umbrella organisation for the various reform movements protesting

against the excesses of capitalism and of traditional bourgeois ideology, but in no way attacking the foundations of capitalist society.

What I found on joining was probably much worse than I had expected. The internal life of the party was non-existent. One continually planned educationals which were not attended and collapsed after the first one or two attempts; the membership's understanding of Marxism and of the party's programme was pretty low; discussion of either was nil; there was no internal bulletin; and there were no new young forces coming along to revitalise things. The external expressions of these failings were an inability to hold or gain recruits, a lack of any consistent party work except sporadic *Tribune* sales (I stopped asking after a time what was happening when I realised that nothing was), and the party branches, which, still based on localities dating from 1945 when the party wanted to run candidates for parliament and local government, were virtually reduced to producing jumble and jam for the *Tribune* fairs. My reaction to this was to hold on, maintain my enthusiasm, and hope to get on a leading body of the party where I could exert some influence. I succeeded two years later.



Graeme Grassie, former member of Qld State Executive and State Committee of the CPA

Soon after I joined, two groups, in Adelaide and Melbourne, came into the CPA and within a year in December 1973 they and their co-thinkers produced the "Adelaide" document around which was crystallised a Left Tendency. Its characteristic positions, with which I identified and which confirmed me in my resolution to stay in the CPA, were: that the ALP is a bourgeois party, not a workers' party; and that trade unions can have no revolutionary function, as they act as brokers between labour and capital, requiring them to be replaced by rank-and-file organisations such as shop committees during a revolutionary period, when they will be the embryonic soviets. While this is certainly to the left of the official CPA position, particularly in that the ALP has to be destroyed rather than pressured to the left, it contains a number of severe deficiencies which both allow the LT to remain in the CPA and prevent it from posing a revolutionary leadership which can take on the current reformist ALP and trade union leaderships and replace them.

The "Left Tendency" and syndicalism

First, the ALP is not a bourgeois party of the working class, but a workers' party with a bourgeois leadership and programme; the LT's approach leads to both opportunist and sectarian errors. (The Communist League, an ostensibly Trotskyist organisation, makes identical errors, but is less consistent in them.) For example, this formulation does not distinguish between the ALP and the Democratic Party in the US: would the LT offer critical support to the Democrats in an election campaign? If the answer is "yes", then one has no principled reason for not entering a treacherous popular front, if "no", then the LT falls into the Stalinist "third period" errors of calling only for the "united front from below" and the formation of soviets now while ritualistically condemning the traitorous social-democrats. The Spartacist League's analysis, which is also that of the early Comintern allows revolutionaries to practise a number of tactics such as entrism, critical support, and the united front, which have as their purpose intersecting the contradiction between the aspirations and needs of the working-class base, and the bourgeois programme of the leadership, in order to win the base to a revolutionary programme.

Second, the LT's opposition on principle to the idea of a revolutionary trade-union leader-

ship means that in practice it excuses the reformism of the CPA's present trade-union bureaucrats, while glorifying the equally reformist CPA shop stewards and rank-and-file workers. They argue that it is not so much the programme that counts at this level, as the organisational potential -- thus, there is a thrust toward combined shop committees with a programme of mere militancy rather than revolutionary politics. This is a fundamental departure from Leninism in the direction of syndicalism, and is not at all a confrontation with reformist ideology, which does not exist independently of a loyalty to reformist parties and leaders. Militant rank-and-file organisations can in no way act as a substitute for building a revolutionary party if one's aim is to unite the class under communist leadership and seize state power. That the LT has not yet gone beyond seeing the primary importance of the revolutionary party as "substitutionist" is a measure of its distance from revolutionary politics.

"Bureaucratic anarchism"

At the Queensland State Conference in 1974 I was elected to the State Committee and State Executive (I am still formally a member of these bodies), and came within one vote (my own) of the National Committee. At the first full day meeting of the State Committee held to discuss priorities I elaborated a plan of action of creating industrial fractions responsible to the SC, and of subjecting all other areas of party work, particularly ecology movement, women's movement, and campus activity, to the scrutiny of the SC and its officers. When a long-standing member of the National Executive denounced my plan as "stalinist", and no one else on the SC supported me, it dawned on me that these people hadn't a clue about building a revolutionary party, and that the function of leading bodies of the CPA is not to direct or lead, but to act as talking shops which have no impact on the activity of the membership.

At the time of the 24th Congress of the CPA in 1974, the SL wrote an article which described the organisational life of the CPA as "bureaucratic anarchism". This struck me then as very precise. There are three factions in the CPA: a dominant centre which controls the Sydney organisation and the National Committee; a right-wing faction which runs the Victorian organisation; and a left faction which is based in South Australia. Since there are no factions allowed in the CPA, these three groups come together for NC or National Executive meetings, argue it out, then go back to their home base to do what they previously intended to do. Most of the party rank and file don't know what goes on at these meetings, nor how differences expressed there would affect their own practice, so they go right on doing whatever they want to do.

In effect, there is no structure for the democratic discussion and working out of principled differences within the bounds of centralist responsibility, as was quickly demonstrated by the expulsion of the Bolshevik Tendency, for no more than having "disloyal" thoughts and intentions -- ie that the CPA is reformist, and that the revolutionaries within it must have a perspective of splitting from the reformists. This organisational anarchy is not accidental but corresponds to the CPA's programme, which is an amalgam of "progressive" trends devoid of Marxist analysis or working-class content whose sum is supposed to amount to a counter-hegemonic strategy. It is not the CPA's fault that it has not been flooded by these trends -- there is nothing to keep such recruits out. One of two things could happen to the CPA in the event of a serious crisis -- it could fall into the arms of the ALP, perhaps playing a significant role in preventing the working class from breaking from reformism as a left opposition in tandem with the Socialist Left within the ALP (a trend heralded by *Daily Tribune* before last year's elections), or it could shatter. On at least one decisive question for revolutionaries -- the defence of the USSR against imperialism -- the CPA would almost certainly split.

The CPA's organisational and programmatic chaos are tightly inter-connected. If the CPA leadership really had the will to make a revolution, they would be forging an instrument which could carry it through. After the break with the Soviet Union, there was no longer that fundamental loyalty to the Kremlin bureaucrats to hold the programme and the practice together. Rather, the leadership has for eight years been attempting to build a party which is an umbrella for every leftish and progressive movement (particularly those in evidence among the petty-bourgeoisie) which wants a better deal from the ALP. It is this appetite which defines the CPA's

Continued on page seven

Angolan leftists jailed by their strikebreaking "comrades"

MPLA: "Nationalists of a new type"?

The war in Angola which has dominated the headlines for several months has caused turmoil in the ostensible socialist movement internationally, with most groups hitching their carts to one or another of the contending petty-bourgeois nationalist movements: the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).

Moscow-line Stalinists have naturally lined up behind the Soviet-backed MPLA. Consequently, in a simple knee-jerk reaction, Peking-loyal Maoists sided with the rabidly anti-communist FNLA and neo-colonialist UNITA. In the name of fighting "Soviet social-imperialism" these shameless bootlickers place themselves in the camp of US imperialism, South African apartheid and their Angolan toadies!

This was too much for many self-proclaimed "Marxist-Leninists", so a number of groups to the left of the pro-Russian Communist parties climbed aboard the MPLA bandwagon. These include a number of "critical Maoist" tendencies, among them Lotta Continua in Italy, the Uniao Democratica Popular in Portugal, the Kommunistischer Bund (Nord) in West Germany and the *Guardian* in the US.

While Stalinists of different stripes are singing the praises of their preferred Angolan nationalists, the Spartacist tendency has called since early November for *military* support to the Soviet-backed MPLA against the imperialist-led coalition. In the earlier three-cornered power struggle, we gave no backing to any of the nationalist movements, and have always refused to give *political* support to these forces which hope to construct a capitalist Angola. All of them, we have warned, will ruthlessly oppose or attempt to subordinate every manifestation of independent working-class struggle.

Mandelites tail "revolutionary" nationalists

In contrast to Trotskyist insistence on the necessity of proletarian independence, the centrist majority of Ernest Mandel's "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" (USec) has tailed after the MPLA in a fashion not much different from the "critical Maoists". With an occasional ritual reference to the desirability of an "independent and socialist Angola", the USec's real policy is "All Power to the MPLA!"

Naturally the Stalinists have no trouble selling this line, since an MPLA-ruled Angola would simply represent the "democratic" (capitalist) stage of their "two-stage revolution" schema. But to call for "all power to the MPLA" and still give lip service to the theory of permanent revolution which holds that only the dictatorship of the *proletariat*, supported by the peasantry, can break the imperialist stranglehold over the colonial countries -- requires a fundamental mystification of the nature of the People's Movement. More than simply peddling stories about "people's clinics" and agricultural co-ops, the fake-Trotskyist USec must claim that somehow the MPLA challenges capitalism.

With all the enthusiasm of Bukharin's accolades for the Chinese Kuomintang in the 1920's, the Mandelites claim that "the dynamic set in motion by the specific features of Portuguese colonialism and by years of struggle have incontestably separated this revolutionary nationalism [of the MPLA] from the swamp of rightism and reformism" (*Inprecor*, 20 June 1974). Just as the arch-revisionist Michel Pablo explained how the "objective processes" would overcome the "limitations" of the Algerian FLN, here again it is the automatic "dynamic" which solves everything.

Of course, the USec has a difficulty with this fairy tale, since MPLA leader Agostinho Neto has made quite clear where he stands: "[I] am not a communist, I am not a socialist, I am first of all a patriot," he says (*New York Times*, 21 April 1975). No problem. This is explained away by references to "insufficiencies" and "ambiguous positions" deriving from the "heterogeneity, political weakness and bureaucratic deviations" in the "sometimes inadequate leadership of the MPLA". The USec sees the "radicalised elements

of the urban proletariat" in the "rank and file committees of the MPLA and in UNTA [the MPLA-led union]". It is this "vanguard" which it sees as "the spearhead of the entire revolutionary process today..." (*Africa in Struggle*, October 1975).

It is undoubtedly true that vital elements for the construction of a Trotskyist party could be won from among intellectuals and plebeian elements in the MPLA. But this requires a sharp struggle to break them from the petty-bourgeois nationalist People's Movement, which represents class forces hostile to the proletariat. Instead, in an article which rails at "those who believe that for revolutionary Marxists to support the MPLA is heresy", the USec asserts that "the political recomposition will take place *within* the MPLA toward the regroupment of an anti-capitalist tendency" (*Inprecor*, 20 November 1975 [our emphasis]).

Collusion with the colonial army

Why all these apologetics for the MPLA? Is the People's Movement perhaps a "revolutionary" nationalist formation of a "new" type, as the USec majority claims? A look at the history of the last eighteen months will dispel this myth. We can begin with the question of national independence itself. The MPLA rightly excoriates UNITA for its despicable attempts to collaborate with the Portuguese army in schemes for "gradual" decolonization and in attacks on the MPLA. *But when it got a chance, the MPLA did exactly the same!*

Far from "relative intransigence on the question of independence" which the USec ascribes to the MPLA, in the year after the Portuguese Armed Forces Movement (MFA) overthrew the Caetano dictatorship in Lisbon, the MPLA was foremost in trying to curry favor with the suddenly "revolutionary" officers of the demoralized colonial army. While the first chief of the MFA, General Antonio de Spínola, attempted to include the colonies in a Portugal-dominated "Lusitanian commonwealth" -- and obtained agreement from the "pro-Western" FNLA and UNITA in the August 1974 Sal Agreement -- once "eventual" independence was agreed to, the MPLA was more than willing to collaborate with the "democratic" army.

It did so particularly during the tenure of Portuguese high commissioner Admiral Antonio Rosa Coutinho, between September 1974 and January 1975, and asserted that it was the "only movement that will support and loyally cooperate with the progressive Portuguese forces" (March 1975 MPLA statement quoted in *Intercontinental Press*, 21 July 1975). That the demagogic MFA leaders were unable to work out a neo-colonial deal with the MPLA, similar to the Evian Accords whereby the FLN guaranteed French interests in "revolutionary" Algeria, was due not to Neto's "intransigence" but to the internal strains and shifting balance of power in the Lisbon government.

Chief among the reasons for the MPLA's attempted honeymoon with the Armed Forces Movement was its own military weakness. At the time of the April 1974 coup in Portugal, the Popular Movement was militarily battered and disorganized....

The military weakness of the MPLA was accentuated by acute internal factionalism, with two main groups challenging the Neto leadership. The "Active Revolt" group led by Rev Joaquim Pinto de Andrade and his brother Mario (leader of the Angolan Communist Party in the 1950s and former head of the MPLA) accused Neto of "presidentialism", "tribalism" and "regionalism", and rejected any dealings with the FNLA. An "Eastern Revolt" group was the personalist organization of guerrilla leader Daniel Chipenda, who simultaneously opposed a ceasefire with Portugal and favored unity with the FNLA....

The MPLA's factional strife reached a climax at its August 1974 congress in Zambia where the Neto faction walked out and Chipenda was elected president. Only under pressure from several African heads of state did the MPLA patch itself back together in mid-September, restoring Neto to the top post and making Chipenda and Pinto de Andrade vice presidents. But the truce did not

last, and Chipenda left the People's Movement soon afterwards.

At this point, wracked by internal fights and militarily vulnerable, the MPLA might simply have fallen apart had it not been for the intervention of the Portuguese army. Admiral Coutinho reportedly said at a news conference that he recognized only the Neto leadership as representing the MPLA. Neto thereupon appealed to the colonial authorities for military support, and when Chipenda tried to take the important eastern rail junction of Luso in January he was stopped by MPLA and Portuguese troops....

Agreement to neo-colonialism

Echoed by its USec camp followers, the MPLA today self-righteously denounces the FNLA and UNITA as always having been puppets of imperialism. Yet in Mombassa, Kenya, in early January 1975 the three groups produced a joint "declaration of principles" to "build a just and democratic society". This was perfectly consistent with Neto's continual denials of Western press accounts labelling the MPLA "Marxist", and with the MPLA program which doesn't go beyond a call for the "installation of a republican and democratic regime".

The Mombassa declaration paved the way for the nationalists to sign the Alvor accords with the Lisbon government a few days later. This agreement established a four-part coalition regime in Angola with a new Portuguese high commissioner (Coutinho, considered too pro-MPLA, was dumped in favor of brigadier general Silva Cardoso) to "arbitrate" any differences and be in charge of "defense" and "security". Under this classical neo-colonial arrangement, the transitional government's armed forces were to consist of 24,000 Portuguese troops and 8,000 from each nationalist group. Independence was set for November 11, with an election limited to the three groups to be held in October. The MFA, figuring it could strongly influence the vote, insisted on keeping troops in Angola until well after the elections. The MPLA went along.

The MPLA also agreed to explicit protection of colonial settler property interests. Point 54 of the accords states, "The FNLA, UNITA and MPLA undertake to respect the property and legitimate interests of Portuguese domiciled in Angola". The next point aims at keeping the "independent" state in Lisbon's economic orbit, registering agreement to "establish between Angola and Portugal lasting ties of cooperation in all fields". Even after the Alvor accords were scrapped, the MPLA continued to soothe imperialist interests. Lopo do Nascimento, now premier of the Luanda-based "People's Republic", said in September that the MPLA would not go "too fast" and that "there is now no reason for the existing companies to get alarmed"; in his independence address Neto stated that "foreign investment will be welcomed from all abiding by Angolan laws" (*New York Times*, 13 November).

The People's Movement's will to strike a bargain with imperialism has been evident in its dealings with the international oil trusts. Petroleum output from Gulf Oil's wells in the Cabinda enclave north of the Zaire (formerly Congo) River has been more than 150,000 barrels a day, with the company grossing over \$1 billion annually on the operation. Gulf officials have reported no complaints whatever with the MPLA, which has controlled Cabinda essentially without challenge for the last year and a half. In September the American monopoly paid royalties of \$116 million into a blocked account in the Bank of Angola which was taken over by the MPLA when independence was declared on November 11....

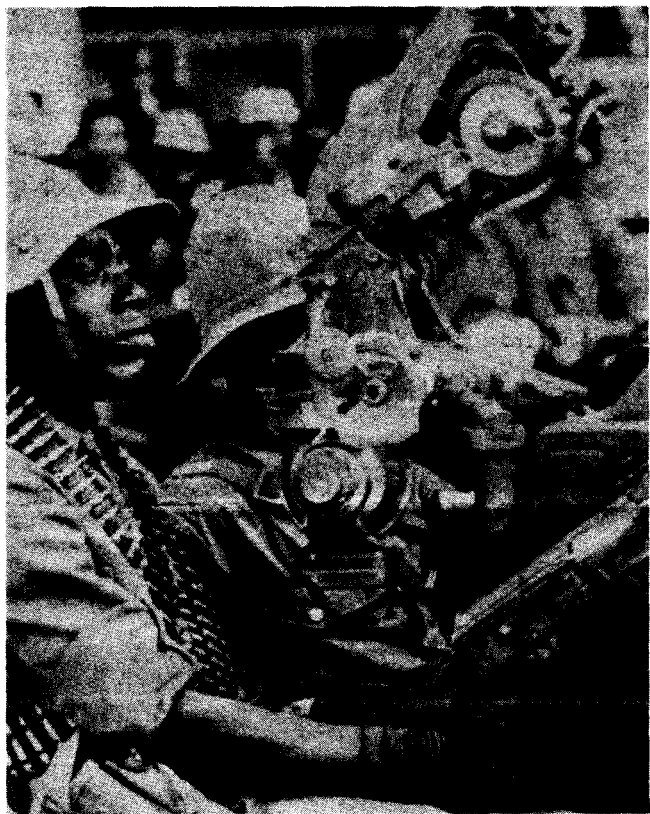
Strikebreaking of an old type

Last year MPLA leader Nito Alves "publicly affirmed that it is an error to say that there is a class struggle in Angola that pits the bourgeoisie against the proletariat" (*Jornal Novo*, 2 September). No doubt it is this kind of statement that the USec majority is referring to when it asserts that "the highly combative workers [are] attempting to wage an anti-capitalist struggle under the sometimes inadequate leadership of the MPLA". After shrugging off the

"frontist and gradualist illusions" of Neto, Alves and co, the USec sums up the People's Movement: "Nevertheless, its desire to put 'an end to exploitation of man by man' and to establish a 'democratic and popular regime' had a very precise class content in the urban centers: *an end to capitalist exploitation, and the power of workers and poor peasants*" (*Africa in Struggle*, October 1975).

The fake Trotskyists of the United Secretariat are trying to portray the MPLA as some kind of a trade union whose bumbling and perhaps even misguided leadership tends to hold back the workers' struggles. This is false to the core. Behind the MPLA's collaboration with the Portuguese army, its signing of the neo-colonialist Alvor accords and its wholehearted cooperation with Gulf Oil stand the appetites of a petty bourgeoisie aspiring to transform itself into a bourgeoisie by making a deal with imperialism. The MPLA's proclamations that the class struggle does not exist in Angola are more than verbiage; the MPLA and its army intend to smash the workers' struggles wherever they break out.

The "precise class content" of the MPLA's occasional demagogic talk of "end[ing] exploitation of man by man" was graphically illustrated by its suppression of workers' strikes. Following the overthrow of the Caetano dictatorship in April 1974 and again as the "transitional government" was being installed and independence seemed to be approaching, Angolan workers launched major strike waves in the hope of obtaining some improvements in their own lot. The strikes focused on the key dock facilities. In the spring of 1975 it was estimated that "in the ports of Luanda, Lobito and Mocamedes...about 60 ships



MPLA soldiers with Soviet-supplied heavy anti-aircraft gun

[were] waiting to be handled; the stevedores have been striking for better wages or, as one labor leader said, 'to accelerate independence'" (*Africa*, March 1975).

The position of all three nationalist movements toward the strikes has always been identical: to suppress them, including with the use of military force. In December 1974-January 1975 the port of Lobito was at a virtual standstill as the dockers demanded wage increases of up to 300 percent. *Africa* (February 1975) quotes one nationalist leader as saying about this walkout: "We were finding ourselves during December in the invidious position of restraining the workers to moderate their demands in the interests of Angola. But the question the workers asked was 'Whose Angola?'" The strike was reportedly ended after a personal appeal by UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi.

One of the very first acts of the four-party transitional government which took office at the beginning of February was to appeal to the workers and unions to suspend the strikes. This was followed up at the end of the month by a decree (the *lei de mobilisacao*) permitting the coalition government to mobilize strikers into the army and thus place them under military discipline. However, even this did not stop the working-class agitation.

"A large demonstration against the *lei de mobilisacao* was held by the Popular Neighbourhood Commissions, an MPLA-influenced movement, on April 9, though Lopo do Nascimento publicly defended the law as in the interests of the Angolan people. Though the dock-workers were placed under military control in accordance with the law shortly after its enactment, they are again threatening to return on strike." (*Africa*, July 1975)

The Luanda longshoremen carried out this threat and walked off the job again on May 28,

protesting that dockers with less seniority should get equal pay raises to the 15-30 percent increases granted a few days earlier to high seniority workers. The MPLA-led longshoremen's union SINTAPA duly denounced the strike as a wildcat and called for the government to take "adequate measures" to restore law and order.

If the "Marxist" MPLA resorted to strikebreaking and militarization of labor under the colonial army, then it should surprise no one that the MPLA of "people's power" should attempt to suppress the neighborhood "people's committees" led by its own militants.

These committees first arose in 1974 in the *muceques* (African slum districts which encircled the European districts of Luanda) essentially as self-defense groups in response to widespread marauding by racist colonialists that left hundreds dead. Their leaders were reportedly lower-level MPLA cadre, along with some Maoist militants who had returned from Lisbon.

There were numerous indications of tensions between the people's committees and the MPLA. The March 8 demonstration against the MPLA-backed mobilization was one example. Later in the month, the neighborhood committees clashed with FNLA troops in the capital, whom they accused of arrogantly parading around like an occupying army, while the MPLA was still trying to maintain the coalition government. After repeated cease-fires and truces, in June the MPLA (under Portuguese pressure) signed the Nakuru accords which called for disarming the people's committees....

Portuguese high commissioner Lopes Cardoso, in reviewing the last months of colonial rule, attributed tensions between UNITA and the MPLA to a "far left" in the MPLA armed forces, the unions and the people's committees. He added: "the MPLA found it necessary to create people's power and to maneuver with the trade unions when the FNLA was in Luanda in force...then it lost control of them. It began to tail after them" (*A Luta*, 26 December). Later, he said, the MPLA tried to impose its authority. In addition, the 23 October *Le Monde* reported that the people's committees had been dissolved and reorganized under "politically conscious elements". All other armed groups were declared illegal.

From liquidation to Political suicide

While refusing to support any of the petty-bourgeois nationalist formations during the three-way power struggle of early and mid-1975, pointing out that there was no qualitative distinction between them, the Spartacist tendency noted that, unlike the FNLA and UNITA, "the MPLA draws its present support from the masses of urban dispossessed, semi-proletarians and working-class elements" and thus an FNLA/UNITA victory would mean "decimating, demoralizing and dispersing the plebeian mass which can form the basis for a future independent movement of the working people". Therefore, "while never ceasing to attack politically the treacherous MPLA leadership" we recognized that communists in Angola would have to be prepared to engage in episodic "military blocs, with the MPLA forces to defend the proletariat and poor". But we added:

"We recognize, however, that should communists in the course of this struggle begin to rally around their program and leadership MPLA supporters or especially to split a section of the MPLA ranks away from their bourgeois leaders, then the MPLA would turn on and savagely attack not only the communists but also its own ranks." (*Young Spartacus* No 35, September 1975)

The United Secretariat majority saw only one side of the story: it was blind to the brutal repression which the MPLA would direct at any socialist tendency which threatened to polarize its base on class lines. In polemicizing against the pro-FNLA "neutrality" of the reformist American Socialist Workers Party, leader of the USec minority, the Mandelites' "Africa expert" C Gabriel writes that the "class-struggle tendency...in the ranks of the MPLA...knows that if the FNLA re-enters Luanda it will be the first target of what Holden [Roberto] called the 'cleanup of Communists'". That is why, says Gabriel, "the question of support for the MPLA is decisive for the further growth of the vanguard" (*Inter-continental Press*, 8 December 1975).

This "class-struggle tendency" actually consisted of supporters of the USec in Angola. The 24 April 1975 *Inprecor* glowingly announced that "a small revolutionary Marxist nucleus has been founded in Luanda around the journal *Revolucao Socialista*." It was evidently quite careful to make clear that it was not a rival to the MPLA: "No, it is not yet another party cropping up! It is only a journal, one that owes its allegiance to the workers and is for the workers". Although an editorial in the September 1974 *Revolucao Socialista* does call for a "revolutionary party", it purposefully avoids the crucial question of whether this will involve a split from the MPLA or can be done by and through the nationalist organization. Such shilly-shallying



MPLA troops march through Luanda

only reinforces illusions spread by the MPLA, which has periodically called for a "vanguard party" since at least 1968!

The USec journal *Africa in Struggle* (October 1975) reports of its supporters in Angola that "against the ambiguous response of the MPLA" they are propagandizing for self-defense, supporting workers strikes, denouncing the imperialist grip on the economy and calling for socialist revolution. But if the response of the MPLA was ever ambiguous toward the "Trotskyists" of *Revolucao Socialista*, it did not remain so for long. In the same way that the MPLA attacked striking dock workers, in the same way that it tried to disarm and disorganize the people's committees, it turned on leftist militants within its own ranks.

At the time of the reported dissolution and reorganization of the people's committees in late October, some 20 leftist militants (apparently mostly Maoists) were arrested. The 2 January *Rouge* (newspaper of the LCR, French section of the USec) reports that in Luanda the "Amilcar Cabral Committees" (CAC), linked to the Portuguese Maoist UDP, had played a leading role in organizing neighborhood committees and self-defense groups, and had put a great deal of pressure on the MPLA. Now with the deepening of the war, the radio broadcast speeches against the "partisans of Trotsky and Bakunin", MPLA leader Nito Alves said that after the FNLA and UNITA the next target should be the "leftists", and the newspaper *Poder Popular* ("People's Power") was banned. *Rouge* indicates that "the CAC were broken" and implies that the *Revolucao Socialista* supporters were also eliminated. The arrested militants were deported to Portugal in November.

Commenting on these arrests, the 20 November *Red Weekly* (newspaper of the IMG, British section of the USec) states: "This move clearly attests to the rightward swing for the petty-bourgeois Neto current." But Marxists did not need to wait for these arrests or a repeat of the 1927 Shanghai massacre by Neto -- Angola's aspiring Chiang Kai-shek -- to determine the class character or anticipate the behavior of the MPLA. The press of the Spartacist tendency has repeatedly warned that Neto and Co would do exactly what they have now done.

This is not a new problem. Already during the 1920s Leon Trotsky, in recognizing that the Chinese Communists should seek to win the best militants away from the nationalist Kuomintang, pointed to the crucial condition for a successful struggle, "the principal instrument of proletarian policy: an *independent proletarian party* which fights under its own banner and never permits its policy and organization to be dissolved in the policy and organization of other classes" ("The Chinese Revolution and the Theses of Comrade Stalin", May 1927).

In the service of its capitulationist policy of tailing after non-revolutionary, anti-proletarian forces the revisionist United Secretariat must ignore and falsify this crucial lesson. From Pablo's "entrism *sui generis*" into the Stalinist and social-democratic parties in the 1950s, to the Pabloist USec's enthusiasm for the Algerian FLN and Castro in the 1960s, to its political support for the Angolan MPLA today, the policy is the same as Stalin's capitulation to Chiang in the 1920s. And as happened in Shanghai in April 1927, political liquidation led to physical liquidation of the cadres. Pablo gave enthusiastic political support to Mao while Mao was locking up the Chinese Trotskyists; the USec gave support to Castro while Castro jailed Cuban Trotskyists. And now, despite the USec's unambiguous *political support* for the Angolan MPLA, Neto returns the favor... by arresting the leftists and expelling them from the country!

Learn the lessons of history! ■

(reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 93, 23 January 1976)

IS covers for PRP treachery

In the wake of the abortive rebellion of left-ist paratroopers in Lisbon on 25 November 1975, the Socialist Party (SP) backed government of Admiral Azevedo moved swiftly to consolidate its power, carrying out a sweeping purge of the armed forces and the mass media, jailing dozens of leftist soldiers and officers and imposing a stringent capitalist austerity program. As at every critical turn in the pre-revolutionary crisis which has racked Portugal since the army-led coup in April 1974, the fighting capacity of the combative workers and soldiers was paralysed by the lack of revolutionary leadership. The Stalinist Communist Party of Portugal (PCP) responded to the shattering of the influence of its cherished "progressive" wing of the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) by counselling "serenity", and actively sabotaged efforts to organise a general strike against the state of siege.

Disillusioned with the pro-capitalist reformism of the SP and the Stalinists, many militant workers and soldiers have looked to formations of the so-called "far left" for revolutionary leadership. One of the most prominent of these groups is the Proletarian Revolutionary Party (PRP) and its armed wing the Rebel Brigades, a syndicalist/Guevarist tendency which in the period before 25 November acquired a certain influence in key sectors of the Lisbon working class and in important barracks in the capitol district. The British left social-democratic International Socialists (IS) have adopted the PRP and its politics as their own (for Portugal that is -- not to be confused with the IS' own domestic politics). So too have their Australian followers, the International Socialists (formerly the Socialist Workers Action Group), for example in the *Battler* no 10, September 1975.

British IS leader Tony Cliff's pamphlet on Portugal, "Portugal at the Crossroads" (*International Socialism* special, September 1975), is an attempted apologetic for the PRP. Cliff claims:

"The PRP is an authentic revolutionary marxist organisation which argues for the need for armed revolution, stands squarely for the dictatorship of the proletariat, and believes in the need for autonomous organisations of the proletariat -- councils (soviets)."

The decisive test for any "authentic revolutionary marxist organisation" in Portugal is its attitude to the MFA, the political expression of the bourgeois officer corps. Yet in his entire 48-page-long opus, Cliff *never once* says anything about the PRP's attitude to the MFA! For that matter, he avoids mentioning practically any of the PRP's concrete policies. Cliff ought to be more than willing to clarify the concrete expressions of what he considers "authentic Marxism" in a pre-revolutionary situation; instead he dishonestly covers them up, to the point of falsification.

As for Cliff's own "analysis" of the MFA, rather than drawing a clear class line against the left-posturing officers it consists of slimy apologetics:

"The coup of 28 September, 1974 was a turning point in the role of the MFA and COPCON [an elite military security force]. Since then, until August this year, by and large the MFA in general, and COPCON in particular, sided with the left against the right."

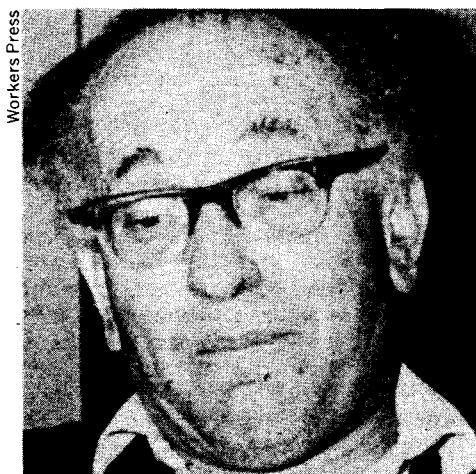
The repeated assaults throughout 1975 by COPCON against elements in the workers movement which in any way opposed the MFA, the arrest of union leaders, the dragnet jailing of 500 members of the Maoist MRPP and the anti-strike slogan of "the fight for production" scarcely constitute siding "with the left against the right".

Certainly COPCON and other military units have at times taken the side of workers against the boss or the MFA, as happened during the period of the Goncalves government on many occasions (eg, in the Radio Renascenca dispute). But the cause lies in the breakdown of military discipline resulting from the effective fraternisation between rebellious workers and soldiers, not in the "revolutionary" intentions of the officers. That some individual leftist officers such as former COPCON chief, ex-General Otelo de Carvalho, have now been purged and jailed does not alter the essential fact that throughout its continual left-right shifts the Bonapartist MFA has only acted to preserve capitalism and its own privileged position -- holding back the class struggle and giving counterrevolution the opportunity to remobilise.

Certainly no one can accuse the PRP of inadequate trust in the officers. Of Carvalho, erstwhile strikebreaker and jailer of leftists, they

said: "we underline the courage of this soldier, who is always ready to advance without fear" (*Revolucão*, 8 May 1975). The PRP was also one of the main participants in the "United Revolutionary Front" (FUR) formed in August 1975 (another thing Cliff forgot to mention), a class-collaborationist coalition also including several other parties of the "far left" which was explicitly committed to support for the MFA and the Fifth Provisional Government of Premier General Vasco Goncalves. The FUR's first communique endorsed Goncalves' 21 August document "Lines of Programmatic Action and Transitional Demands", which called for the maintenance of private property, the strengthening of the corporatist "MFA-People Alliance" and the "fight for production" (ie speed-up and strikebreaking). And Cliff has the gall to claim that one of PRP's main virtues was that it didn't sow illusions in the PCP -- the main civilian backers of Goncalves!

Cliff's strongest accolades to the PRP are for their attempts to answer the urgent need for soviets (workers' councils) with their calls for



Tony Cliff, British IS leader.

"autonomous workers' organisations" and the establishment of the "Revolutionary Workers, Soldiers and Sailors Councils" (CRTSMs). Cliff does admit that the CRTSMs are not yet real soviets but this, he says, is due entirely to the PRP's insufficient implantation in the working class. This is absolute hogwash. As an observer from the international Spartacist tendency at their August conference was able to see, the CRTSMs, far from being fighting organisations that can bring in broad sections of the class, are simply Potemkin Villages representing little more than the PRP, masquerading as some kind of soviets -- a practice also followed by various Portuguese Maoist groups (see "IS Promotes Portuguese Syndicalists", *Workers Vanguard* no 77, 19 September 1975).

In one of the paradoxes characteristic of syndicalism, the PRP, hoping to capitalise on the disgust many militant workers feel with the bureaucratic manoeuvring of the reformist workers' parties, also advocates "Apartidarism" (non-partyism) -- councils without parties -- "organs of political power organised in such a form as not to degenerate into a party bureaucracy" (PRP leaflet, "The autonomous organisation -- the role of the party"). Not entirely by accident, this happened to correspond to some of the views of Carvalho, who wanted soviets without parties to ensure they were utterly sterile. This is one PRP policy Cliff defends outright, although his defence is mealy-mouthed:

"During the elections to the Constituent Assembly there is no doubt that many militants got fed up with the different and numerous political organisations competing for working class votes. Apartidarism (non-partyism) corresponded to the feelings of much of the advanced section of the class."

And whatever "advanced sections of the class" may feel, rightly or wrongly, Cliff is for capitulating to it.

Trotsky answered the PRP-IS syndicalists long ago. In the early 1930s when German workers were faced with the urgent need to smash Hitler's mobilisation, he wrote against both the Stalinised Communist Party which demanded pure "communist" soviets, and various centrists who wanted to supplant the party by soviets:

"We must enter the soviets together with all other organizations such as they are, 'with all their faults and weaknesses'. But to avow that the soviets 'by themselves' are capable of leading the struggle of the proletariat for power -- is only to sow abroad vulgar soviet fetishism. Everything depends on the party that leads the soviets." ("What Next?", January 1932; in *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, p 199)

The PRP's line is motivated in fact by the desire

to sidestep the political struggle against reformism and is another way to capitulate to the MFA "lefts". In response to the MFA's July "guide document" and the August "COPCON document" of last year, both of which labelled the "MFA-People Alliance" the "keystone of power to be built" and called for "direct" (ie non-party) popular assemblies "recognised" (ie controlled) by the MFA, the PRP claimed these corporatist schemes to integrate working-class organisations into the capitalist state "approved the dictatorship of the proletariat" (*Revolucão*, 1 August 1975)!

At the base of Cliff's attraction to the PRP and his cover-up for its betrayals is his menshevik conception of the party. On the party question his smokescreen is most elaborate, but the characteristic thrust comes through. For him the revolutionary workers' party is "the union of the more advanced workers" which, he says,

"of course ... also needs tradition and theory. In other words its cadres need to have absorbed some [!] of the lessons of past workers' struggles nationally and internationally. To weld together a broad layer of advanced workers this tradition must to some extent [!] be taught."

Well, *which* lessons? To *what* extent? What about such lessons as the class character of the officer corps of the bourgeois armed forces, the role of soviets, the independence of the working class from the state, the political independence of its vanguard? The truth is that despite lip-service assertions to the contrary, the whole thrust of Cliff's argument advances an *organisational* union of advanced workers, placed above and totally disregarding a *correct political* orientation on the central questions of revolutionary strategy. To Cliff the essential determinant of a revolutionary party is subjective will and a workerist belief in the magical effect of implantation in the proletariat. Program and theory are regarded as completely *inessential*; correct leadership is supposed to flow from sincerely listening to workers and participation in the struggle, ie an *essentially automatic* product of the class struggle.

Insurrectionary reformism

Pointing out that for two months before November the PRP had been issuing calls to insurrection ("it is now time for the revolutionary forces and the workers to pose the question of insurrection" -- PRP Declaration, 30 September 1975) the International Marxist Group (IMG), British section of the fake-Trotskyist "United Secretariat" (USec) has accused the PRP of "ultraleft adventurism" (*Red Weekly*, 4 December 1975). With the working class still predominantly under the influence of the reformist workers' parties, the PRP's insurrection-mongering was adventurist; but to call it "ultra-left" is profoundly wrong and only reflects the USec's own capitulation to the "progressives" in the MFA.

A classic example of *ultraleft* adventurism was the "March Action" of the German Communists in 1921. While such adventures are indeed disastrous, launching premature insurrections doomed to failure, they are at least clearly directed at establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat by smashing the capitalist state apparatus. But this hardly applies to the PRP. Their call to "make the revolution" was directed not at the working class but at "leftist" officers such as Carvalho. The September issue of *Revolucão* carried an "Open Letter to Comrade Otelo", exhorting:

"Comrade Otelo, it is necessary to struggle for the formation of a revolutionary army and that we progressives must take the true socialist revolution. With the true progressives of the MFA. We must understand that the working class must take power and it must do it as rapidly as possible because tomorrow it will be too late."

The PRP was advocating neither socialist revolution nor ultraleft adventurism but rather something which might be called insurrectionary reformism -- calling for an attempt by means of armed force to pressure a section of the capitalist state apparatus onto the road of socialism.

Today the central task of communists in Portugal still remains: through unflinching political struggle against the USec, the IS, and the disoriented centrists of the PRP and all shades of class collaboration to build a Trotskyist party with the program, discipline and resoluteness to lead the working class to power. Forward to the rebirth of the Fourth International! ■

Cop raid on CPA militants

Reject Ducker — Police Assn whitewash!

Although no charges have been laid, CPA militants and trade unionists Mick O'Loughlin and Libby Barratt, raided by police last November on the totally fabricated pretext of "letter bombs", continue to be kept under police surveillance and harassed. A Committee to Defend the CPA, set up in December has been widely petitioning workers and organisations to condemn the raid as an attack on democratic rights and to call on the NSW Labor Council to hold a trade-union enquiry into the motivations behind the raid.

The CPA itself has done next to nothing to build the campaign. In fact the main force has been the Socialist Labour League (SLL) which has been loudly acclaiming its work and "principled" stand on defending militants under attack from the bourgeois state. The SLL's record though tells a different story: in 1974 they refused to join a committee to defend imprisoned Chilean leftists. And last year they completely abstained from any of the work done by the Brisbane 3 defence committee and around the defence of arrested pickets in the Melbourne Printers' strike. Whatever their reasons here, one can be assured it has little to do with principle. And despite their energy the SLL have shown themselves incapable of fighting for a class defence of democratic rights.

When the demand for a trade-union enquiry was first raised in the Labor Council it was referred to the Labor Council Executive which set up a "conference" of the unions involved, the Miscellaneous Workers Union, the Teachers Federation and the Police Association (!), to carry out "initial investigations". The "conference", chaired by right-wing Labor Council President John Ducker, was closed, with O'Loughlin and Barratt as non-voting "guests".

Continued from page eight

CL's war . . .

proletariat, for without an Indonesian workers state, we pointed out, there could be no viable basis for workers power in East Timor. (See *ASP* no 23, September 1975; see also the article "Defend FRETILIN!", *ASP* no 24, October 1975.)

Lipkowski's key political claim, behind all the red herrings, is that FRETILIN is not essentially a "petty-bourgeois nationalist formation", that it is rather essentially a revolutionary instrument of the masses: "the participation of the masses in East Timor's liberation struggle will decide Fretilin's orientation." So sweeping a repudiation of class analysis is breathtaking.

We have never denied that FRETILIN has significant mass support. But so did Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang in the 1920s (and not tribalists but workers and peasants), which did not stop it from slaughtering the Chinese workers. As Lipkowski admits, the leadership and cadres of FRETILIN, who determine its policies and control its armed forces, are petty-bourgeois in origin. As he neglects to mention (but does not deny), its program is thoroughly bourgeois, a nationalist program which in no way challenges capitalism.

FRETILIN's leadership does not itself immediately act as a bourgeois class -- a native bourgeoisie never developed beyond embryo -- but it is fighting against Indonesia for the historical right to existence of an indigenous East Timorese bourgeoisie. Contrary to the CL, not only would FRETILIN itself, once in power, act as an obstacle to Indonesian workers' revolution; precisely because of its bourgeois-nationalist program and aspirations, and its consequent incapacity to appeal to the class interests of Indonesian workers, FRETILIN's leadership creates an enormous obstacle to a victory in the current struggle against Suharto's takeover as well.

If Indonesia is forced to withdraw, FRETILIN,

corrections

ASP no 28 (February 1976), in listing supporters of the Australia East Timor Association present at its initial 7 December meeting, described Ken Fry as "the Liberal Party candidate for Canberra". In fact, he is the sitting *Labor Party* member for Fraser (ACT). The Liberal Party candidate present was Ian Yates (now member for Holt, Victoria) who expressed his willingness to lobby Fraser and other Liberal Party members on behalf of the AETA.

In *ASP* no 27 (20 December 1975) it is incorrectly stated that Ken Mansell offered his resignation from the Spartacist League in early 1974 when it was actually submitted in late December 1973. ■

When this proposal was first put before the defence committee Spartacist League (SL) representatives argued that to go along with this alternative "cop conference" could only assist Ducker's attempts to bypass a genuine trade-union enquiry and, in the process, provide a whitewash for the cops. The rest of the committee -- the SLL, CPA, Communist League (CL) and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), "formally" agreed but claimed that the committee had no option but to work through the conference, keep up the petitioning and continue to call for a genuine trade-union enquiry. Ducker's recommendation, the majority argued, was the "unanimous decision of the whole trade-union movement" and it was "ultra-left" (O'Loughlin) and "abstentionist" (SLL) not to wish to participate in what everyone agreed was an attempted whitewash! One can only wonder where these organisations who bow and scrape in awe before the "unanimous decision" of trade-union bureaucrats will line up the next time the Labor Council Executive recommends a sell-out to striking workers!

Predictably Ducker has used the conference to put the onus on O'Loughlin and Barratt, demanding further "evidence" of "political discrimination". Then a few more weeks were wasted by organising a delegation (including the Police Association) to see NSW Chief Secretary Coleman. Now the matter rests on Coleman's "reply" to Ducker. The defence committee majority has dutifully trailed along behind naively believing that when Ducker runs out of manoeuvres he will be forced to have a proper enquiry. O'Loughlin and Barratt's participation in this charade without any attempt to expose it has only given it political credence. And the SLL, the staunchest defender of remaining in Ducker's cops' conference, has had the hyp-

like Ben Bella in Algeria, the MPLA in Angola, the Kuomintang in 1920s China, etc -- in short like every other petty-bourgeois nationalist "anti-imperialist front" has always done, will end up by regimenting, robbing and shooting the proletariat in the name of "national unity". That is the real dynamic of FRETILIN's nationalism.

For Marxists, for all class-conscious workers, the class struggle is primary. Blocking militarily with a section of the class enemy to fend off a more immediate threat is one thing; ceding control of the anti-imperialist struggle to the class enemy is quite another. There are only two paths of historical development for East Timor -- outside Indonesian Anschluss -- proletarian revolution in Indonesia or a capitalist DRET ruled by FRETILIN. Not only does Lipkowski dismiss the former as "wholly remote", his argument assumes that even to raise the call for Indonesian workers' revolution is "destructive" of the defence of East Timor! Thus the counter-revolutionary implications of the CL's tailism become clear.

Lipkowski can rationalise this betrayal only by attacking the Trotskyist conception of the permanent revolution in truly classic Pabloist style. According to him, the war in East Timor is actually "the leading front of a whole series of national struggles" from West Sumatra to West Irian, tied together, one presumes, by the omnipotent "dynamic". And he concludes: "These centres of popular resistance are the weakest links in the Indonesian sub-imperialist chain. They don't need to wait for a workers revolution in Indonesia. They'll make it possible."

Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution placed the proletariat at the centre of the revolution, even where it is numerically weak and faced immediately with bourgeois-democratic tasks. It is completely wedded to proletarian internationalism, which sees the revolution in such countries as fundamentally dependent on, a subordinate part of, the international proletarian revolution. The CL in the name of the permanent revolution abandons the proletariat in order to rely on petty-bourgeois nationalist-led separatist movements in peripheral areas with only a marginal proletariat. This turns Trotsky upside down, resulting in a crude kind of menshevik "two stage" revolution, a systematic application of class collaboration among all the oppressed nationalities under Jakarta's heel.

We say: Indonesian workers need not -- *must not!* -- wait for a motley crew of FRETILINs to succeed in setting up mini-capitalist states. Their revolution will alone make possible the true liberation of all the national minorities of Indonesia. That revolution can only succeed by uniting workers of all nationalities against the nationalists of all stripes, under the independent banner of the proletarian revolution, the Trotskyist banner. The CL has placed itself in direct opposition to that task. ■

ocritical gall to attack the CPA (*Workers News* 5 February 1976) for supporting Ducker's plan!

The question of the cops has been central to the campaign, for the Police Association is affiliated to the Labor Council and recognised as a trade union. Cops are not workers who just carry out orders "from above"; they are the most direct agents of the ruling class, the day to day enforcers of bourgeois rule. Unless a trade-union enquiry into police discrimination sharply draws a class line between the workers movement and the police it will be useless. The SLL however, which itself projects an almost paranoid concern towards security from police infiltration, and consistently and slanderously cop-baits its opponents on the left, has given implicit support to cops' "trade-union rights" by its energetic support for tactical participation in Ducker's "conference". At the February 3 committee meeting SLL National Secretary Jim Mulgrew explicitly stated that the Police Association was a trade union because it was affiliated to the Labor Council. According to Healy method the class line it seems can be erased by the edict of the trade-union bureaucracy. The history of the Healy tendency towards the police only confirms that this "cops are workers" opportunism is no aberration for their American co-thinkers, the Workers League (WL), supported the New York police strike in 1970 -- a key thrust of which was to end bureaucratic interference with cop harassment of blacks and Puerto Ricans.

Hostility to the SL's "dogmatic" Marxist position on cops also characterised the CL, according to whom the role of cops depended upon the circumstances, giving the example of the Portuguese army. But the army is not the police. The state holds it in reserve, as the ultimate bastion of bourgeois rule, to be used only in exceptional circumstances against the workers movement. The psychology and everyday environment of rank-and-file soldiers, who may be drafted or who join to learn a trade or escape unemployment, is quite different from that of the police who are engaged in everyday suppression of working-class struggle. Leninists seek to split the army ranks away from the officers in solidarity with the revolutionary workers. *Cops out of the labour movement!*

At the February 10 committee meeting SL representatives proposed that the committee issue a leaflet detailing Ducker's manoeuvres, exposing the fraudulence of the "cop conference" and calling on trade unionists and officials to force the question through from the floor of the Labor Council. This was hotly rejected by all the other tendencies, the SLL charging that it would "sabotage" the campaign (!), and the CPA that the "main thing" was to get the Labor Council to endorse the campaign.

A resolution in the Labor Council minutes, or even a trade-union enquiry, if left in the hands of the trade-union bureaucracy, is mere lip-service to defence against repression. To rely on the trade-union bureaucracy for protection from the bourgeois state, as has been the whole thrust of O'Loughlin/Barratt and their supporters in the committee, is only to become its prisoner.

Continued from page eight

CPA militant . . .

break with Stalinism as being towards a more organic reformism. Even the most dedicated CPA members, those who, unlike the vast majority, are not passive and cynical, are committed to a program which cannot carry through a revolution. Those who do have such a will have no alternative but to split from the CPA and fuse with the international Spartacist tendency, which does have such a will and a programme.

The Spartacist League starts from the proposition that in order to make a socialist revolution and build a workers' state on the basis of the fullest soviet democracy, the political weight of the international proletariat mobilised by a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party is decisive. It sees the political struggle against Stalinism and revisionism in the workers' movement as critical precisely because these ostensibly revolutionary trends depart from Marxism on the key questions ie internationalism and proletarian hegemony in the socialist revolution. The regroupment resulting from this struggle will lead to the rebirth of the Fourth International, and thus the great project launched by Lenin and Trotsky in their founding of the Third International will come to fruition.

Graeme Grassie
10 February 1976



Timor and the Indonesian revolution

The CL's war on Marxism

If it is not to be subordinated to one or another bourgeois plot, the defence of East Timor against the Indonesian junta's bloody invasion must be integrated with and subject to the tasks of international class struggle. The Spartacist League has been the only tendency on the left in Australia to combine a firm adherence to unconditional military, practical support of the East Timor resistance with a rejection of any political support of its petty-bourgeois nationalist FRETILIN leadership, to warn of the dangers of social patriotism, and to consistently oppose any support to intervention by the UN imperialist club. Among the most enthusiastic "far left" tailists of FRETILIN is the Communist League (CL), which in order to justify its opportunism has published a polemic against us authored by one "S Lipkowski" (*Militant*, 16 January 1976). Here are its main charges against the SL:

"To attack Fretilin as 'a petty-bourgeois nationalist formation' as the Spartacist League did last October at the Communist League's public forum on Timor ... is a

vicious simplification of this reality [that "Fretilin remains a heterogeneous anti-imperialist Front ... rather than an evolved political party"]. At that time, before the invasion the Spartacists urged the 'workers and peasants of East Timor' to rise against Fretilin; having since discovered that there is neither an urban proletariat nor a peasantry in Timor, but remaining unable to recognise reality, they now call (in *Australasian Spartacist* 27) for an 'Indonesian workers' revolution' as the 'one solution' to the struggle in Timor.

"The destructive perversity of this position -- since to pose wholly remote demands is to evade the tasks of solidarity -- is worth noting simply because it comes, in a sect claiming to be Trotskyist, from a complete misunderstanding of the nature and dynamic of permanent revolution in the struggle against imperialism."

It is a cynical and blatant slander to imply that the SL raises no slogan other than for the

Indonesian workers' revolution and does not concretely support the defence of FRETILIN, as can be seen by consulting the very issue of *ASP* referred to. Nor has the SL ever called for the "'workers and peasants of East Timor' to rise against Fretilin". We did say that FRETILIN sought to create a capitalist nation-state which would have to be overthrown and replaced with workers' power in order to begin to solve the problems of the East Timorese masses. Marxists can take no other view.

It is simply a lie to say that the SL did not "discover" the size of the proletariat until after October (in *ASP* no 23, September 1975, we pointed out that it was "probably less than one percent of the population"). Of course the CL is quite wrong to assert flatly that no proletariat at all ever existed in East Timor (the trade-union federation had perhaps 4000-5000 members mainly in Dili prior to the outbreak of the civil war). We said these workers must break from FRETILIN and seek to ally with the Indonesian

Continued on page seven

International Women's Day: A proletarian holiday



Bourgeois feminists may celebrate it, but March 8 -- International Women's Day -- is a workers' holiday. Originating in 1908 among the female needle trades workers in Manhattan's Lower East Side, who marched under the slogans "for an eight hour day", "for the end of child labor" and "equal suffrage for women", it was officially adopted by the Second International in 1911.

International Women's Day was first celebrated in Russia in 1913 where it was widely publicized in the pages of the Bolshevik newspaper, *Pravda*, and popularized by speeches in numerous clubs and societies controlled by Bolshevik organizations which presented a Marxist analysis of women's oppression and the program for emancipation.

The following year the Bolsheviks not only agitated for International Women's Day in the pages of *Pravda* (then publishing under the name *Put' Pravdy*), but also made preparations to publish a special journal dealing with questions of women's liberation in Russia and internationally. It was called *Rabotnitsa* (*The Working Woman*), and its first issue was scheduled to appear on International Women's Day, 1914 (see "How the Bolsheviks Organized Working Women: History of the Journal *Rabotnitsa*", *Women and Revolution* No 4, Fall 1973).

Preparations for the holiday were made under

FORUM

Towards a revolutionary women's movement

Speaker: Marie Hotschilt
Central Committee
Spartacist League

Room 5
Trades Hall
SYDNEY

7.30 pm
Tuesday
9 March

the most hazardous conditions. Shortly before the long-awaited day the entire editorial board of *Rabotnitsa* -- with one exception -- as well as other Bolsheviks who had agitated for International Women's Day in St Petersburg factories, were arrested by the Tsarist police. Despite these arrests, however, the Bolsheviks pushed ahead with their preparations. Anna Elizarova --

"Under the lead of the Third International, the day of the working women shall become a real fighting day; it shall take the form of practical measures which either solidify the conquests of Communism ... or prepare the way for the dictatorship of the working class."

—Alexandra Kollantai

Lenin's sister and the one member of the editorial board to escape arrest -- single-handedly brought out the first issue of *Rabotnitsa* on March 8 (or, according to the old Russian calendar, February 23) as scheduled. Clara Zetkin, a leading figure in the German Social Democratic Party and in the international working women's movement, wrote:

"Greetings to you on your courageous decision to organize Women's Day, congratulations to you for not losing courage and not wanting to sit with your hands folded. We are with you, heart and soul. You and your movement will be remembered at numerous meetings organized for Women's Day in Germany, Austria, Hungary and America." (Quoted in A. Artiukhina, "Proidennyi Put'", *Zhenshchina v revoliutsii*)

By far the most important celebration ever of International Women's Day took place in Petrograd on 8 March 1917 when the women textile workers of that city led a strike of over 90,000 workers -- a strike which signaled the end of the 300-year-old Romanov dynasty and the beginning of the Russian Revolution. One week afterward, *Pravda* commented:

"The first day of the revolution -- that is the Women's Day, the day of the Women Workers' International. All honor to the International! The women were the first to tread the streets of Petrograd on their day."

As the position of Soviet women degenerated under Stalin and his successors, as part of the

degeneration of the entire Soviet workers state, International Women's Day was transformed from a day of international proletarian solidarity into an empty ritual which, like Mother's Day in the United States, glorifies the traditional role of women within the family.

But International Women's Day is a celebration neither of motherhood nor sisterhood; to ignore this fact is to ignore the most significant aspects of its history and purpose, which was to strengthen the ranks of the revolutionary proletariat. Unlike the pre-war Mensheviks who wanted to conciliate the feminists of their day by limiting the celebration of International Women's Day to women only, the Bolsheviks insisted that it be a holiday of working women and working men in struggle together. As Nadezhda Krupskaya wrote in the lead article of the first issue of *Rabotnitsa*:

"That which unites working women with working men is stronger than that which divides them. They are united by their common lack of rights, their common needs, their common condition, which is struggle and their common goal.... Solidarity between working men and working women, common activity, a common goal, a common path to this goal -- such is the solution of the 'woman' question among workers."

Today the Bolshevik program for the full emancipation of women is carried forward by the Spartacist League. We are proud to publicize the real history of International Women's Day, a part of our revolutionary heritage.

As we deepen our influence in the working class, we look forward to celebrating future International Women's Days not only through the dissemination of propaganda, but also through the initiation of the full range of activities traditionally associated with this proletarian holiday -- general strikes, insurrections, revolution!

Forward to a Women's Section of the Reborn Fourth International!

For Women's Liberation through International Proletarian Revolution! ■

(reprinted from *Women and Revolution* no 8, Spring 1975)