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Bring down the Howard Government!

On June 30, the Australian workers movement put on an impressive show of force. 120,000 marched through the streets of Melbourne and tens of thousands marched through other centres. They made it clear that they were not going to take this reactionary legislation lying down. The mood was militant. In Sydney, a day later, the efforts by the bureaucrats of Unions NSW to fragment the movement succeeded in decentralising meetings and reducing the march to twenty thousand workers.

The Sydney bureaucrats moved a motion deliberately aimed to be ambiguous. Militants interpreted the motion as supporting strike action. But Unions NSW has made it clear that strike action is the last thing that they want. They argue that it is "counter-productive".

Strike action is in reality the only way that workers have to make employers and governments listen. It was strike action, in 1969, that released Clarrie O'Shea from prison and effectively smashed the Penal clauses legislation.

Kim Beazley made an impressive speech about how Labor will oppose this "un-Australian" legislation. Labor opposes this legislation not because it opposes penal clauses but because Howard wants to take industrial relations power away from the states and territories (all administered by Labor).

But it was Brack's Labor which introduced some of the most reactionary anti-union legislation and which jailed militant unionist Craig Johnston.

Labor is arguing that that the status quo is good enough – to contain working class struggle. Workers must oppose all anti-union legislation whether introduced by Labor or Liberal. The only type of government which can really serve the working class is one based on working class power. It would be committed to expropriating the ruling class.

The buzz expression for the union bureaucrats has been "united front", probably learnt off Bob Gould. For the third international, under Lenin, the united front was a tactic aimed at gaining an audience for communists amongst the most advanced layer of the working class. Workers needed to fight to survive. Communists were committed to struggle. The bureaucracy, tied to capitalism through its privileged material position will be exposed as both unwilling and unable to fight. Therefore communists will influence and win over this advanced layer of workers. This type of united front is not what the bureaucrats mean. What they want to do is defend their privileges and contain struggle.

Of course for the bureaucrats "building the united front" means falling in behind their agenda. They hate Howard's laws but are comfortable with those of Carr, Gallop or Bracks. Labor is fighting this legislation because it means that their beloved state governments will lose power and because they believe the status quo is good enough to contain struggle and keep wages down. The meetings especially in Sydney were stage managed. No amendments were permitted so the options were fall in behind their impotent protest or nothing. Whilst there is some basis for joint unity in action, in some tactical circumstances, in no way must we fall in behind their agenda.

One organisation falling in behind the united front is the "Communist Party" Their glossy publication was only distinguishable from similar produced by Unions NSW by their organisation authorisation, in the fine print at the bottom of the leaflet. There was no mention of strike action. What they offered was practical measures such as "ring talkback radio" "contact your member of parliament" and other respectable suggestions.

The Socialist Alliance is indorsing an united front called Defend the Defend Workers Rights and Unions Committee which at least called for strike action especially if a union official is jailed.

What is required is not merely strike action to fight this legislation, but a political strategy to bring down the Howard government.

It is not only unions which his government is attacking but unemployed and pensioners, Black people, refugees and small farmers. Workers must win over these sectors to their struggle. Workers must unite with them to fight Howard.

Howard has a reactionary imperialist foreign policy. Australian troops are still in Iraq as part of the reactionary "Coalition of the Willing" Australian troops will shortly be doing imperialism's dirty work in Afghanistan. Howard's whole reactionary agenda must be opposed.

But who will fight Howard? The Labor Party is totally impotent. Worse still, a future Beazley Labor government will continue system's reactionary agenda. Labor has abandoned any attempt to "roll back" (let alone abolish) the gst. This tax redistributes the tax burden from rich to poor. Labor has repudiated any opposition to work for the dole.

The only party which will consistently fight Howard is a revolutionary communist party. Such a party will not only fight Howard and his policies but the whole capitalist agenda supported by both major parties – Liberal and Labor. Such a party will support not another bourgeois parliamentary government but a workers and farmers government.

Afghanistan: Howard sends the troops back.

With all the attention paid to Iraq, it has been forgotten by many that there is still a war going on in Afghanistan and the US imperialists, and allies, still haven't defeated the Taliban. The invasion of Iraq by the imperialists was totally unjustified. The Taliban are reactionary but they were not responsible for blowing up the World Trade Center. Osama Bin Laden and his fundamentalist El Quaida has been blamed and it is now clear that they were responsible. The Taliban claimed that they were prepared to hand over Bin Laden provided America could provide proof. America didn't feel like proving anything, they simply invaded. Bin Laden still roams the Afghan hinterland.

The inspiration for Howard sending the troops back came from Beazley Labor. Labor has decided to sell itself as the conscience of imperialism. It has decided that it was right to invade Afghanistan but wrong to invade Iraq. Responsible Beazley though has repudiated Mark Latham's promise to remove Australian troops by Christmas. He still believes in withdrawing the troops but at some indefinite time to be announced. He is selling himself as a responsible opposition leader, responsible to the imperialist war drive. Indeed he is!

In his bid to re-impose America's authority after the September eleven terror raid, George W Bush has created two military quagmires, Afghanistan and Iraq. Two years of fighting and there still appears to be no way out in the foreseeable future. Terrorism is no way to defeat imperialism but we can have no sympathy for a country which has terrorised the Middle East for decades, backing the reactionary state of Israel.

It is up to the workers movement to show that there is an alternative to terror in the fight to defeat imperialism and that is revolutionary class struggle. Terrorism is the price of the failure of working class struggle to stand up to imperialism and back the Palestinians and others. Workers must reject any participation in the imperialist war drive. In fact we must fight against this new invasion with direct working class action.

Bolivia: emergency appeal for international support

Introduction

Communist Left reprints this statement by the International Trotskyist Faction – fourth International and the Communist Workers Group New Zealand. We wholeheartedly agree with it! The struggle of the Bolivian workers has been heroic. As another joint document put out by the groups states:

‘During the revolutionary struggle of the worker and peasant masses, the 16 days of May and June of an insurrectionary political general strike, with blockades and barricades, the COR of El Alto became the acknowledged headquarters of the Bolivian revolution. Thousands of the oppressed that engaged in the true art of pre-insurrectionary struggle, constituted embryonic organs of dual power advanced a strong revolutionary program. With their blockades, the workers and the peasants paralysed the city of La Paz and all Bolivia, creating a dual territorial power; in El Alto, they created self-defence pickets; and they occupied oil wells and cut gas pipelines across all of Bolivia’

They face serious problems though. A serious barrier to the workers and peasants taking power is the politics of compromise of their leadership. This has to be addressed. They also need international solidarity. It is the responsibility of workers throughout the world to assist them. A victory to the workers in Bolivia will also give great impetus to revolutionary struggles throughout South and Central America and throughout the world!

THE BOLIVIAN REVOLUTION MUST PREVAIL ITS VICTORY IS THE TASK OF THE WORLD WORKING CLASS!

To all the organizations who call themselves Principled Trotskyists and to all the revolutionary workers organizations of the world!

Unite and centralize the enormous revolutionary class solidarity that has awakened in the world proletariat in support of

the heroic combat of the oppressed masses of Bolivia!

From the harbor workers of Oakland in the United States, to the militant workers of the South Cone of Argentina and Chile, revolutionary workers and youth everywhere in the world feel as if they are part of the new revolutionary uprising of the masses in Bolivia. As internationalist Trotskyists we call on all militant workers’ organizations to centralize and to coordinate at international level the solidarity and enthusiasm of the exploited millions of the world, and to mobilise them alongside the heroic struggle of the workers and farmers of Bolivia rising up against the treacherous bourgeois lackeys of capitalism. We call on them to take up the immediate demand of the revolutionary workers of the Americas for the nationalization without compensation under workers’ control of the gas and oil in Bolivia and in all Latin America. Our class brothers and sisters of the United States and Europe have in their hands the means of boycotting and of striking against the oil companies and their imperialistic governments who plunder our people.

We call on the workers of the United States, of Spain, France and England to attack the interests of the Chevron Texaco, Exxon, Repsol, Totalfina, and British Petroleum, the real super-exploiters of the workers and the people of Bolivia, and backers of the fascist bands of Santa Cruz, just like they organized the plunder and killing in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine and the Middle East. Living off the breadcrumbs that fall from the table of the exploiters, the privileged workers’ aristocracy and bureaucracy of the imperialistic powers betray the workers by supporting the regimes that create wars to plunder and oppress the peoples of the world. To ensure the victory of the Bolivian revolution the working class of the United States and the European powers must revive the great anti-imperialist struggle that began against the war in Iraq. The Latin American workers must take into their hands the defeat of the pro-imperialist governments of Kirchner in Argentina, Lula in Brazil, Lagos in Chile and Toledo in Peru, and all those in Latin America, who support the policies of Morales, Solares and company in Bolivia.

The Central American workers and peasants, making the anti-imperialist struggle of the Bolivian and Latin American workers and peasants their own, will be able to renew their resistance to the FTAs and FTAA with which US imperialism

and its national agents oppress them and condemn them to poverty. A victorious workers and peasants revolution in Bolivia, will provide the Cuban workers and peasants with a revolutionary program in defense of their own revolution. But for succeed, they will have to defeat the policy of the Stalinist Castro bureaucracy, that today prepares to complete capitalist restoration in Cuba, and collaborates to strangle the Bolivian revolution, just as it yesterday with the revolution in Chile in 1973, and the ' 80s with the Central American revolution. That is why the Castro bureaucracy, along with Chávez, supports the plan of Morales to hand power to Rodriguez in exchange for elections in 150 days to a bourgeois Constituent Assembly. The Venezuelan masses must know that their greatest ally in its anti-imperialist fight is the struggle of the Bolivian worker and peasant masses. The expropriation of the gas and oil by the Bolivian masses, under a revolutionary government of Workers and Peasants, would inspire the Venezuelan masses to fight to prevent no drop of oil leaving Venezuela for Bush to fuel the military machine that massacres Iraqis.

The gangs of imperialist lackeys in the O.A.S. and the UN are preparing to lead the counter-revolution in Bolivia if the Workers and Peasants Government prevails. Commanded by Bush, all the US client governments on the continent will defend by means of wars and occupations - as they did in Afghanistan, Iraq and Haiti - the "democracy" of the exploiters and oppressors. The Latin American, American and world working class cannot allow this to happen. Let us demand that all the militant organizations of the working masses coordinate a continental and world-wide action in support of the victory of the Bolivian revolution, just as yesterday we mobilised the working class in defense of Iraq facing the colonial war of Bush and Blair!

This struggle to reconstitute proletarian internationalism in the world working class, destroyed by decades of social democratic and Stalinist treachery, must be taken up by all those who fight to defend the legacy of the III and IV revolutionary Internationals. In particular this the duty of the Principled Trotskyists who fight against all the treacherous leaders and agents of finance capital and imperialism, including the renegade Trotskyists who destroyed the Fourth International, who are today all grouped together in the World Social Forum. So that the world proletariat can live, the Bolivian and Ecuadorian revolutions, the Iraqi resistance, and the revolutionary centers of Uzbekistán and Kirguiztán, must prevail. So that the humanity can live, imperialism must die!

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Bombing in London.

The New York World Trade Center was attacked Now it is London's turn. The authorities have accused a small group of British born Moslems of Pakistani decent. They appear to be British citizens. Often in the context of wars of liberation the oppressed use terror tactics. This however, appears to be a religious attack Such an attack, blowing up innocent civilians for the "crime" of not being Moslem, is of course, reactionary. However, we don't know the full facts yet and can only judge when these are fully established.

Even if the attack is what it appears to be, we must make our judgement in context. Far more civilians have died from US bombing raids on North Vietnam and Kampuchea. Far more civilians have died from Israeli raids on the Palestinians. Far more civilians have died from the US and allies (including Britain) bombing of Baghdad. It appears that the world cares when it is Brits or American civilians killed by terror but not so much when civilians from the imperialist dominated "third world" die. This is a racist double standard.

What we can be sure of is a reactionary attack on the Islamic community and the left and workers movement. This is happening all ready. Tony Blair has promised tougher measures to exclude extremists from Britain. These measures will attack the left. Tony Blair may be heartfelt when he points out that Islam in itself is not responsible. But he is creating a climate or reaction where racists and fascists will attack that community.

This campaign of reaction must be fought. Reactionary legislation must be opposed and the Islamic community defended. Imperialism is the worlds number one terrorist!

Northern Territory elections: Clare Martin's reactionary crackdown against Black itinerants

One Nation may be marginalised but its influence is alive and well in the Territory. Before the June election talk back radio was bombarded with red neck callers demanding government action against "itinerants". They meant indigenous ones, not the many backpackers or tourists that travel to the northern capital. Clare Martin and her Labor Party gang panicked. Prior to the election Labor only had a margin of two seats. She feared the loss of marginal seats in the northern suburbs of Darwin. So she responded to red neck pressure. Her policy is that habitual drunks will be taken off the street and if they refuse treatment – and jailed!

It is a tragedy that some Black people, excluded from society, turn to alcohol. They are paying the price of white conquest by their own personal destruction. Clare Martin's solution to this is jail. Her loyal lieutenant, now retired black minister John Ah Kit, defended the policy by claiming that it demands Blacks be dealt with "humanely". The fact is that they can still be picked up by the police. Police custody is an extremely alienating experience for Black people. Many get bashed in custody and some die as a result.

Ah Kit argued that this policy is in the context of the Community Harmony Project, which he claimed deals with issues such as homelessness, cultural and social dislocation. We don't think Labor or the system has any real answers. The attempt to deal with these issues may be honourable. But when will we see real solutions? Perhaps, if seriously carried out this project may deal with drunkenness. But the drunk blacks today are victims of neglect of previous governments (and the Federal government). Ah Kit wants them to suffer.

White Australian racist capitalist governments have used all sorts of reactionary legislation and police state measure to make Black people suffer – for the crime of being oppressed and marginalised by white capitalist society. There may now be more Black representatives in Martin's government than in other government current or previous in Australia. But Martin Labor is dealing with Black victims in the same way as every reactionary government – state repression.

DSP: from revisionist Trotskyism to Castroite Stalinism - an overview.

Part One

The following article was contributed by Communist Left to the New Zealand Trotskyist publication *Class Struggle* which is published by the Communist Workers Group. We stress that this is an overview and not a complete history. Given that Green Left Weekly has influence in New Zealand, we thought it important that activists in that country get a picture of their sordid degeneration. Whilst more should be written, we think this is a valuable article for Australian activists also.

Origins in the 'Fourth International'

The origins of the **Democratic Socialist Party** of Australia go right back to a split in the post-war self-claimed 'Fourth International' between the majority **United Secretariat**, and those who supported Michel Pablo known as the **International Marxist Tendency**. In Australia the majority led by Nick Origlass, supported the IMT. The Australian United Secretariat supporters led by Bob Gould and Ian MacDougall split in 1965 and put out the magazine called *Socialist Perspectives*.

Whilst there was an organisational break with Pablo over political questions, both groupings had the same fundamental methodology. In Pablo's 'new world reality' history was seen as an inevitable process that would revolutionise reformist, Stalinist and even bourgeois nationalist parties. Therefore both sides of this split no longer saw the need to build independent Trotskyist parties.

Both groupings were thoroughly loyal to the **Australian Labor Party** (ALP) practicing long term entry work (deep entrism). John and Jim Percy, foundation leaders of the Democratic Socialist Party, were then Sydney University campus radicals in the Labor Club. They were recruited by those who produced *Socialist Perspectives*. Eventually they were to win ideological hegemony over the Sydney University Labor club.

The grouping around *Socialist Perspectives*, founded the Campaign for Nuclear disarmament which became the **Vietnam Action Committee** when Australia entered the Vietnam War. Its leader was Bob Gould. For the next few years a number of youth and student fronts were formed centred around their bookshop, the 'Third World Bookshop', which became an activist centre.

Inside this group there were differences over organisation. The Percy brothers were known for their belief in strong centralised organisation. On the other hand, the 'New Leftists' very influential at the time, opposed organisation, equating it with bureaucracy. New left meetings were often chaotic and bureaucratic (lacking structure certain stronger members tended to dominate). The older Trotskyists (MacDougall and Gould) were fearful that a more defined organisation would threaten their long-term entryism in the ALP.

Their youth group **Resistance** became very successful, organising high school students against the war and the Student Underground. During 1968 there was a significant growth in activity and membership. They also received a degree of notoriety because of their support for the NLF in Vietnam and with their booklet *How Not to Join the Army*. The 'Third World Bookshop' was raided by the police.

A number of splits occurred over organisational issues. The most significant of these being in 1970 was with Bob Gould who opposed Resistance being defined by political demands. Gould split away taking with him about one third of the membership. Both supported protest movements and an orientation to the Labor Party. The real difference was priority. This is shown by their support for Bob Gould as Socialist Left delegate to the 1971 Federal ALP Conference. In NSW the Percy group won hegemonic control over the Socialist Left within the Labor Party which never grew (in NSW) significantly beyond the radical left.

Bob Gould claimed the Third World Bookshop as his property because he was the legal owner and put in more money than others. The Percy majority pointed out that the Third World Bookshop was established as a bookshop for Resistance and Bob was in the minority. Within six months, Gould had lost most of his supporters to the variant of the so-called "Fourth International" called the *International Committee* led internationally by Gerry Healy.

Out of all this the Percy grouping renamed itself as **the Socialist Youth Alliance** and emerged as politically coherent with a strong organisational framework. They then formed the **Socialist Workers League**. They published a colourful and strident newspaper called *Direct Action*. Each issue came out in a different colour. They had the full support of the **Socialist Workers Party** of the US (SWP-US). John Percy had been to the USA. Barry Shepherd SWP-US leader had visited Australia. Allen Myers, an antiwar GI, migrated to Australia and joined their ranks.

Vietnam War

Now being fully aligned with the SWP-US, they took on its theoretical heritage, such as Cuba being considered a healthy workers state. The SWP-US was an ex-Trotskyist party in total degeneration. It adapted to bourgeois liberalism in the anti-war movement and Castroism in Cuba. Castro, they argued was an 'unconscious Trotskyist'.

The priority of SYA became the Moratorium against the Vietnam War. They fought for a coherent single-issue one-point programme: 'Out Now!' They opposed calls for 'peace' or 'negotiations'. They opposed the Moratorium being based around support for the National Liberation Front.

They opposed any orientation to draft resistance or against conscription. They opposed the slogan "stop work to stop the war" arguing that this underestimated the strength of the protest movement. They supported strong centralised and regular marches and opposed decentralised ones. They opposed the Vietnam Moratorium becoming multi-issue.

Their opposition to the 'solidarity with the NLF' slogan came from both the right and left. For revolutionaries, the point of internationalist solidarity is to sharpen the struggle against 'ones own' country by calling for its military defeat. This the SYA didn't do. They deliberately avoided taking a military stand in what was an imperialist war with the conscious purpose of mobilising as broadly as possible. According to SYA 'theory', which they still agree with today, the might of numbers i.e. public opinion, forces governments to act. This they counter-posed to direct action by the working class. Their strategy amounted to populism and public opinion. Bourgeois forces were welcomed as part of the mass movement. This apparently was "their contradiction and not ours".

They sounded left when they opposed the strategy of the Vietcong, correctly identifying this strategy as Stalinist. They made the link between Stalin's theory of socialism in one country and the NLF call for peace talks. Of course class struggle anti-imperialist solidarity must mean a break from Stalinism. But the SYA opposed identification with Stalinism as it might scare off bourgeois liberal antiwar opponents and narrow the movement. This is a right wing opposition to the 'solidarity with the NLF' demand. They have since changed their analysis and now consider the NLF to be Leninists who pursued a revolutionary strategy.

From class struggle to protest politics

SYA adhered to the theory of neo-capitalism. According to this theory capitalist crises are over, and issues such as alienation were now more relevant in creating a revolutionary dynamic. In the late 'sixties and early 'seventies in prosperous Australia, radical middle class people were concerned about many 'quality of life' issues. SYA were active around issues such as high school students' rights, the environment, women's liberation, gay liberation, anti-racism, anti-censorship etc.

In all these issues they pursued the same method — mass action around single-issue demands. They were, seen as conservatives, especially during the mass movement against the South African racist Springbok rugby tour. Virtually everyone else involved supported physical disruption of that tour.

In short, SYA were a Labor Party loyal league with a minimalist programme oriented to radical middle class protest politics.

In 1972, the economic crisis hit. Class issues came to the forefront. The Liberals moved some reactionary anti-working class legislation known as the 'Lynch Laws' bringing about an upsurge of militancy in the metal industry, the 'movement for workers control'. This resistance continued after the Whitlam-led ALP was elected in November '72. During this upsurge of working class struggle the SWL were basically irrelevant. A group of Ernest Mandel supporters left its ranks no doubt itching to get involved in class struggle as opposed to student protests. They constituted themselves as the **Communist League**.

A key issue in the split was what attitude to take to the ALP. In his recently published book John Percy has suggested that the difference was merely a tactical one of formulating their critical support. However if one reads SWL leader Jim McIlroy in his commentary on the 1974 Federal election, it is very clear that the SWL considered voting Labor to be a matter of principle, as opposed to tactics, since Labor was the working class party to be supported despite its leadership.

During the Whitlam years the SWL may have abstained from the militant working class struggle, but there was plenty of student and mass movement activism for them to build their league. They formed the Women's Abortion Action Campaign, a single issue campaign. They were prominent in defending the Palestinians in resolutions debated within the Australian Union of Students. They recruited some from the Communist Party of Australia – Dr Gordon Adler being the most prominent. But basically, they consolidated their organisation. In the climate of militancy during that period they were considered conservatives within the left. The Communist League described their paper as 'The Women's Weekly of the Australian revolutionary left'.

They entered into many significant debates with the CPA Stalinists on international issues such as Chile, Portugal and Vietnam.

The 1975 Federal Election saw them stand candidates for the first time. They have stood in almost every election since. Previously they were known to have opposed standing for parliament on principle, arguing that it was a barrier to their fight against the Labor leadership. The '75 election occurred after the sacking of Whitlam by Governor General Sir John Kerr and his replacement with an interim Fraser government. Working class militancy and anger was immense. The left were extremely active. Of all the left groups the SWL was the least involved with the justifiable anger felt within the working class. They made a splash with prominent and colourful posters around protest issues (Women's, gay and black rights) calling for a Labor government pledged to socialist policies. This, in a situation where a revolutionary general strike was being seriously and widely demanded.

In February '76 they renamed themselves the **Socialist Workers Party**. Of course this spelt out that they were to have a prominent presence outside the ALP. But they were still liquidationist. A few years later Bob Gould was to point out that 'supporters of *Direct Action* were virtually indistinguishable from the official Left in NSW Young Labor, the **Radical Leadership Group**'. Gould at least had a faction which demanded 'socialist policies' (of the reformist variety). The RLG and therefore 'supporters of *Direct Action*' did not!

'Turn to the workers'

As with their US comrades, the 1976 conference announced a 'turn to the working class' They argued that this is necessary due to intensified class struggle. There was no objective reason the turn to the working class was any more warranted in '76 as it was in '73 or '74. In fact the working class of '76 was more on the defensive. But the Australians turned basically out of loyalty to the US SWP.

By renaming themselves as a party and their turn to the working class, the SWP did form a sort of pole of attraction among sections of the far left. They won over some former members of the syndicalist **Melbourne Revolutionary Marxists** and some former CPA members. They were on the road to winning back those who split to form the Communist League which was seen to be failing in its efforts to build an organisation,

They were still strongly involved in protest politics. In the Timor Moratorium movement and the anti-uranium movement they intervened as they did against the Vietnam War. They had a single-issue broad populist approach. From these movements they recruited. But they didn't recruit from the movement for civil liberties in Queensland. They opposed marching for the 'right to march' because it was against the law even when large sections of the labour bureaucracy were marching. Once again they were considered conservatives on the left.

The turn to the working class was unsuccessful in terms of results for effort. The ex-student radicals joined the unions to form rank-and-file oppositions. While a few militants were won the class composition did not significantly change. And in no union were they a serious left pole of attraction. On the whole they opposed economic protectionism but sometimes made opportunist adaptations to link up with militants who were protectionist (Victorian Builders' Union for example). In Wollongong they were controversial for standing against the official rank and file dominated by the CPA. For this they got a hostile reception and were disowned by almost the whole of the Wollongong left.

But they did have some ideological influence on the left. This resulted from the CPA Stalinists' rabid turn to the right. In the major unions where the CPA had significant influence, the perspective of workers control of the early 'seventies was replaced by overt class collaborationist protectionism. The CPA promoted all sorts of 'Peoples' Economic Programmes' (PEP) basically to get the government to 'save manufacturing'. The logic of this was the selling-out of class struggle, as the bureaucrats did with the Prices and Incomes Accord which they negotiated before Bob Hawke came to power.

The SWP was a pole of attraction because they were the most prominent opponents of the Stalinist social patriotic schemas promoted by the "left" union bureaucrats, supported by large sections of the rank and file and sections of the

academic left. However the SWP had an analysis which did not correspond to the reality of Australian capitalism. For the SWP, there was no fundamental restructuring away from manufacturing to mining nor any significant intervention by foreign capital. The reality was that during the 'seventies, 'eighties and 'nineties whole sections of manufacturing collapsed, including shipbuilding, the car industry, white goods and the BHP steelworks in Newcastle. In short, because of their failure to understand the dynamics of Australian capitalism, their heartfelt desire to oppose both protectionism and class collaboration lacked credibility, especially in the eyes of trade union militants.

The Communist League shared a roughly similar analysis and there was joint work in opposition to the PEP. This facilitated their reunification. The Communist League were instructed to rejoin by leaders of the United Secretariat such as Ernest Mandel.

The formal break with Trotskyism

Subjective revolutionaries joined the SWP because they perceived the need for a numerically strong party which identified with Trotskyism (irrespective of its flaws). Many were purged by the Percy leadership whose lesson from their previous CL experience was to deal with potential troublemakers. But some remained as members. But what these leftists were joining was a party collapsing into Stalinism at a rapid rate of knots. With every crisis of Stalinism that occurred during the next twenty years, the SWP took one step further in a Stalinist direction.

In 1979 there was a third Indochina war when Vietnam invaded Pol Pot's Kampuchea and China invaded Vietnam. The SWP justified their pro-Vietnamese line by suddenly discovering that Kampuchea under the Khmer Rouge was 'state capitalist'. This convenient analysis meant they were not seen as endorsing an invasion of one post-capitalist state by another. But in no way did it square with reality. The 'capitalist' Khmer Rouge had even abolished money!

When the Soviet Union sent troops to Afghanistan, they endorsed the invasion more enthusiastically than their US comrades.

SWP Australia was formed in solidarity with SWP-US and therefore considered Cuba a healthy workers state. But on the whole Cuba had been a low priority for the Australian comrades. With the victory of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, this was to change. The SWP Australia became their uncritical cheerleaders. The popular governments in Nicaragua and Grenada were hailed for 'following the Cuban road'. They defended the Sandinistas maintenance of capitalism and their repression of the revisionist Trotskyist Simon Bolivar Brigade.

The SWP-US was also enthusiastic, uncritically hailing these revolutions and their leaderships. They also made a reassessment of Trotskyism, consciously breaking from it. But the Australian SWP went even further along the Stalinist road than the North Americans did.

For the Australian SWP, Castro was not an 'unconscious Trotskyist' but a 'conscious Leninist'. Trotskyism, they now argued, was a sectarian deviation from Leninism. They repeated the Stalinist slander that Trotsky 'underestimated the peasantry'. Basically they were arguing for a Stalinist strategy for the third world. One leading SWP member at their Social Rights Conference argued that if Trotsky's line had been pursued, the Chinese revolution would never have been won!

The Australian SWP then reassessed their analysis of the Vietnamese revolution. The Vietnamese Stalinists too became 'conscious Leninists'. In doing this they stabbed in the back the very significant Trotskyist movement that had a strong base amongst the Vietnamese proletariat. They rehashed the same Stalinist slanders which they had refuted when argued by Denis Freney, the notorious Pabloite who became a Stalinist. They have since established friendly relations with the Vietnamese Workers' Party and invite speakers from the Vietnamese Embassy to their conferences.

Of course this blatant turn to Stalinism led to a break not only from the SWP-US, but from the United Secretariat which they considered a roadblock to their efforts to regroup third world Stalinists. Here there is a clear logic. If the Sandinistas, Castroites etc. are revolutionary, then why have a Fourth International? Mandel and Co could not junk the old Trotskyism, or rather identification with Trotsky, so easily. So the SWP liquidated the fundamental class line between Trotskyism and Stalinism. As a result of this international break, Australian supporters of the United Secretariat and of Sean Matgamna (now called **Workers Liberty**) left the SWP.

In the next issue we will continue with part 2 which deals with their bloc with the Socialist Party of Australia that adhered to the pro-Moscow variant of Stalinism, and their role in the Socialist Alliance.