

South Australia's ex-top cop Harold Salisbury.

**"Reformed" or not —
down with ASIO/Special Branch!**

Labor, Fraser unite for stronger secret police



The army "secures" Bowral in aftermath of Hilton bomb.

After four weeks of unwanted public scrutiny and scandal, ASIO and the state Special Branches were finally off the hook. The bomb which rocked Sydney's Hilton Hotel shortly after midnight, 13 February, also blew away the flap over indiscriminate Special Branch spying and ASIO activities which had spread from South Australia to NSW, pursued by the Labor premiers of both states, Don Dunstan and Neville Wran. For the bourgeoisie and its own gangs of professional terrorists, the "terrorist" bombing could not have been more convenient had it been one of ASIO's own "dirty tricks".

Who did plant the bomb, and why, remains a mystery. The presumed "target" was the Commonwealth Heads of Government Regional Meeting (CHOGRM), a diplomatic plaything of Fraser's which brought together twelve of Her Majesty's minor Pacific island vassals, reactionary bandits and tinpot dictators, including India's octogenarian Morarji Desai and Singapore's brutal Lee Kuan Yew. However, the dignitaries on the 36th floor were in danger of nothing worse than having their sleep disturbed by the bomb left in a rubbish bin on the pavement in front of the building. It may not even have been intended to go off (an anony-

mous phone tip warned police shortly before the blast).

The only victims claimed by this *at best* inexcusably stupid action were two council workers blown to shreds as they emptied the bomb-laden bin into their garbage truck. (A cop injured by shrapnel also subsequently died in hospital.) Nonetheless if such an act were genuinely a misguided attempt to avenge the legion crimes of the assembled rulers against the oppressed, it could call for proletarian defence of its authors, though not their futile methods, against the bourgeois state. But despite the media hysteria against the Ananda Marga religious cult, allegedly out to avenge the imprisonment of its living god, Baba, in India, police have admitted that they have neither suspects, motives nor clues. No "terrorist gang" has claimed credit for the act — a most dubious sort of "political terrorism".

But this did not stop Fraser and the media from quickly escalating the "security" frenzy to ludicrous proportions. Taking "direct control" of security arrangements, Fraser made some of his CHOGRM colleagues feel at home by calling out the army for the first

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Miners fight cops, defy bureaucrats

US rocked by coal strike

Since 6 December the 175,000 soft-coal miners of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) have been on strike against the giant energy conglomerates who dominate this key industry. Win or lose, the hard-bitten miners concentrated in the bleak isolated Appalachian mountain region of the US — primarily West Virginia and Kentucky — have waged the most significant class battle in the US in at least the last decade. In instance after instance, the determined miners have demonstrated that they would not be cowed by company gun thugs, cops, government threats, or their own misleaders. As the bosses wring their hands, the miners' class brothers and sisters are learning a lesson they will not soon forget: mass pickets can stop strikebreaking, anti-union legislation can be defied. A victory would threaten to set off an explosion at the base of the American labour movement which has been brewing since the onset of the recession in the early seventies. A defeat would open a union-bashing offensive against the entire US labour movement.

The UMWA is the oldest industrial union in the US. Despite the absence of a leadership which could provide any sort of direction — in fact despite the presence of one which has openly sabotaged struggles — for the last three years it has

been the one focus of sustained labour militancy as repeated wildcats (strikes unauthorised by the union leadership) sweep the coal fields. In the first eight months of 1977 alone, wildcat strikes cost the industry an estimated 21.8 million tons of coal and 2.3 million man-days of work, a lost-time rate that is ten times the average for all US industries.

The coal operators grouped in the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA) are absolutely adamant that "labour discipline" must be restored to the coal fields and have demanded an explicit no-strike clause and financial penalties for miners who engage in wildcats. The UMWA has become a serious hindrance to the BCOA, which anticipates massive new profits with the projected expansion of US president Carter's energy program — if the traditional militancy of the miners can be tamed. The key issue in the strike is thus the right to strike itself — a life-and-death matter in the notoriously unsafe coal pits.

With careful preparation, the operators entered this strike intent on decisively humiliating, if not smashing, the UMWA. Before the strike began coal-fired electricity companies, which purchase over 70 percent of American soft coal, had amassed stock-

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Workers Vanguard



Class war in the coal fields: sand bags and bullet-riddled picket signs.

Miners . . .

Continued from page one

piles estimated to last from 80 to over 100 days. The companies also expected to be able to augment these supplies from scab mines, which produce nearly half of US coal.

But after three massive wildcats in as many years to defend the right to strike and beat off BCOA attacks on health benefits and safety conditions (another issue in the strike), the miners were no less intent on defending their union. Thousands of UMWA militants fanned out through the coal fields, shutting down nearly half of all



Kentucky miners protest against harassment by state cops.

non-union operations. Car caravans of 500 or more miners have travelled the highways in Kentucky and Tennessee to shut down scab operations and make sure they stay shut. One made sure at least five truckloads of scab coal were dumped alongside eastern Kentucky highways as it covered that state, Ohio and West Virginia. This particular contingent also made a stop at the Justus mine in Stearns, Kentucky, where 150 miners have been on strike for nearly 17 months seeking a UMWA contract. A hundred riot-equipped police were rushed to the scene. But unlike last October, when the cops beat and arrested over 100 strikers and union supporters for trying to stop scabs, this time the outnumbered cops made no attempt to remove the pickets.

Following the Christmas holidays the roving picket squads began to take the strike beyond the coal fields to combat the crippling effects of coal stockpiling and transportation by other industries. In one instance hundreds of miners blocked the entrance to a Pittsburgh steel mill for several hours. Extending the strike through solidarity bans on coal in related industries like steel, auto and transportation remains a crucial but still unfulfilled task. According to the 3 February issue of *Workers Vanguard* (WV -- weekly paper of the Spartacist League/US [SL/US]), class-struggle unionists in at least one major United States Steel mill in Chicago have campaigned for a joint nationwide coal/steel strike. Such solidarity actions cannot of course be confined to the US proletariat but must be extended to all countries which handle coal to or from the US, including Australia.

Nobody will obey Carter strikebreaking

As the stockpiles which they expected would see them comfortably through to a victory over the miners began to dwindle, electricity company executives began frantically scurrying to Washington to demand strikebreaking action by the federal government. Large utilities in Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York began crying that

Defend Body Politic !

On 30 December cops from the Toronto Morality Squad raided the offices of *Body Politic*, a Canadian gay liberation magazine, seizing records, documents, subscription lists and personal mail. Pink Triangle Press (the non-profit publisher of *Body Politic*) and members of the *Body Politic* collective were later charged with possession and distribution of "obscene" material. This raid and other recent attacks against homosexual rights in Canada are the spearhead of a generalised right-wing offensive against democratic rights. The Spartacist League sent the following telegram to the Canadian High Commission:

"We condemn Ontario government's criminal raid on *Body Politic*. No censorship. Stop police victimisation - drop all charges. Full democratic rights for homosexuals."

We urge our readers to send donations to help defray the inevitable heavy legal costs to "The Body Politic Free the Press Fund", C/- Melbourne Gay Liberation, PO Box 35, Fitzroy, Vic, 3065.

they could run out of coal in early February. On 14 February Carter threatened to invoke the anti-union Taft-Hartley act, which would force the miners back to work for an 80-day "cooling off" (and stockpiling) period. But as one Labor Department official admitted, "the major problem with Taft Hartley is that nobody will obey it" (*Wall Street Journal*, 13 February). Another government option mooted about -- nationalisation of the mines and the deployment of troops to force the miners back -- could have such incendiary political repercussions throughout the labour movement that Carter is understandably nervous about considering it.

Not that the bloodthirsty coal operators have waited quietly for "legal" action by their government. The coal fields are traditionally notorious for strikebreaking violence by company gun thugs and scabherders as well as the cops. Hundreds of miners have been arrested for picketing and one died in mysterious circumstances when he was shoved in the path of an onrushing truck on an interstate highway near Morgantown, West Virginia. On 3 February another miner was killed by a scab when 35 militants attempted to shut down an Indiana pit which has operated throughout the strike.

But the most brutal incident thus far was the cold-blooded murder on 6 January of 65-year-old retired miner Mack Lewis, gunned down by a company guard in Pike County, Kentucky. According to a Pike County miner interviewed by WV, four elderly unarmed union men were picketing the gate at the time of the murder. A few minutes

Black ban coal to the US!

According to the *Financial Review* (24 February) and the *Australian* (25 February), at least two Australian firms -- Coalex Pty Ltd and RW Miller (Holdings) Pty -- are contracted to ship coal to the US. Such shipments can serve only one purpose at this time -- strikebreaking. International labour solidarity demands that all Australian unions involved in the handling of coal -- including the Miners Federation, the Seamen's Union, the Watersiders, and the Federated Engine Drivers -- black ban all coal intended for the US as long as the miners strike continues.

after Lewis arrived at the site with sandwiches for his union brothers, the guard "walked up, didn't exchange three words till the guy was shot -- five times -- with a .44". "They were peaceful old men, and one of them got shot by being peaceful", the miner said angrily. "We're going to be prepared the next time."

Militancy without leadership

But for the militancy and fighting spirit of the miners the strike would have been scuttled by their "leader" days after it started. UMWA president Arnold Miller reportedly caved in on the decisive issue of the right to strike as early as 14 December. Miller officially sanctioned scabbing right from the start of the strike by signing separate agreements forcing Western US strip miners to continue working. "People feel suspicious; people feel Arnold Miller really is trying to betray them", the Pike County miner commented. An Ohio miner told WV, "Miller's acting like he doesn't want none of this scab coal shut down".

What doubts might have lingered among the militant ranks regarding Miller's treachery were dispelled as rumours of a tentative agreement "which would spell disaster for the union if accepted" (WV no 192, 10 February) circulated in early February. After a dramatic confrontation in Washington 10 February, when hundreds of angry miners stormed UMWA headquarters and a frightened Arnold Miller stayed in hiding, the UMWA Bargaining Council voted 30 to 6 to reject the proposal. Faced with a unanimous cry of outrage from the coal fields, a rising chorus calls for Miller's resignation and a stack of telegrams demanding rejection which one council member said was "twelve feet high", every district president and International Executive Board member present voted no. Only Miller, the union's vice president and secretary-treasurer and the three-man negotiating committee voted for the sellout. The depth of Miller's own unpopularity was underscored by the widespread popularity of a recall petition, unusual in itself in US unions and all the more so that it was circulating in the midst of a strike.

Such sentiments are the fruit of five years of Miller's pro-capitalist leadership, during which union coal has fallen below 50 percent of the national total. Unless hundreds of new and old non-union pits are brought under UMWA contract, scab operations will sabotage strikes and threaten the union's existence altogether. But Miller's record in organising is as painful as the history of broken wildcats which he helped to defeat. (One miner in Cabin Creek, West Virginia told WV that some of the non-union pits could be organised in 15 minutes if the leadership would take the time to sign the workers up.)

When Miller first got elected to the presidency in 1973 under the aegis of "Miners for Democracy", his candidacy was supported by virtually every ostensibly socialist organisation in

the US -- just as today they support the Arnold Miller of the steel workers, Ed Sadlowski -- including the Healyite Workers League and the like-named co-thinkers of the workerist International Socialists and the reformist Socialist Workers Party. The outstanding exception was the SL/US. While the fake lefts lauded Miller for his lip service to "rank-and-file democracy", the SL/US pointed out that Miller's election on the coat-tails of a federal court suit against the union was a victory not for workers democracy but for "the Labor Department/liberal Democrat cabal which installed him at the head of the UMW" (WV no 17, March 1973).

In an article entitled "Throw Back the Sell-out" (WV no 192, 10 February), the SL/US warned the miners not to fall for any of Miller's deadly games and emphasised the importance of a victory in this strike -- not just for the miners but for all their class brothers and sisters:

"COAL MINERS! In spite of the total lack of leadership from the International in organizing the strike, in spite of Miller's betrayals at the bargaining table, VICTORY IS POSSIBLE! You can win this strike by sticking to your guns and demanding that there be no settlement without unlimited right to strike, fully funded health fund and a big wage increase. DON'T GIVE IN NOW THAT THE BOSSES' BACKS ARE AGAINST THE WALL! Redouble your efforts to shut down scab mines. Send mass delegations to steel plants, power stations, rail and truck terminals urging the workers not to handle scab coal....

"The miners have suffered plenty through this bitter strike and they have fought hard. There hasn't been such a display of militant picketing in years. And your demands are urgent necessities, not only for all workers but particularly for coal mine workers. Give up the right to strike and the UMWA health plan and there will be more widows standing at the pit heads mourning their dead. The way to reduce the suffering is not by knuckling under to the companies and the government but by using your strong position to win a decisive victory.

"Now is the time to teach the bosses a lesson, the enormously profitable coal-steel-oil monopolies who make millions out of disasters like the Farmington and Scotia mine tragedies. If the UMWA wins the unlimited right to strike it can quickly go on the offensive to sign up miners at the non-union pits who will have seen how militant action can win. The entire U.S. labor movement will be invigorated to resist job-slashing "austerity" attacks from New York to San Francisco. And then the miners will not have to fight alone, as they have repeatedly and militantly done so far....

"Remember that during World War II Roosevelt threatened to call out federal troops to crush a UMWA strike against the wartime wage freeze. UMWA president John L. Lewis told FDR, 'You can't mine coal with bayonets!' His words are still true today. Successfully defying Taft-Hartley would change this noose around labor's neck into a dead letter and open the door to unionization of millions of unorganized workers through militant tactics (such as labor boycotts) declared illegal by these laws.

"It could pave the way to unionizing textile, the key to breaking open the South; it could be the spark for a drive that would bring in the women working for the minimum wage in small shops around the country; blacks and other minorities constantly threatened with unemployment; the illegal immigrants constantly worried that the employer will have them deported. All these sectors -- amounting to tens of millions of workers, far more than the unionized working class -- are kept from

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EDITORIAL BOARD: Chris Korwin
Len Meyers (managing editor)
David Reynolds
Inga Smith (production manager)
David Strachan (Melbourne correspondent)

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Roberta D'Amico

GPO Box 3473, Sydney, NSW, 2001
(02) 235-8115

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"Revolutionary reformism"?

What's red about Scarlet Woman?

The movie *Harlan County, USA*, shown recently in Australia, portrays with gripping impact the leading role women can play in the class struggle, as it follows the militant wives of the striking Harlan County coal miners into pitched battles with gun-toting cops and scabs. The same point was illustrated here recently when the wives of the LaTrobe Valley power workers began organising in support of what was the most important strike since Fraser came to power. A proletarian women's movement could intersect such opportunities to break down the pervasive sexism among male workers and draw politically more backward women who are not part of the workforce onto the terrain of social struggle.

The proletarian-communist Spartacist League (SL) actively supported those strikes and our comrades stood -- literally -- alongside the class-conscious women of the LaTrobe Valley. But not so "socialist feminists" like the Scarlet Woman collective (SW). While Communist Party (CPA) union bureaucrat John Halfpenny was busily selling out the LaTrobe strike, his "sisters" in the CPA-influenced SW were undoubtedly agonising over "the correct feminist line when starving coal miners' wives try and force their men back to work" (*Scarlet Woman*, March 1977). At the very time these "correctly feminist" scab apologists first posed this "question", they were also spearheading an unsuccessful anti-communist purge campaign against SL supporters in Sydney Women's Liberation.

The purge attempt was decisively, humiliatingly defeated. But recently, the first issue of *Scarlet Woman* (October-November 1977) to appear since then includes a long self-justification ("Expulsions: the Spartacist [sic] debate") which sets out to rehash the now stale distortions (eg that we are "opposed ... to the very existence of the autonomous women's movement"; or, still more outlandish, that we "are in fact opposed to women organising around their felt needs as women") propagated in the exclusion attempt (though it discreetly ignores SW's own apologia for strikebreaking, mentioned above, which figured in the original debate). In the process the article recognises not only that we are indeed a part of the women's movement, but that we -- as opposed to SW and such sister "socialist feminists" as the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) -- are the genuine Marxist pole within it. And it confirms what we said last year: "Scarlet Woman's argument for the separate organisation of women is necessarily an argument for a reformist, non-revolutionary program for the liberation of women" ("Women's liberation: Autonomy is not an option", 27 March 1977; reprinted in *Revolutionary Communist Bulletin* no 8 part 2, "The crisis in the women's movement").

Unable to challenge our programmatic consistency, SW decries "theoretical purity at the expense of alienating the masses". Yet in the same issue it is repeatedly forced to acknowledge feminists' consistent failure even to form "links" with working-class women, much less lead the masses. All too eager to slander the SL and Marxism, SW can lay claim to neither the masses nor "theoretical purity" -- they are even "unable to clearly articulate their socialist feminist perspective". "We have been asked by readers what is 'socialist' about our magazine", an editorial confesses. The scarcely surprising reply: "we have obviously felt more confident about our feminism than our socialism".

In fact SW's facade of professed confusion veils a program -- confining the struggle against women's oppression to reform under the inherently oppressive capitalist system. Along with its insistence on the spurious "autonomy" of the feminists the article puts forward a list of demands (free 24-hour child care, free abortion on demand etc) which it says "form the essence of our political principles". With the exception of the SWP, which usually argues against the call for free abortion on demand as maximalist, virtually everyone who stands for the liberation of women can agree with most of them. But a program limited to such minimal reforms (which do not even raise the questions of socialisation of household duties and replacement of the nuclear family, as even avowedly non-socialist radical feminists would) is necessarily reformist, and this is the program which SW posits as the true "political basis" of their women's movement.

So overtly reformist is SW's approach that it must painfully attempt to distinguish itself from the openly bourgeois-feminist Women's Electoral

Lobby (WEL). The difference certainly does not lie in their attitudes toward the bourgeois state, for SW assures us that the achievement of reforms during the Whitlam government "required cooperation with a government that is both capitalist and male". What then? WEL is "avowedly reformist" while SW is ... "revolutionary reformist"! In other words the only *fundamental* difference between WEL and SW is that WEL is more honest -- it makes no pretence that the bourgeois reforms it desires, if accumulated in sufficient quantity, will somehow total "socialism". Decades ago, Rosa Luxemburg ruthlessly exposed the treachery of the first "socialist" reformist, Eduard Bernstein.

Communists recognise that to seize power the working class must be purged of the predominating influence of bourgeois consciousness and imbued with a revolutionary class consciousness, manifested in the struggle for an alternative revolutionary leadership to replace the pro-capitalist labour bureaucracy. SW, however, castigates the SL for "advocat[ing] that women be actively involved in politics ... only [!] as a way of raising women's class consciousness". This is not good enough, you see. For SW the working class -- though "a decisive force for revolutionary change" -- is relegated by its backward consciousness to being "at best [!] a latent force". Like the trade-union bureaucracy which justifies its wretched misleadership by pointing to the apathy and backwardness inculcated in the workers by its betrayals, SW defines class consciousness to *exclude* working-class unity around the special needs of women, belittles the struggle for class consciousness, and then dismisses the proletariat as a "latent" force. SW

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Reformist hypocrites vs homosexual communists

When the Communist Party's (CPA) *Tribune*, out of the blue, drops a little piece of slander concerning an organisation 12,000 miles away, an organisation of the kind it normally refuses with disdain to recognise, there must be a special reason. The organisation is the Spartacist League/US (SL/US), and the reason is the significance of its recent fusion with the Red Flag Union (RFU), a group which had developed from the radical gay-liberationist Lavender and Red Union (L&RU) to Trotskyism.

The *Tribune* (25 January) piece is even geographically garbled, having the RFU a Canadian group. More central is its nauseating attempt to discredit this revolutionary Trotskyist fusion through simultaneously red-baiting and homosexual-baiting it, quoting from the Canadian gay paper *Body Politic* the comment: "fruit and nut fusion".

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP), on the other hand, doggedly refuses even to acknowledge it. But the SWP cannot simply ignore the RFU comrades' long history as a tendency within the radical gay movement which sought for the class line even before decisively breaking from the New Left sectoralism of the gay milieu. Thus, without mentioning the RFU or its fusion with the SL/US, a piece in *Direct Action's* "Forum" column (9 February) -- observing that the L&RU "has had some experiences with the issue of hiring gays for the police force and the role of the police" -- quotes a long passage from "Gays vs Police", a 1975 L&RU article explaining that cops are definitively in the camp of the class enemy, the front-line defenders of bourgeois property and morality. It does not, however, quote the article's attack on the call for community control of the police -- a demand long supported by the US SWP -- as "very regressive"! Nor does *Direct Action* see fit to mention the US SWP's habit of standing candidates for sheriff!

So, leaving aside the sectoralist approach of the SWP article, why is the SWP, of all people, printing solemn denunciations of trusting the bourgeois cops? Well hypocrisy, as they say, is the tribute vice pays to virtue. For those interested in why the RFU opted for the revolutionary Trotskyism of the Spartacist League, the fusion issue of its paper, *Red Flag*, and other literature on gay oppression and bolshevism is available from the SL.

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Leninism and workers control

The following is the first part of an article reprinted from Workers Vanguard no 162 (17 June 1977). It is based on a talk by Comrade Seymour, a member of the Central Committee of the Spartacist League/US, at a West Coast Spartacus Youth League educational in mid-March of last year. The second part will appear in a forthcoming issue of ASP.

by Joseph Seymour

There is probably no question in contemporary left-wing politics where greater confusion, both substantive and terminological, reigns than over "workers control". Of the several forms of confusion, the most dangerous is a *stagist* conception of workers control as the link between day-to-day trade-union militancy and revolutionary dual power, as the *necessary, first* step toward the seizure of state power. Workers control is not a demand which communist trade unionists agitate for and seek to implement every day in every way. It is only appropriate to a qualitatively different, higher level of class struggle.

Workers control -- dual power at the point of production -- is an aspect, usually secondary, of a generalized revolutionary crisis. With one exception -- Italy in 1969 -- workers control has emerged only *after*, not before, the government was overthrown and the repressive state apparatus was in disarray: Russia 1917, Germany 1918, Spain 1936, Portugal 1974-75. And in Italy's "Hot Autumn" in 1969, workers control was a subordinate aspect of a mass strike wave centered on economic demands.

There are four characteristic kinds of confusion. The most important is an attempt to exploit terminological ambiguity in the service of a reformist programmatic conception. This is the trade unionization of workers control. In the conventional sense, trade unions normally exercise some control over the conditions of production, job standards and the like. Trotsky, who was very precise in his programmatic formulations, always speaks of "workers control of production" or "of industry" to distinguish this concept from the kind of control that trade unions normally exercise.

In a recent article, "Nuclear Power and the Workers Movement" (WV no 146, 25 February), we demanded "trade-union control of safety conditions in all industrial situations". This is *not* a call for generalized dual power at the industrial level. Rather it is a strong trade-union demand. Many unions in many countries have forced management to adhere to a thick rulebook specifying safety standards. This is not "workers control of production". Of course, it is in the interests of reformists and centrists to blur the distinction between this type of trade-union control of working conditions and generalized dual power at the point of production signalling a revolutionary situation.

A second source of confusion is more purely terminological. "Control" is a word which exists in many Indo-European languages with similar but not identical meanings. In European languages other than English, "to control" means to check or monitor the actions of another. For example, the functionary who checks tickets on French trains is called the *contrôleur de billets*. However, in English the term "control" means to administer or direct. While in other languages "workers control" is distinct from and weaker than "workers management", in English the two are usually identified. Thus English-speaking

Trotskyists sometimes confuse these two qualitatively different concepts. For example, Felix Morrow in his *Revolution and Counterrevolution in Spain* uses "workers control" to describe what was actually workers management of nominally nationalized enterprises.

A third area of confusion centers on workers management, which is neither identical with nor necessarily occurs under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Our program is not workers management, but rather the management or administration by a workers government of a centrally directed and planned economy.

It is possible for generalized workers management or, more precisely, self-management to exist as another, distinct form of dual power. Workers control is dual power *within* the production unit; management is still trying to reassert its traditional authority. In Italy 1969 there were pitched battles of Fiat workers against Fiat foremen and company goons -- that's what we mean by workers control or dual power. Workers management, by contrast, occurs when the bourgeois management abandons the productive units to the workers, while the latter are not subject to economic administration by the state. It is obvious that such an extraordinary situation can occur only when a proletarian state power has not yet consolidated its rule (Bolshevik Russia in late 1917-early 1918) or in a civil war under a weak bourgeois "popular front" government (Spain 1936-37). Workers management is then a situation of dual power *between* the productive units and the government, which may be either proletarian or bourgeois. The government's monopoly over the mechanisms of finance is invariably the Achilles heel of workers management.

A fourth point of confusion concerns "workers control" as an institution under a democratically governed workers state with a centralized planned economy. The terminological identity of this concept with "workers control" in a revolutionary, dual-power situation is codified in the Transitional Program and reflects the political language of the Russian experience. That the same term refers to two fundamentally different programmatic concepts is inherently confusing and ideally should be avoided. However, it would be ineffectual scholasticism for us to invent and use different terms.

Nevertheless, comrades must understand the difference. Workers control under socialist economic planning is an authoritative *consultative* voice at the point of production. It is absolutely not counterposed or antagonistic to the managerial hierarchy of the workers government. The notion that "workers control" has the selfsame character during a revolutionary offensive against capitalism and in a workers state is an economist or syndicalist deviation.

Workers control is not a demand made upon the employer or state; it is a *condition* of struggle. Workers control cannot be incorporated into a trade-union contract [counterpart of award] or otherwise institutionalized. By its very nature workers control posits open-ended struggle between workers and management. Comrade Douglas' document captures well the difference between strong trade unionism and workers control: Putting assembly-line speed in the contract is a strong trade-union demand; workers control means determining line speed against management's will. A union hiring hall is a strong trade-union demand; workers control is forcing management to hire more people than it wants to employ. These are real and significant differences.

Pabloite revisionism

Because workers control cannot be institutionalized, it is wrong to call for workers control in a particular firm or industry as a programmatic norm. In a revolutionary situation, of course, certain firms and industries are in the vanguard of workers control struggles -- the Putilov metalworks in St Petersburg in 1917, Fiat in Turin in 1969, the Lisnave shipyards in Lisbon in 1974-75. However, a call to action on a particular firm in a revolutionary period is different from a programmatic norm.

The leading exponents of reformist and stagist

conceptions of workers control are the European Pabloites. In Britain, the best-known left-wing advocates of workers control are two freelancing independent Pabloites, Ken Coates and Tony Topham of the Institute for Workers' Control. The very name reveals a reformist conception. Think of the Institute for Revolutionary Dual Power in Industry! The purely social-democratic nature of the Coates/Topham project is spelled out openly:

"The aims of the Institute for Workers' Control shall be ... to assist in the formation of Workers' Control groups dedicated to the development of democratic consciousness, to the winning of support for Workers' Control in



Russian Revolution, 1917: factory meeting led by Bolshevik workers.

all existing organizations of Labour, to the challenging of undemocratic actions wherever they may occur, and the extension of democratic control over industry and the economy itself..." (*Bulletin of the Institute for Workers' Control*, vol 1, no 1 [no date])

A far more sophisticated exponent of a reformist, stagist position on workers control than the "industrial democrat" Coates is Ernest Mandel. Labelling workers control an "anti-capitalist structural reform", he presents it as an institutionalized aspect of trade-union bargaining:

"Workers' control is the affirmation by the workers of a refusal to let the management dispose freely of the means of production and labour power.... It is a refusal to enter discussions with the management or the government as a whole on the division of the national income, so long as the workers have not acquired the ability to reveal the way the capitalists cook up the books when they talk of prices and profits." ("Lessons of May", *New Left Review*, November-December 1968)

Mandel simply trivializes workers control as an appendage to every kind of social struggle



Paris unions rally to support Lip watch factory "work-in". Revisionists hailed Lip, UCS struggles as "workers control".

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normally occurring in capitalist society:

"The struggle for workers' control -- with which the strategy of anti-capitalist structural reforms, the struggle for a transitional programme, is largely identified -- must ... keep close to the preoccupations of the masses, must *constantly* arise from the *everyday* reality experienced by the workers, their wives, the students and revolutionary intellectuals." (our emphasis -- *Ibid*)

The anti-revolutionary nature of Mandel's position is clear when he attempts to inject workers control into the French May 1968 general strike. I read the following passage several times because I didn't understand it. This is because it's inherently confused and confusing, grafting a reformist, stagist concept of workers control onto a revolutionary dual power situation:

"The general strike of May 1968 ... offers us an excellent example of the key importance of this problem. Ten million workers were out on strike. They occupied their factories. If they were moved by the desire to do away with many of the social injustices heaped up by the Gaullist regime in the ten years of its existence, they were obviously aiming beyond simple wage scale demands."

It is significant that Mandel does not see the strikers as having a revolutionary anti-capitalist impulse, merely wanting to eliminate "many" (sic) of the social injustices associated with the Gaullist regime. He goes on:

"But if the workers did not feel like being satisfied with immediate demands, they also did not have any exact idea of what they did want. Had they been educated in the preceding years and months in the spirit [sic] of workers' control, they would have known what to do: elect a committee in every plant that would begin by opening the company books; calculate for themselves the various companies' real manufacturing costs and rates of profit; establish a right of veto on hiring and firing and on any changes in the organization of the work." ("The Debate on Workers' Control", *International Socialist Review*, May-June 1969)

The 1968 general strike in France

But for there to be "workers control of production" *there must be production*. A functioning workers control committee during a general strike would be scabbing! Workers control and a general strike are two mutually exclusive economic-military tactics, which usually arise in very



Clydeside workers march during UCS "work-in", 1971.

different situations. As we shall see, workers control is usually an attempt to *maintain* production in the face of employer sabotage, the disruption of war or severe economic crisis.

The call for workers control during the French May events would not merely have been wrong and confusionist, but dangerous and liquidationist. Under those conditions, the French ruling class would have promised considerable concessions toward workers control -- open books, union veto on firing, the right to beat up foremen and all kinds of good things -- if only the workers ended the general strike and defused the political crisis.

Mandel himself drew out the liquidationist consequences of his call for workers control during the French May-June 1968 events in an article published at that time:

"It is here that the strategy of 'anticapitalist structural reforms,' transition demands, assumes all its validity. *The masses cannot seize power in the factories and neighborhoods*; that calls for a new and centralized revolutionary leadership that does not as yet exist. But the fact that the masses are not yet in a position to seize power does not at all imply the impossibility of winning, right now, demands over and above wage increases. "The workers hold the factories and nerve centers of the nation.... They must immediately establish a de facto power that the bosses and the state cannot cancel out once 'calm' has been restored.... "This de facto power consists in democratically elected committees which establish

workers control over all production....

"*These committees should decide which enterprises would begin operating again, and to what end -- that is, exclusively to fill the needs of the working population. They should have veto power over every investment project.*" (our emphasis -- "From the Bankruptcy of Neocapitalism to the Struggle for the Socialist Revolution", in *Revolt in France* -- 1968)

The French 1968 general strike is a perfect example of when a stagist concept of workers control is dangerous. Workers control would have meant a *lowering* of the level of class struggle. It would have been equivalent to abandoning a major battle on the verge of victory and retreating into guerilla war. The correct revolutionary demand for the French May events was the unification and centralization of the strike committees as embryonic soviets, bypassing a distinct period of workers control.

Trotsky on Germany 1931

Trotsky's 1931 article, "Workers' Control of Production", is absolutely unambiguous that workers control is not a reform, but a manifestation of dual power in a revolutionary situation:

"Control can be imposed only by force upon the bourgeoisie, by a proletariat on the road to the moment of taking power from them, and then also ownership of the means of production. Thus the regime of workers' control, a provisional, transitional regime by its very essence, can correspond only to the period of the convulsing of the bourgeois state, the proletarian offensive, and the falling back of the bourgeoisie, that is, to a period of the proletarian revolution in the fullest sense of the word."

However, taken out of historic context and read superficially, Trotsky's article could be interpreted as positing workers control as a necessary or normal early stage of a revolutionary crisis.

Amid Trotsky's voluminous writings on revolutionary strategy and tactics, there is only one substantive article on workers control -- concerning Germany in 1931. Why did Trotsky bring to the fore the demand for workers control at that particular place and time? Why did he consider factory committees rather than soviets as the most likely form of dual power? Why did he regard workers control rather than a mass strike wave or street fighting as the probable initial form of confrontation with bourgeois authority?

First, the economic conditions militated against the strike tactic. Given a sharp and worsening depression, the tasks of the workers were to prevent plant closures, lock-outs and increased unemployment.

Apart from economic conjunctural considerations, Trotsky's position on workers control was governed by the relations of the Communist Party (CP), which he considered bureaucratic centrist with a potential for revolutionary renewal, to the Social Democrats on the one hand and to the Nazis on the other. In most circumstances the strength of the workers movement against the employers is roughly in line with its strength against the state. Try having a work action in Brazil, Iran or South Korea. However, in Germany 1931 the power of the workers in the shops was far greater than in the streets. The Communists alone, a minority of the proletariat, could not overcome the Nazi stormtroopers; the CP's sectarianism and the Social Democrats' legalism prevented united military action against the fascists. However, the Nazi writ did not run into the factories so that in military terms resistance to workers control was far less than to other forms of a proletarian offensive.

The German Social Democrats associated soviets with Communist rule and would have opposed them as a united-front form. The "Third Period" Stalinists refused to work in the Social Democratic-dominated trade unions. The factory committees were the only existing common organizations of Social Democratic and Communist workers. Thus Trotsky saw in the factory committees and workers control the path of least resistance for a united proletarian offensive. His advocacy of workers control was not a universal tactical schema, but a concrete form for a united front of a deeply divided workers movement against the growing fascist threat. If one abstracts Trotsky's position from the concrete conjuncture and political alignment in Germany 1931, one is liable to project a false tactical schema involving the fetishization of workers control. ■



Portuguese workers hold strike meeting at Lisnave shipyards, Lisbon, 1975.

Courts out of BLF!

A challenge by Brian Rix of the NSW "Builders Labourers for Democratic Control", a "rank-and-file" group in the Builders Labourers Federation (BLF), on 23 January led to the Federal Court voiding the recent re-election of Norm Gallagher, the Maoist federal secretary of the BLF, and ordering a new government-controlled ballot. The Gallagher leadership had bureaucratically in-



Builders Labourers federal secretary, Maoist Norm Gallagher.

validated Rix's nomination for federal secretary on the spurious grounds that it was "late" and that Rix and his supporters had refused to pay an eight-dollar levy which Gallagher had imposed to finance his wrecking operation against the old NSW branch, led by Communist Party (CPA) members Joe Owens and Jack Munday.

Gallagher and his sleazy and corrupt leadership clique are notorious throughout the labour movement for their gangsterism and their gross class collaborationism -- notably, their intimate collusion with the Master Builders Association in destroying the democratically elected NSW leadership. But by bringing the bosses courts into the union Rix and his supporters are betraying the ranks no less grotesquely than Gallagher.

Yet virtually every left organisation in the country has lined up behind Rix. Except the Maoists of course who, three years after Gallagher's own threats of court action against Munday/Owens, are having a field day hypocritically denouncing their opponents as "bosses stooges". "We'll get you this time, Gallagher" (*Battler*, 4 February) crowed the philistine-workerist International Socialists (IS). When one troubled IS supporter asked, "Are 'WE' of the I.S. now to be identified with the Federal Court?" (*Battler*, 18 February), the reply ("Why we used the courts") in the same issue was a clear-cut yes, lauding the bosses' court for "forcing proper elections to take place".

The absolute precondition for trade-union democracy, as Trotsky noted in "Trade unions in the epoch of imperialist decay", is "the complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state". The courts are not neutral. They are institutions of the bourgeois state aimed at suppressing the working class. Those like Rix, the CPA, the IS and his other so-called socialist supporters who look to the bosses to get them into office can be relied on to repay their sponsors once they get in. Arnold Miller, the man who is today trying might and main to sell out the most militant class battle in the US in years, was also elected through a court suit to "democratise" the union. The BLF membership must repudiate this attack on their union. Gallagher must be swept out by the ranks whom he misleads and replaced by a revolutionary leadership. Courts out of the BLF! No state intervention in the labour movement!

Fake-left red-baiting at AUS council

Student "union" shifts right

According to the *Nation Review* (2-8 February), Sydney University Communist Party (CPA) member Gary Nicholls posed the main question facing the Australian Union of Students (AUS) at its recent annual January Council as follows: "Was AUS going ... to play bankroller to the revolution at home and abroad? Or was it ... to direct itself away from what outgoing president Peter O'Connor called 'esoterica' and being an 'alternative world government' towards the bread and butter campus issues?"

Despite the implication in Nicholls' loaded "question" that AUS had in fact been "bankrolling the revolution", the truth is that the CPA and the other fake lefts (most notably the Socialist Youth Alliance [SYA] and the Maoist Students for Australian Independence [SAI]) in the AUS hierarchy have steered as clear of any hint of revolutionary politics as possible. After a year of bitter, essentially apolitical clique-fighting between the SAI and the Maoist-influenced Overseas Student Service (OSS) on the one hand and the "Left Caucus" swamp of social democrats (including the CPA, SYA and independents) on the other, AUS finds itself with an increasingly apathetic if not hostile student membership. With the fake lefts tearing each other to shreds the main victor has been the right, as witnessed by its success in winning a number of executive and

officer positions this year. The Maoists have been virtually routed from office. After a series of sharp government/right-wing attacks which met with practically no organised resistance from the predominantly "Left Caucus" AUS leadership last year, AUS finds itself threatened with the possibility of complete disintegration.

A recent Supreme Court decision by one Justice Kaye in Victoria invalidated compulsory AUS membership and ruled "unconstitutional" AUS funding to such "non-educational" causes as the Timor Information Centre, the Black Resources Centre and the Malaya News Service. Rather than attempt a student mobilisation combined with a call on the labour movement to defend it against such attacks by the bourgeois state, the AUS "lefts" simply caved in. The council dutifully recognised its commitment to "bread and butter campus issues" and the sagacity of the judge's decision by voting to cut off funds to any such groups -- including OSS and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Student Union (NATSISU) -- and devising their own scheme to eliminate compulsory membership through a "conscientious objection" loophole (which the momentarily more militant SYA refused to go along with). As for the OSS, its own flouting of financial accountability to AUS won it little support. And although the cutting off of its funds was motivated by both clique hostility and capitulatory cowardice, the OSS with its own class-collaborationist line and bureaucratic practices is no better.

And as though to provide irrefutable evidence that social democrats can be just as ruthlessly anti-communist as the right, long-time "Left Caucus"-type and Victorian regional organiser Sandy Thomas gave even the Liberal students the opportunity to denounce the "lefts" -- with stomach-churning hypocrisy -- for setting up Asian students for assassination. And that is precisely what this worthless scum Thomas did! In an outrageous fingering operation picked up by and widely reported in the bourgeois press, he accused the OSS of funnelling funds to the underground Malayan Communist Party. This was nothing less than an open invitation to the Fraser government to deport the Asian student members of OSS and to his bloody colleagues in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the other rightist regimes in Southeast Asia, to line them up for the torture chambers and the firing squads. And what have Thomas' ostensibly communist colleagues in the CPA and SYA had to say? Nothing, absolutely nothing! *They stand condemned tacit endorsers of this set-up.* Their hands will be stained with the blood of any OSS member who meets a brutal death in his native country as a result.

Thomas' treachery was extreme, but it was not inconsistent with the politics of the "Left Caucus". Throughout the past year they have consistently opposed shifting AUS from its liberal, narrow "student unionism" toward any attempt to link up with the social power of real unions -- workers' unions -- or to broaden the struggle against cutbacks in education into a generalised struggle against recession austerity and unemployment. They actively resisted any attempt to go beyond simple defence of TEAS stipends to fight for opening the universities up to working-class youth through open admissions and for replacing the administration -- the bourgeoisie's representatives on campus -- with democratic student-staff-campus worker control. Red-baited by the bourgeois media, the "Left Caucus" responded with even more virulent red-baiting. Refusing to allow full political debate on the crisis in AUS, their squabbling with their equally bureaucratic Maoist rivals earned the contempt of students.

Last year, when its relations with the rest of the "left" bloc were somewhat cosier, the SYA called AUS "one of the most democratic, progressive and militant unions in the country" (*Direct Action*, 4 August 1977). Now it bemoans the victory of "a 'do nothing' policy" (*Direct Action*, 9 February). But by this the SYA means only that it can no longer rely on AUS for its favoured method of recruitment -- reformist single-issue "mass mobilisations". When Spartacist League supporters at Sydney University last October approached members of the SYA and CPA to join it in united-front support work around the most important strike in Australia since Fraser's rise to power -- the LaTrobe Valley power workers' strike, which if victorious

might have created the conditions for a more generalised upsurge against the government's budget-slashing attacks on education and other social services -- the SYA and CPA both responded with a "do nothing policy". They were too busy standing in AUS elections, they claimed. They may soon find themselves with no AUS in which to stand for elections.

Even in the case of labour unions, which have the social power to force concessions from the bosses, pure-and-simple unionism stands programmatically counterposed to the only means whereby the workers can secure their interests -- the seizure of power. But AUS is not a labour union -- students are a heterogeneous layer with no social power in their own right and only ephemeral or secondary common interests. In any serious social crisis, the "bread and butter campus issues" which the fake lefts in AUS so single-mindedly pursue will be overwhelmingly buried as the student population polarises, taking sides in the class struggle. The reformists who so contemptuously dismiss the struggle for "revolution at home and abroad" have nothing to offer students. We do -- a struggle for a world free of exploitation and oppression, in the ranks of the proletariat and its communist vanguard, the revolutionary Trotskyist party. ■

"Boat people" . . .

Continued from page eight

demand, whatever its motivation, protest against anti-communism becomes a cover for racism.

Following the collapse of the Thieu regime in 1975 the US imperialists airlifted their collaborators and cowardly professional torturers to safety, hastening to rescue these anti-communist hitmen for possible future use in the service of the CIA. "No Asylum for Indochinese War Criminals" was the demand raised by the Spartacist League/US: "These vicious professional anti-communist killers should not be allowed to escape punishment for their heinous crimes against the workers and peasants of Vietnam and Cambodia" (*Workers Vanguard* no 68, 9 May 1975). The same holds true today for any high-ranking military officers of the old regime or other war criminals among the "boat people".

But to demand that the "boat people" be shipped back *en bloc* can only be racist. By and large these refugees (who may not necessarily all be committed right wingers) appear to be relatively small-time components of the *ancien regime* -- businessmen, entrepreneurs and the like -- or trained professionals such as doctors, engineers, professors and students, as well as the ubiquitous brothel keepers and drug pedlars. There is a sense in which the "boat people" are dispossessed -- deserted by their own ruling class and its US imperialist paymasters. They were part of the artificially bloated "middle class", created and made wealthy through corruption and its services to the imperialist army of occupation. The fall of the Thieu regime meant an inevitable, dramatic drop in the living standards of this thin layer and also posed the threat of being packed off to a so-called "New Economic Zone" to boost agricultural production.

Of course, many of the refugees have arrived complete with gold bars and in some cases their own servants! Others have sold their supposedly unseaworthy boats and acquired expensive houses (*Australian*, 3 August 1977). But while decidedly unenthusiastic about the arrival of such well-oiled "refugees", we do not join in the chauvinist-motivated clamour for their expulsion.

Defend the Berlin Wall

While we support the democratic right of citizens of the bureaucratically degenerated and deformed workers states to emigrate, such rights are subordinated to our unconditional class defence of the workers states against imperialism. Thus we defend the right of the Vietnamese government to prevent the departure of those whose technical or medical skills are needed for reconstruction of the country after the ravages of the imperialist war, or those who are privy to secret military information. Similarly, unlike all varieties of West European pseudo-Trotskyists, including the West German United Secretariat group, we defend the Berlin Wall. At the time of its construction in 1961, East Germany was suffering from a massive, economically destructive hemorrhage of its skilled workforce. While the East German Stalinists' bureaucratic policies made the wall's construction necessary, and recognising that in a Germany reunited under a healthy workers state it would be torn down, it nevertheless represents a defence of the proletarian property forms against resurgent West German capitalism.

Certainly many of the "boat people" are simply refugees from a social revolution. However, the economic mismanagement of the Stalinist bureaucracy not only undermines the revolutionary gains but exacerbates such disaffection. A healthy workers state in which all policies were deter-

Scarlet Woman . . .

Continued from page three

thus places itself in the same boat as the labour fakers who are directly responsible for perpetuating the backwardness of the proletariat (male and female) played up by SW as a rationale for reformism.

Though they dismissed the proletariat as a force for social change, the earlier radical feminists were at least imbued with a healthy disgust for the rottenness of bourgeois society and its institutions (eg the nuclear family). Those who, compelled by the obvious irrelevance of orthodox feminism in the light of the recession and the fall of Whitlam to face the question of class, simply allow themselves to get sucked into SW's feminist-tinged labour reformism will thereby find themselves reconciled to the maintenance of bourgeois society.

There is no revolutionary aspect to Scarlet Woman's "revolutionary reformism"; there is no socialist side to its "socialist feminism". Even had Scarlet Woman won the day in Sydney Women's Liberation last year, it will never win the day in Harlan County or the LaTrobe Valley. Victory in the class struggle, in the fight against women's oppression requires above all the communist program of the Spartacist League. ■

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mined by the toiling masses through democratically elected soviets would be far more capable of enlisting the support of professionals and the middle classes. Only workers political revolution to oust the bureaucratic parasites can open the road to the fullest use of all the resources, human and material, of the workers states.

Marxism and immigration policy

The ALP's current moves toward complete opposition to immigration because of the unemployment crisis -- "left-winger" Moss Cass, the Labor spokesman on immigration, is now calling for immigration to be "cut to the bone" -- is thoroughly reprehensible to proletarian internationalists. "White Australian" opposition to immigration expresses only the chauvinist protectionism of the labour bureaucracy. On the other hand we do not raise the demand for "open borders". The miserly standard of living of the Asian masses will not be raised if they all go elsewhere. Not only is such a "solution" utopian; on a sufficiently large scale immigration flows only exacerbate national antagonisms and in extreme cases could even wipe out the national identity of smaller countries. Only after the triumph of international socialism, eliminating the age-old problem of scarcity, can the state, and therefore borders and immigration laws, be abolished.

While aggressively opposing all forms of racially and nationally discriminatory quotas, communists do not advise capitalist governments on their necessarily chauvinist and exploitative immigration policy, which opens and closes its portals in line with economic and political expediency. We intransigently defend the rights of migrant workers -- "legal" or not -- against chauvinist persecution and deportation. We demand full citizenship rights for all migrants.

We care little for the anti-communist Viet-



Reformist racism: Cartoon from the Worker, Brisbane, 1901.

namese who are currently the darlings of the Australian bourgeoisie; we are on the other hand vitally concerned with the fate of our class brothers and sisters who seek to escape from under the thumbs of right-wing dictatorships around the world. But we understand as well that the plight of the exploited masses can be relieved only through their mobilisation in a struggle against their exploiters -- the bourgeoisie -- and for the international dictatorship of the proletariat. ■

ASIO . . .

Continued from page one

time in peacetime since 1949. Over a thousand troops, complete with armoured personnel carriers, inundated the countryside to patiently look out for "terrorists" lurking in the bush along some 200 km of train track over which the CHOGRM party was to travel to the scheduled stint at a health resort in tiny Bowral. It turned out that this was merely a clever feint by strategist Fraser, who foiled the "terrorists" by flying the conference to Bowral in helicopters.

Dunstan/Wran rush to join ASIO boosters

The sometimes farcical furore over the dreaded "international disease of terrorism and violence" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 February) was calculated for a serious purpose: to clear the way for a strengthening of the political police agencies. "Stop knocking the security services", warned the following day's editorial in the *Australian*. Heeding the call, erstwhile Special Branch/ASIO critics Dunstan and Wran fell over themselves proclaiming their "anti-terrorist" credentials.

The trendy libertarian Dunstan had started the Special Branch row on 17 January when he

sacked his troglodyte police commissioner, Harold Salisbury, for misleading parliament regarding Special Branch liaison with ASIO, and declared he would "disband" the Special Branch (which was in fact merely reduced in size). Amidst a storm of reactionary indignation, the furore spread to NSW when Dunstan quoted in parliament testimony from the recently released Hope Commission report on ASIO, implicating the NSW leader of the Liberal opposition, Peter Coleman, in ASIO dirty tricks to discredit antiwar radicals in the early 1970s. Seizing on this long-known, seven-year-old incident to embarrass the reactionary Coleman, Wran had launched a judicial inquiry.

Now, two days after the bomb, Dunstan emphatically stressed the need for a police agency concerned with matters of genuine (!) "security", especially "political terrorism" (*Australian*, 14 February). A day later Wran quietly announced the Coleman inquiry had been dropped. "Security" is a "bipartisan" issue; the reformist ALP falls right in line behind Fraser to make the secret political police of capitalism both more efficient and more "respectable".

ASIO has not had a very good press in recent years, and growing talk of "reform" preceded Dunstan's move to rein in the Special Branch. Compared to their American big brothers in the CIA, ASIO et al are small-time, amateurish outfits. But in the course of the Hope Commission inquiry into ASIO (originally set up by Whitlam) and Dunstan's White Commission on the South Australian Special Branch, some of their more sneaky, paranoid and legally shady practices have come to light. In addition ASIO spying on the left has been exposed several times, most recently when ASIO agent Janet Langridge's confession of her job as a plant in the Spartacist League gained nationwide attention last June (see *ASP* no 44, July 1977). The White report revealed that the South Australian Special Branch maintained dossiers and file cards on over 40,000 people, from antiwar clerics and ALP parliamentarians through to New Left radicals, riddled with glaring inaccuracies.

Communists -- "always legitimate subjects"

But at the same time White makes it clear he accepts that "communists are always legitimate subjects for surveillance and stored security intelligence information" (*Australian*, 19 January). And Hope defines subversion so broadly that it can encompass almost anything, declaring that ASIO has a duty to "watch over" even those merely ideologically prone to become "potential subversives" (*Fourth Report*, vol 1)!

By purging ASIO/Special Branch of its obvious political bias and making it more accountable to the elected authorities, the reformers hope only to make the secret police more palatable as well as more efficient. The same is true of the CPA. In an obsequious sermon against "senseless terror" following the Hilton bombing, the CPA echoes the White report, scandalously calling in effect for better cops. Accusing them of "incompetence" in the Hilton incident, the "Communist" *Tribune* (15 February) explains: "The real reason they are incompetent is that they are politically motivated ... against the left".

Bosses will not abolish ASIO

Like the ALP reformists, the CPA hopes to make ASIO and the Special Branches subordinate to the institutions of bourgeois democracy. But bourgeois democracy is a fraud. When capitalist rule is directly threatened the ruling class will abandon the democratic, constitutional facade in order to defend their wealth with the methods of civil war. The secret political police are an essential part of the repressive apparatus which forms the real core of the bourgeois state. The ruling class will never allow them to be done away with through parliamentary means.

Yet the "Trotskyists" of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) call for the abolition of ASIO/Special Branch as if it were simply a question of democratic rights. Aiming to achieve a parliamentary "abolition", they fall in step behind the social-democratic deception that the state's machinery for repression can be peaceably done away with. Wedded to capitalism, the labour fakers who head the ALP are neither willing nor able to disband the police. Wedded to ALP reformism, the SWP upbraids Wran for not doing his social-democratic duty: "we find it deeply disturbing that you have not acted immediately in defence of democratic rights" by abolishing the NSW Special Branch ("Open letter to Neville Wran", *Direct Action*, 26 January)! And the SWP joins the CPA and other secret police "reformers" by implicitly accepting the validity of appeals to "national security", ie the safety of capitalist property. They lecture Wran that "It is not the 'national security' which is threatened by nonexistent left-wing terrorists ..." and, without further comment, leave the conclusion to be drawn: if "national security" really were threatened, the Special Branch would be justified!

The mutual distrust of the ALP and ASIO generates more or less constant friction between them, Lionel Murphy's "raid" on ASIO and Dunstan's row with Salisbury being the most spectacular in-

stances. But ASIO's distrust of a party led by loyal capitalist lackeys is not simply stupid paranoia. Behind the Whitlams and Dunstans stands the ALP's working-class base. However incompetent, ASIO knows that the labour movement is the mortal enemy of its masters. Thus it is Labor governments which tend to bring out most the bonapartist appetites of the political police, and it is this, not hostility to their existence (after all, Labor created ASIO), that generates ALP reformists' preoccupation with ensuring their loyalty to the "elected government".

Cops out of the unions!

Backed by the Liberal opposition and confronting Dunstan with the most serious challenge yet to his government, the reactionary mobilisation to reinstate Salisbury was a mobilisation in favour of cop bonapartism. Salisbury, a committed right-wing ideologue who rails against the "agents of darkness" plotting to destroy marriage and the family way of life (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 January), openly defended Special Branch's virtual subordination to big brother ASIO -- and not the state government to which it is nominally responsible -- on the grounds that their work "is or should be secret and its members sworn to secrecy...." The SA Police Association, affiliated to the TLC, stood solidly behind Salisbury, manifesting a consciousness among cops of their common class position as defenders of capitalism, disdainful of "political control" -- illustrating once again an important lesson: cops are not workers, police associations are not unions and these thugs have no place in the ranks of organised labour. Throw them out!

Such bonapartist appetites of the political police to go beyond the limits of bourgeois democracy can pose an immediate threat to existing democratic rights under capitalism, as does Fraser's impending legislation to widen ASIO's powers. But while opposing such attacks and supporting all genuine restrictions on police power, unlike the ALP, CPA and the bourgeois reformers we are not interested in streamlining the so-called "security" agencies to make them more efficient in their task of tracking down proletarian militants.

ASIO does not hound the workers movement simply to gather information to be deposited in dusty files nor to prevent Hilton bombings. ASIO and its satellites in Special Branch are the real secret terrorist conspirators, who carry out their spying in order to harass and attack the workers movement and, ultimately, to set up its militants for assassination. In the process it does indeed violate the democratic rights not only of working-class militants, but of many who pose no danger to capitalism whatsoever. We demand the immediate return of all ASIO/Special Branch files to their subjects. We demand that all spying on left-wing and working-class organisations cease immediately. And we demand that all the bosses' secret police be abolished. But we say openly that that can come about only through the establishment of a genuine workers government to destroy the brutal system of exploitation they are paid to protect. ■

Miners . . .

Continued from page two

joining the ranks of organized labor above all through fear. The power of a militant union demonstrated by a miners victory could change this dramatically.

"Not for a long time has a section of the U.S. working class been in a position to deal such a stinging defeat to the bosses and their state. Coal miners, aided by solidarity action from rail, trucking and steel, must seize this opportunity to push ahead to victory."

It is seemingly paradoxical that the American workers, one of the most militant sectors of the world proletariat, should also be among its most politically backward. Tied by its hidebound class-collaborationist bureaucracy to the bosses' Democratic Party, the US working class does not even have a party it can call its own. But as the current miners strike attests, when the US workers move into action, the most blood-thirsty imperialist power in the world shakes in its boots. When the militancy and determination exemplified by the miners is finally linked to a revolutionary Trotskyist leadership instead of being held back by the Millers, the Sadlowskis and the Meanys, the US imperialist ruling class will have precious few days left to count. ■

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GPO Box 3473, Sydney, NSW, 2001



Racism, anti-communism and the "boat people"

For a few weeks at the end of last year it seemed that scarcely a day would go by without a boatload of Vietnamese slipping into Darwin harbour, waving anti-communist banners and demanding to be treated as political refugees. The bourgeois media had a field day, of course, abounding with "human interest" stories about these "boat people" -- forced by "ruthless communist tyranny" to become "desperate refugees" in search of "freedom" and a "new life". In sympathetic interviews the refugees described, often in impeccable English, their "harrowing" escapes, their "nightmarish" journeys through storm-racked, shark-infested seas and their gratitude at being in a "free country".

The Fraser government, discovering it had a "moral and humanitarian" obligation to "ease human suffering", welcomed the "boat people". At the other extreme, the Darwin branch of the Waterside Workers Federation called a two-hour protest strike against the arrival of these "phoney refugees" from a "friendly country", denouncing "a double standard by the government in dealing with illegal migrants to Australia" (*Northern Territory News*, 25 November 1977). The wharfies also raised several hundred dollars to aid six crewmen kidnapped during the hijacking of the trawler Song Be who demanded to be returned to Vietnam and took industrial action to prevent their harassment by the Fraser government. The Stalinist-influenced wharfies demanded not only that the crewmen be repatriated, but that those who had seized the boat to flee Vietnam be sent back as "pirates" as well.

"Double standard" is hardly adequate to describe the government's attitude toward the Vietnamese refugees. Less than a year ago this "moral and humanitarian" government literally abducted Italian Communist Party member and migrant organiser Ignazio Salemi to whisk him out of the country on a deportation writ and forced Malaysian student leader Hishamuddin Rais into hiding in order to avoid deportation to the torture chambers of the reactionary Malaysian government. Like its predecessors, Labor or Liberal, this government has maintained a virtual closed door to the hundreds of thousands of leftist Latin American refugees fleeing savage military regimes. What persecuted leftists do manage to get into the country are, like the sizable Asian student population, subject to relentless surveillance and intimidation by ASIO and other secret-police agencies.

The "boat people" and "White Australia"

This is nothing new. When, after World War II, the then Labor government opened Australia to large-scale immigration by non-English-speaking Europeans, it was official policy that "under no circumstances are refugee Spaniards from the Franco regime to be included in the immigration program" (quoted in John Playford, "The Truth Be-

hind 'Captive Nations Week'", April 1968). While barring victims of Franco's rightist terror, the government welcomed supporters of various East European fascist movements and veterans of Hitler's extermination squads.

If, following the 1965 rightist bloodbath in Indonesia in which some 500,000 workers and peasants were slaughtered, any Indonesian "boat people" had attempted to land in Darwin we have no doubt they would have been either blown out of the water by the Australian armed forces or immediately shipped back to face Suharto's death squads. The then Menzies government, along with the mainstream of the Labor Party, was frankly appreciative of the anti-communist coup and ever since has been anxious to express its gratitude to the Indonesian generals.

But as valuable to the bourgeoisie for anti-communist propaganda as the "boat people" are, they are still Asians; and official policy or not, this is still "White Australia". Fraser was uncomfortably aware that their descent upon Darwin would revive the fears of "invading yellow hordes" and acute anti-Asian racism pervasive throughout Australian society and might damage his prospects in the December elections. The government quickly dispatched Immigration Department officers to the refugee camps in Malaysia and Thailand to persuade prospective "boat people" to await processing through "normal channels". (Some 5000 such officially screened refugees have been flown to Australia since 1975.) The bourgeois press agonised over the dangerous precedent being set if the threat of instant deportation of any and all Asians landing "illegally" in the country were de facto removed (see *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 December 1977).

Hypocritical as the bourgeoisie's welcome has been, the indignant opposition of labour's "leaders" has been simply disgusting. A spokesman for the Darwin public bus services drivers, citing the "danger" of exotic diseases, threatened stop-work action if the buses carrying Vietnamese were not thoroughly fumigated before and after use! A trifle more circumspect, Hawke denounced Fraser for "inviting Vietnamese refugees to simply row a boat ashore and stay in Australia" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 December 1977). Such racist rubbish expresses the traditionally chauvinist policy of the ALP/ACTU bureaucracy, resurrecting the central planks of Australian social democracy's founding program: "White Australia" and virulent protectionism.

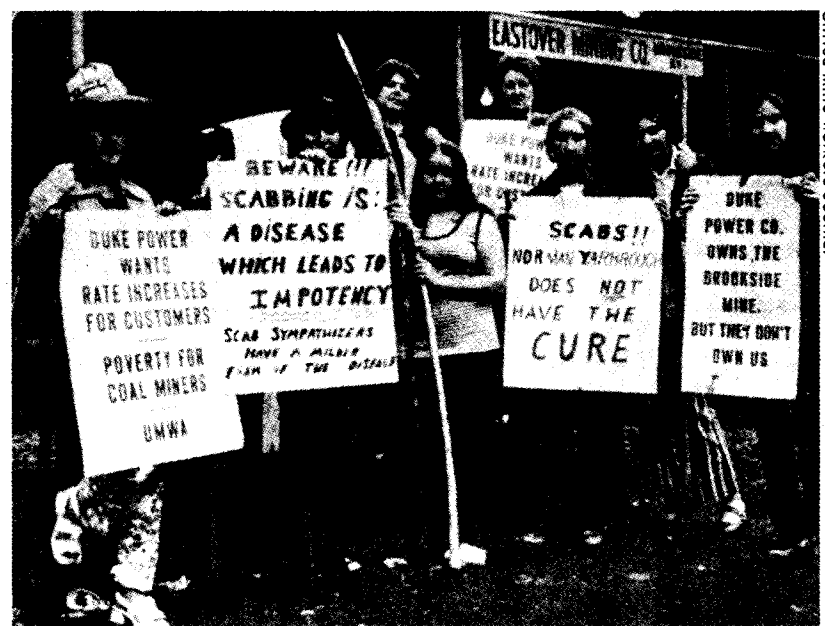


Arrival of "boat people" on Song Be sparked Darwin wharfies' protest strike.

Even Whitlam's official revocation of "White Australia" several years ago was largely fraudulent -- only a few thousand highly skilled Asians were allowed in each year. The logic of Labor's historic reformist chauvinism is stark: far better to allow Indonesian workers to be massacred by the butcher Suharto in 1965 than to have them land on Australia's shores.

Because of this context of traditional anti-Asian chauvinism within the labour movement, any blanket opposition to the arrival of the Vietnamese must be viewed with suspicion. All the more so when it comes from the Maoist Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) (see *Vanguard*, 9 February) which in pursuit of its virulent strain of Australian patriotism opposes foreign-language instruction for migrants in Australian schools (*Vanguard*, 20 October 1977), and furthermore, given its current line-up with Cambodia in the nationalist border war, is well on the way to characterising Vietnam as "dark fascist". Similarly the Healyite Socialist Labour League -- which is notorious for its adaptation to backward consciousness in the working class -- following the Darwin strike demands that all the Vietnamese be shipped back (*Workers News*, 1 December 1977). In the case of this

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Harlan County: Brookside miners' wives led picketing in 13-month strike.

United Mine Workers Journal

"They say in Harlan County, There are no neutrals there. You'll either be a union man Or a thug for JH Blair. Which side are you on?"
- Florence Reese 1932

International Women's Day 1978

a proletarian holiday

International Women's Day belongs to the proletarians of the world -- male and female -- those who are combatants in the class struggle, who understand that picket lines are not to be crossed, that strikes are not to be broken, that women's emancipation demands the strongest bonds of proletarian unity. Claim it though they will as their own, it does not belong to the bourgeois feminists who preach sex war and class collaboration, who justify strikebreaking in the name of sisterhood.