

RCO Congress Special Edition

# ***Direct Action!***

A magazine of Communist ideas

July '24 #15



**INSIDE: RCO comrades condemn ANU's expulsion of student activist Beatrice Tucker & A reflection on the student movement and what it means for Communists and the Left & Whither Activism? & RCO's Congress and what it means for the RCO and Direct Action & and more**

**DIRECT ACTION!** is a monthly Communist magazine that publishes essays, articles, and other writings. We aim to highlight the perspectives of working militants of all stripes, for the benefit of workers and students.

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**RCO Congress dates:**

July 6th to July 7th  
(Saturday-Sunday)

## **About the RCO**

The Revolutionary Communist Organization (RCO) is a Communist pre-party fighting group who seek to regroup militants to construct a mass workers party that can arm the class for the final confrontation with Capital. Drawn from a variety of political backgrounds and experiences, we are unified by our iron-clad determination to resist the capitalist system and to unify with proletarian resistance wherever it appears.

We have members organized in Brisbane, Newcastle, Melbourne, Hobart, Perth, Adelaide, and Sydney.

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## Editorial: A new RCO, a new Direct Action

### BY The Editors

In July, the RCO will convene for its yearly congress, to determine the broad strategic orientation of the organization, as well as to adjust the organization's structure. As part of this restructuring, the magazine, amongst other things, will also be changed.

Direct Action has ran continuously for 15 months now, beginning in April 2023 as a collection of recommended articles and essays, growing into a monthly magazine of Communist ideas, publishing articles, essays, and other writings from various comrades.

We are proud of the work we have put into Direct Action. We are ecstatic to announce, then, that after congress, Direct Action will be almost entirely revamped. With a new editing team, a new design, a better print and distribution system, a new subscription system (making it easier for supporters of the magazine to financially support us and have issues mailed to them each month), and potentially even a new name.

As comrades have been tirelessly working to organize and schedule things for congress, we must apologise for the relatively bareness of this issue compared to previous issues. That is why in this issue, we have decided to include statements from the RCO's newest factions - internal political groupings - stating their case for which way the RCO should go politically. For the historical interest of our readers, we have also included old articles written by the late John Percy on the topic of party-building and Socialism in general.

The RCO as an organization is committed to unity of action and freedom of criticism, which is why comrades are not discouraged from forming 'factions', internal political groupings that aim to advocate for a particular line or position. Conventional wisdom is false: factions are not bad, and on the contrary, can demonstrate a healthy political environment within an organization, where members can freely associate and give their opinions without being browbeat into silence, or forced into cliques, as is seen in many other sects.

We hope you continue to support Direct Action, even as it adopts a new name and appearance, long into the future.

## Update on the Gaza genocide

Israel's army of bandits continues their genocidal onslaught against the Palestinians in Gaza, entering its 10th month in July, 2024.

In early June, Israel launched a "rescue operation" with the help of the United States, wherein Israeli and US stormtroopers infiltrated the Nuseirat refugee camp disguised as humanitarian aid, using Biden's "aid port" pontoon as a staging ground. The ensuing "hostage rescue" slaughtered over 250+ Palestinians, and possibly scores more, in order to "rescue" four Israeli hostages.

Israeli bandits have no consideration for the "safe zones" they themselves established. Against their own promises, they launched an assault against the Rafah border crossing, encircling Gazans further.

The following comes from **Electronic Intifada**:

- 377,280 buildings destroyed
  - 405 schools & universities
  - 700 hospitals & health facilities
  - 290 mosques
  - 3 churches
  - 12 buildings destroyed **every hour**
- 194,768 - 511,824 people dead (estimated)
  - 95,040 - 97,680 people killed by direct fire
  - 17,050 - 94,049 people dead from untreated chronic illness
  - 14,408 - 255,985 people dead from sickness and disease
  - 24,750 people dead from starvation
- 221,760 people injured
- 42,000 people missing, kidnapped, or presumed dead
  - 21,000 children

This number is unfortunately unable to account for the thousands (or tens of thousands) more incarcerated in Israeli's concentration camps, where Israeli bandits torture, rape, and murder Palestinians (including children).

Of the 240 Israelis taken captive by Palestinian resistance fighters, 50 have been killed. All 50 were killed either directly or indirectly by the Israelis.

## Against the Student Left

**BY Brunhilda**

“In every American community there are varying shades of political opinion. One of the shadiest of these is the liberals. An outspoken group on many subjects, ten degrees to the left of centre in good times, ten degrees to the right of centre if it affects them personally. Here, then, is a lesson in safe logic.” – Phil Ochs

As the mid year break begins and the camps scattered across the campuses of Australia are pulled down, a reflection on the role of students in the revolutionary struggle emerges as a major arena for analysis. The brief flourish of excitement that emerged during the initial encampments saw rhetoric calling to remember Vietnam and South Africa, an attempt to directly draw on the previous brief outburst of student militancy as a mechanism to fight against the naked genocidal face of Zionism. Yet, the Vietnamese solidarity campaign coincided at its height with an upsurge of worker militancy, and in the United States the imperialists shovelled conscripts into a meatgrinder. In the current situation wherein only the youth of Israel are being thrown into the slaughter, it is impossible for this brief highlight of militancy to be reached again.

Furthermore, the question that Communists must ask is, do we desire for this militancy to be reached again? Are students a revolutionary class, or even a potential revolutionary force?

Fundamentally, no. The idea of the student activist and radical is accurate, but these forces are not revolutionary. The student is a transitory body, they will inevitably graduate, move away from the campus and higher education, and in the collective understanding look back on their revolutionary days as a brief period of wasted youth. A common saying in liberal circles is “if you’re not a socialist when you’re young you don’t have a heart, and if you’re a socialist when you’re old you don’t have a brain.”

For all its rabid anti-communism this provides a vital insight to the makeup of students as a political force. Students are motivated by moralism, the great upswings in student militancy come during periods of mass offensives against the moral framework of the world liberal order. May 68 came during the height of the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights movement, and the broader post-war social realignment. The occupations of campuses across the world comes during Israel’s

genocidal campaign against the Palestinians. This moralistic response to crises leaves students open to bourgeois moralizing, winning them over to the left side of capital, at least for their period as students.

The current crisis in Gaza has been the most blatant example of the fundamentally moralist understanding of politics mobilizing students. Let us use the example of the University of Melbourne’s encampment. University of Melbourne for Palestine (UM4P) founded the camp, a group dominated by the fetishization of the ‘activist’ as the height of all political actions. The unelected steering committee based their legitimacy from their position as either being members of the Palestinian diaspora, or from being in UM4P early on.

From this legitimacy stemmed their right to run the encampment as the natural endpoint of all student politics. A fetish for the ‘correct’ kind of nationalism (at the expense of the internationalism they claimed to support), a focus on building a façade of diversity without really attempting to build a mass coalition, an alliance with reactionaries (so long as they held the ‘correct’ opinion), and ultimately immense anti-communism. UM4P was not unique in this, rather they were only unique by the open-faced nature of their moralistic ideology. Whilst this ties into the shifting ideological nature of the overarching Free Palestine Melbourne’s shift to the right (the June 2nd rally was a particularly shocking example of this) it rests on the fickle nature of students.

Students as stated earlier are a transitory force, the high school senior of today is the first year of tomorrow, the first year of today is the newly graduated mess of tomorrow, and the newly graduated mess of today becomes the white-collar worker. This fundamental shift in their societal role means that students cannot be relied upon as anything other than an auxiliary force. When looking back throughout the heydays of student radicalism (that many student and campus oriented activists point toward) we find that these great triumphs only came about through an alliance with, and the fundamental leadership of, the working class.

While students may have played a key role in, for example, Russia’s 1905 revolution, it was the working class that played the most crucial role in its unfolding. The formation of Soviets revealed the iron

## “A reflection on the student movement and what it means for Communists and the Left.”

law of history, that revolutionary forces will form councils as the basis for the new era they herald, whilst students faded into the background. Most of the Bolsheviks were of the working class for their entire lives, the few class traitors that sided with the proletariat were a tiny fraction of the party, and in 1917 we see it revealed that the working class will take power into their own hands.

No student protest toppled the Tsar, it was not students who stormed the Winter Palace and toppled Kerensky's corrupt liberal government. It was the working class, united under the aegis of the Communist party. When looking at the students who led the way in 1905 however, we find most of them had graduated, matured, and settled down in the Kadets, Octoberists or Black Hundreds. We see the same with May 68 or student opposition to the Brazilian dictatorship for instance.

And we shall see the same with the activists of 2024. A heyday of radicalism and the fetish of revolutionary agitation, before settling down in the sensible centre-left parties. The trajectory of a student radical throughout life apes the arc of Kautsky, from revolutionary to reformist. Yet in an ancient echoing of Louis Napoléon and his illustrious uncle, the student radical rarely is a revolutionary. They are moralist, nationalist, rabid defenders of the left-wing of capital as being 'truly transformative'.

In Australia they agitate for the Greens or the Left of Labor because that is the end point of moralist politics. The love of the lesser evil, the allegiance to the idea of moderate concessions, the framework of diversity, is the fundamental endpoint of the student political activist. They are not connected to the broader population, they live within a bubble of a bubble reinforcing their rhetoric, and beliefs. The question which now emerges is how should communists interact with students as a force?

The answer is that we must agitate amongst them in their position as workers. Students are increasingly a part of the proletariat, and we must agitate amongst them as such. Communists should not rule out on campus organising as mechanism to build up experience but fundamentally we must push for students to go beyond campuses. Students must transform into workers, and from there into Communists. This in turn should be met with the

redevelopment of and reinforcement of struggle amongst the working class, transforming the worker-student alliance into the Communist party reformed as a mechanism of struggle.

Students should build ties with staff at their institutions. Not only teaching stuff, but janitorial, and administrative staff. During pickets they should provide bodies, resources, and unity under the banner of the Communist Party. By transforming the fetish of radicalism or 'activism' into practical and organised work moving revolutionary forces forward, we rebuild the militancy, and power of the working class.

Revolutionary upheavals will never be seen ahead of time or called by the party. They will emerge organically from the contradictions which drive capitalism, it is the duty of the Communist party to seize the chance and push forward, with the masses of the working class, and shatter the capitalist state. The Communist party can only send capitalism into the dustbin of history if it has won over the proletariat. To achieve that we must integrate students into the revolutionary body of the proletariat.

Our own liberation awaits us. We need only reach out and take it.





## Freedom of Speech Illusory at ANU

BY Edith Fischer



The Australian National University (ANU) has expelled a student for comments made in the course of their Palestine solidarity organising. This is the first expulsion of a student by an Australian university in the wake of the latest wave of pro-Palestinian and anti-imperialist organising on campuses. Beatrice Tucker (above), who is a member of Students and Staff Against War ANU, as well as a Socialist activist, was expelled following a disciplinary investigation concerning comments they made during a radio interview.

The expulsion comes after a number of threats aimed at students protesting the ongoing slaughter in Gaza. At University of Queensland, students were informed that the word “intifada” and the slogan of “Israel out of Palestine!” were to be banned, while at Monash, several leading student activists were threatened with retaliation and academic penalties if they did not desist from their protests. Unfortunately, these threats have had a chilling effect on the demonstrations around the country, showing that students have not yet moved to a political level where they are no longer afraid of institutional repression.

Democratic freedoms are not guaranteed by the beneficence of the state, nor are they the spontaneous product of “natural rights” or “civil society”. They are the hard won gains of social struggle, and the consistent demands of the democratic and workers movements for political and social freedom. Communists are not afraid of freedom of speech or assembly. In fact, we see freedom as light and air for the socialist movement. As such, we say: Defend political freedoms! No penalties for protest! Lift the expulsion and ban on Beatrice Tucker!

## Reflections on Stonewall

BY Brunhilda

In the fifty-five years since the Stonewall Riot in the United States the struggle for Queer Liberation has advanced further, and further. In many ways the rights, legal defences, and advancements that have been won are unthinkable to those first pioneers who threw bricks at the NYPD. However, the question remains: are we actually free? Or has capitalism integrated us into its blood-soaked façade as another faux example of the “rights and freedoms” granted by bourgeois liberalism.

The answer is that we are not free. Capitalism has given us concessions after decades of struggle, and then turns around to parade us as cute little deviants who show the tolerance of capital. Rainbow capitalism is a well-documented phenomenon. Every June, capitalists will fly the rainbow flag, give a couple of speeches about how much they respect the existence of the Queer community, and then fuck off.

This shameless two-faced annual concession is proclaimed to be ‘progressive’. And indeed, it is. After all, progressivism is about restraining the excesses of capital. The ultimate end point of any social struggle within capitalism will be capital adjusting itself to integrate new types of people into the market.

The Queer community is just the latest example of that, before in the United States it was African Americans, or migrants, before that Roman Catholics. Capital’s very nature requires the total destruction of what makes communities unique. All that is solid melts into air, and the same is happening now with the queer community.

The struggles for Gay liberation, which formed a mass movement of the queer working class fighting for the most basic democratic rights, was devastated by AIDs. Indeed, AIDs was one of the greatest strokes of luck for the capitalist social order in decades. The shift from the struggles for Gay Liberation to more moderate demands were in effect the logical end point of the sheer devastation of the AIDs crisis.

AIDs was a scourge which killed so many that even today the Queer community (one that infamously does not grow via reproduction) is still recovering from the damage done. I write this as a Trans woman

## **“A reflection on Stonewall and the need for a militant, radical, Queer Socialist movement.”**

who grew up in the 2010's, so to me and my peers AIDs is a historical footnote, yet to so many others it was death that stalked their communities.

We must remember it as what it was. An intentional failure on the behalf of the capitalist governments, a failure which allowed so many to die, just so they could attack those deviants. Is it any surprise now that as reactionaries rally against us, the state leans back, and washes their hands from the issue? And is it any surprise that the only group we can rely on to defend ourselves from these attacks is ourselves? We defend ourselves, we defend our siblings, we defend our loves, we defend our community, yet the current culture of constant defence and organising around actions opposing offensives is one that has long since rotted with the fervour of activism.

The only consistent way that we will ensure our own safety, and to ensure that we will have the ability to crush fascism, bigotry, and reaction where, and whenever it arises. Is through the organised power of the working class. This hardly a new position. Capitalism has sowed the seeds of its own destruction, the very labour which fuels its great industries and empowers the capitalists to throw money and funding behind the reactionary bigots calling for our death will arise and shatter the system.

We will be part of that revolution.

As such it is the duty of Queer socialists and organisers to rebuild our community as what it once was: a mass working class movement fighting for our liberation and the liberation of all others. The current political culture of anonymous Instagram accounts and internet micro-celebrities is not, and indeed cannot, ever be enough. We must wage an unrelenting struggle against the atomisation that capitalism promotes in our community. If we are to achieve our own liberation, we must rebuild our community into one that is fully separate to the capitalist mass cultural hegemony. We must rebuild the cultures of gay bars, and a well-established arena in which we can organise and interact with our community, on our own terms.

This is a key part on the road to Queer communism, and we must understand that Queer Communism



isn't a buzzword, or a series of theoretical papers, in a dust jacket on a shelf. It is a living, breathing movement, it is the self-organising against alienation, it is remembering the work of our previous martyrs, and it is uniting. It is uniting and fighting for the rights and dignity of all our fellow workers. It is integrating ourselves into the body of the proletariat once more to truly show that our liberation is class struggle. To reveal ourselves as the rising sun of human liberation.

There has never been a greater necessity for the establishment of a mass Queer socialist movement than today. The collapse of mass Queer politics has left a gap that must be filled, and it cannot be filled with reformists or liberals, who spit away our gains, or try and ally us with the capitalists. If we allow ourselves to be bought by the capitalist class, we will sell ourselves into slavery for farcical rights that can and will be revoked, and perhaps we will get more than an annual raising of the rainbow flag.

**We need to fight for our own Liberation!**

The road to achieve that is through the formation of an independent mass socialist organisation run with the highest aims of democracy, and the most noble goal in all of human history: the self-emancipation of the proletariat from the chains of capitalism. To all those interested and willing to stand up and fight for our own liberation, I send my comradely salute, and sisterly greeting. We must fight and stand together. If you desire to join in the fight for Queer liberation, please email [Liberation.LRSF@protonmail.com](mailto:Liberation.LRSF@protonmail.com).

## REPORT: U4P General Meeting, Whither Activism?

BY Anthony Furia

The Unionists For Palestine (U4P) general meeting on the 5th of July accomplished a fairly substantial symbolic victory for the left forces of the movement. In a “win” for those of us who oppose coalitionism [forming broad activist coalitions] and ALP tailism [following behind activists and taking up unprincipled positions for the sake of popularity], Solidarity’s motion rebuking the events of the ALP state conference protest (in which protesters from U4P conducted a sit-in in the lobby) was thoroughly voted down; whilst the Socialist Alternative and RCO backed counter-motion supporting the protest and condemning the ALP was successful. In a loss for attempting to maintain unity within U4P, the motion devised by comrade Seb to establish a line of communication and reconciliation between the wider U4P and the disgruntled (by those same events at the state conference) Teachers and School Staff for Palestine (TSSP) was shot down.

Beyond a summary of the actual motions passed at this meeting, the more important aspect for those of us on the socialist left was just how dominated politics within it were by the same thing that has been haunting the Australian socialist movement since 1995; the Solidarity/Socialist Alternative divide. Broadly defined along the lines of coalitionist tailism, represented by Solidarity, opposed to spontaneous movementism [seeing disparate social movements and activist coalitions as the basis for revolutionary change], represented by Socialist Alternative, the history of the Solidarity/SAIt conflict is one worthy of our attention if we endeavour to understand both groups today, and the contemporary Australian revolutionary left.

Formally beginning in 1995 with the expulsion of 16 members of the International Socialist Organisation (ISO), who disagreed with the organisation’s position on the importance of the 1990s (“the 1930s in slow motion”), Socialist Alternative was formed shortly after from such ex-members. Was this an issue over which a split was necessary, or even tactically sound? Certainly not. However, such is the case with bureaucratic centralist organisations. The ISO all but formally renounced unity in action itself in 1993, passing a motion that read;

*“individuals who can’t implement [conference decisions] ... should not obstruct them. Refraining from a particular activity on these grounds is not regarded as sabotage.”*

Indeed, the formal expulsion of these members of the ISO was partially motivated by accusations of “factionalism” (amongst other utterly dull bickering). Impressively, the ISO had worked itself into violating both Unity in Action and Diversity in Opinion, banning both factions and conceding disciplined action in practice.

Socialist Alternative thus begins its storied (twenty-nine year) history with the explosive bang of yet another publication on the left that makes no reference at all to its history as a product of the expulsion of members from the ISO. Indeed, it’s impressive how little SAIt did to truly differentiate themselves from the organisation they had just departed from. For all intents and purposes, these were two organisations sharing almost the exact same organisational principle and Tony-Cliffist ideological lineage.

However, let it not be said that these organisations did not grow apart. To their credit, both socialist groups scrambled to define themselves in the negative of the other, in order to justify and legitimate their own existence in the face of an organisational identity crisis. The ISO, in the wake of the (not-so) crisis filled 90s, worked with the Democratic Socialist Perspective (DSP) and seven other smaller organisations (including their own splinter group from 2001, Solidarity, not to be mistaken for Solidarity) to establish Socialist Alliance as an electoral project. SAIt abstained, notably, although clearly having walked back such an anti-electoral position with the establishment of Victorian Socialists (VS) a few years ago.

Socialist Alliance would struggle on for a few years (and still struggles on now!), before the ISO resigned in 2007- designating 100% of the blame for the failures of SA to achieve its established goals on the conduct of the DSP. Most of these critiques of conduct reflect an increasingly coalitionist turn on the part of the ISO, as they centred around the DSP expecting a “pace of activity suited to a revolutionary organisation, not a broad left party,” arguing for a central SA publication in the form of Green Left, and declaring SA a multi-tendency socialist party. These critiques were made on the basis that the DSP was establishing in SA an organisation that didn’t properly accommodate “disaffected Labor members” and instead geared itself towards cohering and coordinating the existing socialist movement (if only!),



betraying the ISO's own right-turn.

Not a year later, and the ISO merged with two smaller organisations, Solidarity and Socialist Action Group, to become simply Solidarity. This organisation adopted much of the politics and tactical positions accumulated by the ISO over the years since 2000, including electoral support to the Greens followed by Labor, and a "United Front" orientation towards these organisations and the trade unions. This was the culmination of the political ups and downs since 1995; an organisation committed to a tactical tailism of major parties and unions in order to exist within the "real movement" and build up the potential for the eventual mass-party.

It should be noted that, in the years before Solidarity's formation, SAlt grew considerably, orienting itself almost entirely towards students and campus organising, and committing to a militant propaganda routine. In contrast to Solidarity, SAlt developed a line committed to socialist propaganda within as many social movements as possible, it committed itself to its own growth through these movements, and through propaganda, in preparation for the emergence of the mass party.

These two positions manifest with blinding clarity in most contemporary political struggles amongst the far left. The university encampments for Palestine, and this very U4P meeting, are two of the most recent examples that spring to mind. In the U4P meeting, Solidarity members and affiliates attempted to condemn actions which they saw as endangering their tactic of Labor Party entryism in the hopes of exacerbating conflict within the party and pulling rank and file away from it. SAlt members, affiliates, and ex-members rejected this out of hand, and supported the affirmation of these actions, which would surely themselves draw in new members through their radical appeal and socialist orientation. Attempts to impact ALP policy were futile, the reasoning goes, and actions like this attracted, rather than subtracted, supporters.

It should also be noted that the overall tactics of SAlt and Solidarity aren't all that dissimilar, despite the constant conflict between them. Both tactics are founded firmly upon a belief in the spontaneity of revolution and the mass party itself, which will emerge, as if from the heavens, in order to lead forth the revolutionary working class in the moment of critical crisis. Solidarity aims to "build" this mass party by developing forces within existing bourgeois

institutions and parties, until the moment the party appears, able to lead the working class itself. SAlt aims to build itself through outward propaganda and social movement participation, existing as a propaganda group of the highest order, until the emergence of the revolutionary moment (and thus the mass party).

Both groups acknowledge they are not the sole inheritors of revolutionary socialist legacy. Both acknowledge they are not the mass party, and neither aspire to become it through sheer growth in membership. In fact, in SAlt's latest *What kind of organisation is Socialist Alternative?* article, although referencing the mass socialist party, they explicitly typify themselves (and their future aspirations) as a "socialist organisation" instead of a mass party. So where will the mass party come from? From organisations that don't allow disagreements over "major" strategic questions (whatever that may mean) and have spurious, tactically single-minded orientations to students or unions? Certainly not, by their own admission. From the coalescing of the existing left? Perhaps, but neither group makes much explicit noise or reference to this goal. From spontaneous, phantasmic political forces above the control of any organisation? It would seem so.

This is not a tactically, let alone a strategically sound position, yet both groups that currently dominate far-left politics in Australia hold some variation of it. Their perspectives have shaped, and continue to shape the orientations of the far left to movements, institutions, and actions as they have occurred over the past 35 years and will likely continue to do so in the future. What we can learn from the U4P meeting, which exemplified this stagnating state-of-play, is what role we play. What role a partyist faction in the workers movement must fill, and how we navigate these conflicts to the best of our abilities in order to meet our aims, fill our role, and stride forward to the patient (yet hurried) construction of the mass workers party. We cannot afford to ignore these tensions, as we cannot afford to ignore the existing left - we must determine how we work with and through these groups towards the extremely intentional project of a mass party. A mass party through which we can save ourselves from the stagnating status quo of sectarian conflict and a culture of irresponsible spontaneity.

## Ultra-Left Faction Points of Unity

The Revolutionary Communist Organisation serves as the best mechanism for the establishment of a mass Revolutionary movement, the self-proclaimed principles of Communist unity offer a vital mechanism to reunite the shattered Left and fight for the establishment of socialism. Nonetheless, as with all groups it has flaws. Whilst the principle of reuniting the left is a sound one, the mechanism through which the RCO currently operates leaves much to be desired.

The current program is too Leninist in inclination, with many of the weaknesses that come from this tendency. Despite critiques from the organisation against Stalinist bureaucracy the organisation itself is bloated with pointless positions, and both too top-heavy with all financial powers coming from the Central Committee and too bottom-heavy with the CC holding very little practical power. Furthermore the internal culture of the RCO is a culture that focuses on recruiting amongst already committed Communists, or students. Which de facto creates an inability to interact with the working class. This critically weakens the ability of the RCO to take on the key role of a pre-party formation.

As such we raise the following demands:

As the party must be the head and weapon of the revolution, the party even before it's formation must integrate itself into the social and political life of the working class. The party must lead the working class forward both in words and in deeds. Whilst the RCO is a pre-party formation we must take action to be the compass of the working class towards Communism.

The RCO must be a fully federal organisation, with the Central Committee acting as a mechanism to coordinate action between state branches and determining general strategy. Power on the whole must be held by the local cell with all power in the RCO derived from the consent of Cadre members.

For the program to raise the demands of workers councils or Soviets as the historically recognized form of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and the focus of the RCO's struggle to establish a revolutionary mass movement to be the illumination and understanding of workers councils as the mechanism for the liberation of the Proletariat.

For the maximum demand to include the abolishment of currency, and the transitioning to labour vouchers.

For a dual party-union approach to the revolution allowing for all workers to intervene in the struggle for their own liberation under the aegis of the party, yet not relying on purely bourgeois mechanisms.

The active intervention in the movement of the workers caused by economic needs so as to attempt to spiritually clarify such movements and develop them, by encouraging appeals for active solidarity so that the struggles are extended and take on revolutionary and, where possible, political forms.

Communists must therefore seek to unite the revolutionary workers (not only the members of the communist party) to come together in their workplaces, and to build up workplace organisations which will unite into Unions and which will prepare for the taking over of production by the working class.

Our struggle must be firmly internationalist, our demands, and struggles must all be raised on this principle on the struggle for the world wide emancipation and liberation of the working class. Whilst the RCO is an Australian bound organisation we must reject nationalism, and move forward to the total abolition of nationality. We understand the RCO to be the nucleus for the formation of the Oceanian Communist Party and we must build up ties with revolutionary movements across Oceania and the world.

*"In the present time production is dominated by capital. The capitalist, possessor of money, founded the factory, bought the machines and the raw materials, hires the workers and makes them produce goods that can be sold."* -Anton Pannekoek, 'Workers Control', 1947.



## Statement of the Marxist Unity Circle

The following are the points of unity of the Marxist Unity Circle, a circle of comrades within the Revolutionary Communist Organisation (RCO) which share a common outlook on the chief questions facing our organisation. Any member of the organisation that agrees with our views should reach out to us, and join the fight for a Marxist Centre in Australian socialism.

**Marxism as a Political Strategy.** There is only one path to socialism. Through the merger of socialist politics and the workers movement, the working class can establish for itself a mass party, and this party can lead the battle for democracy - to bring the working class to political power and begin the transition from capitalism to communism. For us, Marxism is not simply a set of conceptual tools - it is a political program and a revolutionary strategy.

**Unity of Marxists.** We view the central task of our organisation as seeking the unity of the communist movement in Australia. This requires that we orient ourselves towards winning over existing socialists, communists, and Marxists to our perspective, and seeking unity through struggle with the existing socialist forces in the workers movement - be they in the trade unions, the Labor Party, the social movements, the Greens, or the socialist sects.

**A Faction is Not a Party.** We view the Revolutionary Communist Organisation as a partyist faction in the broader socialist movement. We are not a party. We cannot act like a party. This means forgoing forms of mass work that attempt to go directly to the middling layers of the masses, and instead focussing on political education, propaganda, and seeking unity of radical workers and socialists into a single movement. Until a party is formed, our primary task is to build one.

**Democratic Centralism.** We uphold freedom of criticism and unity of action. We seek to be the strongest proponents of internal democracy, of a strong, centralised political leadership, strong cells and local sections, freedom of debate and criticism, and a serious, healthy party culture. We also believe that our present task (forging a partyist faction to forge the socialist movement into a single party) requires a strong common outlook on key strategic and programmatic questions. The best means by which to marry these tasks is through democratic centralism.

**We Need a Professional Organisation.** Our organisation suffers from systematic immaturity - in outlook, in organisational capacity, in political education. This is the prime challenge we currently face. To overcome this immaturity we need a systematic plan to rationalise the organisation, develop cadres, and foster a disciplined and serious political life. Every single member of our organisation must become a revolutionary by trade, politically educated, confident in our politics, and capable of independent and collective action. We are not an activist organisation - our job is to turn activists into revolutionaries. This means moving towards a more selective recruitment process that cultivates layers of sympathisers and focuses on recruiting those who are broadly convinced of socialist politics.

**Strong Organisational Bodies.** Our organisation needs strong organisational bodies. This means a strong Central Committee that is directed, responsive, and proactive. This means cultivating a pool of part- and full-timers who can undertake administrative work. This means strong local cells that are supported by the Central Committee to undertake their political work. Most importantly, this means building strong city sections that can build our organisation from dozens to hundreds, and serve to guide public education, recruitment, and political interventions.

**Strengthen Our Publications.** We see our publications, particularly Direct Action and The Militant, as being at the centre of our political work. Writing for, reading, and distributing our publications is not a secondary matter, but rather the primary task of our comrades - it is an educational tool, a means to reach sympathisers and supporters, and the means by which we will reach larger layers of socialists and militant workers and youth. As such, we support strengthening our publications, giving them dedicated editorial committees, and placing them at the centre of daily political work.

**The Centrality of Education.** In order to carry out our task, we need every single member of the organisation to be educated on the outlook of our organisation, the fundamentals of communist thought, and all manner of matters of history, political economy, and critical theory. This means that education is the primary internal task at our current stage. The individual cell of the organisation must act as a militant reading group - the organisation as a whole as a school of communism.

# The Viable System Model in 1000 Words

**REPUBLISHED from Metaphorum, a Cybernetics Institute**

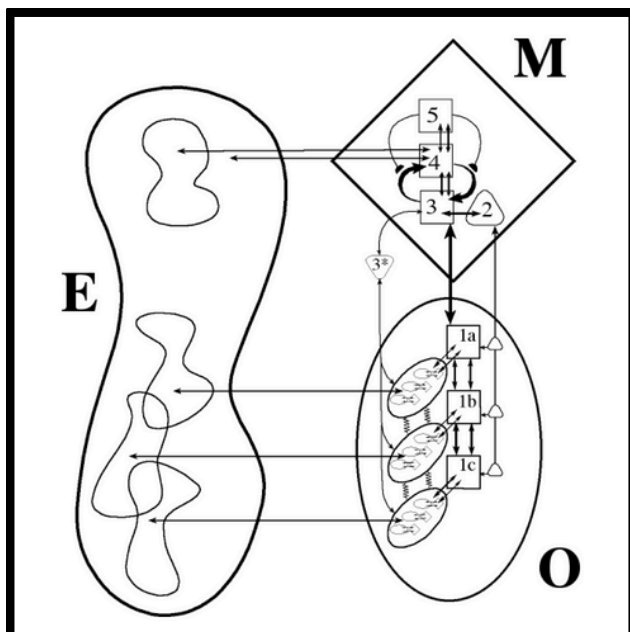
Stafford Beer, the inventor of the Viable System Model (VSM) described it as a “holistic model involving the intricate interactions of five identifiable but not separate subsystems”. The model was developed during the 1950s while Beer was a manager in the steel industry in Sheffield (UK) as a practical tool capable of dealing with issues of organisational structure.

The VSM is firmly grounded in systems theory and is inspired by the way the brain co-ordinates the muscles and organs, Its theoretical basis is Ashby's work, particularly the Law of Requisite Variety, Weiner's development of cybernetics, the mathematics of recursive systems, and McCulloch's theories of neural networks.

What emerges from all of this is a body of knowledge which describes the way that all viable systems work. Beer identified the invariances which apply universally, regardless of the size or nature of the viable system. It has been applied at all scales from small work-groups to nation states.

Beer's first models were mathematical, but these proved impossible for most people to understand. He then designed the graphical model which illustrates the five subsystems (the building blocks of the VSM) and the “intricate interactions” which connect them. The diagram also shows the interactions between the viable system and its environment – the niche within which it operates.

A simple VSM looks like this:



The diagram shows the three main elements : the operation (O) , the management (M) and the environment (E).

As can be seen, the operational ellipse is composed of three operational units (labelled 1a, 1b, and 1c) and the management diamond is composed of four sub-systems (labelled 2, 3 4 and 4.) These are the five systems: the operation is System 1 – in this case composed of three operational elements – and the management is composed of Systems 2, 3, 4 and 5. The various arrows represent the many and often highly complex interactions between the five systems and the environment.

An understanding of the theory begins with the observation that operational units must be as autonomous as possible, and thus Beer's model of sees any organisation as a cluster of autonomous operational parts which bind together in mutually supportive interactions to create a new, larger whole system, Thus the job of management is to provide the “glue” which enables this to happen. Beer named this function the Meta-system, which is defined as “A collection of sub-systems which looks after the operational elements so that they cohere in that totality called the Viable System”

Systems 2, 3, 4 and 5, between them, make up the Meta-system. Their roles are as follows: System 2 deals with the inevitable problems which emerge as a number of autonomous, self-organising operational parts interact. There will be conflicts of interest which must be resolved. System 2 is there to harmonise the interactions, to keep the peace, to deal with the problems. Without a System 2, the system would shake itself to pieces.

System 3 is concerned with synergy. It looks at the entire interacting cluster of operational units from its meta-systemic perspective and considers ways to maximise its effectiveness through collaboration. System 3 ensures the whole system works better than the operational parts working in isolation. Beer talks about an “explosion of potential” which emerges from collaboration and symbiotic relationships. Without a System 3 this could not happen.

System 4 ensures the whole system can adapt to a rapidly changing and sometimes hostile environment. It scans the outside world in which it operates, looks

for threats and opportunities, undertakes research and simulations, and proposes plans to guide the system through the various possible pathways it could follow. Without a System 4, the system would be unable to cope with the complexity of the external environment in which it operates.

System 5 provide closure to the whole system. It defines and develops the vision and values of the system through policies. System 5 creates the identity, the ethos, the ground rules under which everyone operates. It aligns the tasks of everyone in the organisation. In Beer's words "Rules come from System 5: not so much by stating them firmly, as by creating a corporate ethos – an atmosphere" Without a System 5, fragmentation would be inevitable.

The interactions between these 5 sub-systems and the way they respond to and affect the external environment define the VSM. The essence of these interactions are as follows:

The operational units are given as much autonomy as possible so they can respond quickly and effectively. This is limited only by the requirements of system cohesion.

Systems 1, 2 and 3 between them make up the internal environment of the viable system – the Inside and Now. The autonomous parts function in a harmonising internal environment which maximises its effectiveness through creating mutually supportive relationships.

System 4 is concerned with the Outside and Then. It formulates plans in the context of both the outside world and its intense interaction with System 3 which ensures all plans are grounded in the knowledge of the capabilities of the organisation.

System 5 monitors the interaction between S3 and S4 to ensure all plans are within policy guidelines. If not, it steps in and applies its ultimate authority.

All parts of the system work together holistically. Information is designed to flow throughout the structure in real-time, binding together the various sub-systems.

Applications involve re-thinking the workings of any organisation in these terms. Take any enterprise and identify the operational parts: this is System 1. How do conflicts of interest get resolved? This is System

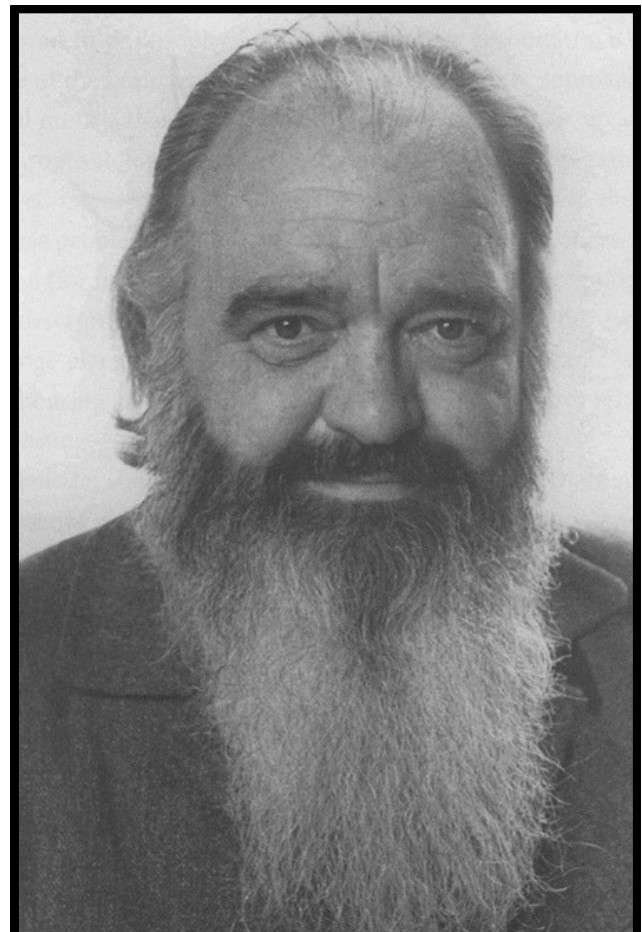
2. As the process continues a diagram something like the figure shown above will develop. Once this is complete, the diagnosis can begin: are the identified systems properly connected? Are they fit for purpose? And so on.

After 50 years, no-one has been able to find a case study in which the VSM has failed: in all its many and varied applications it has provided insightful diagnosis and has directed organisational restructuring to create effective organisations, based on individual autonomy and creativity.

*"According to the Cybernetician, **the purpose of a system is what it does.** This is a basic dictum. It stands for bald fact, which makes a better starting point in seeking understanding than the familiar attributions of good intention, prejudices about expectations, moral judgment, or sheer ignorance of circumstances."*

-Stafford Beer (below), *What is Cybernetics?*, 2001.

**Cybernetics Study Circle** - dedicated to studying and researching cybernetics and how it can be applied to radical politics. We are a study collective that meets bi-weekly to discuss texts and research. Contact Max J @ [jacobimax@protonmail.com](mailto:jacobimax@protonmail.com) for more information.





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Public forum hosted by the **Friends of Palestine WA** group. To be held on Monday 8th of July, starting at 6pm. Hosted at the Murdoch Lecture Hall at UWA.

Weekly protest outside of MP Pat Conroy's office, 571 Pacific Hwy, Belmont NSW. Every Monday at 4:30pm. Held by **No Weapons for Genocide**.



**REPUBLISHED from Direct Action #40  
(2012), written by John Percy**

He was won to a revolutionary socialist perspective as a high school student in Sydney, during the struggle against the US and Australian war in Vietnam. This was an exciting period, of youth radicalisation and questioning of the conservative norms and restrictions of a relatively affluent capitalist society, emerging from the stifling restrictions of the Cold War days.

From among the radicalising young people and students protesting the war and conscription, he was a central founder of the radical youth organisation Resistance in 1967. We started building a revolutionary socialist party and in September 1970 published the first issue of our paper Direct Action. We expanded to other cities, and in January 1972 held the founding conference of the Socialist Workers League, which became the Socialist Workers Party in 1975, later changing its name to Democratic Socialist Party.

Jim was national secretary of this party as it grew, split, united, matured and learned. We engaged increasingly in all the important political struggles, and some trade union campaigns, and in 1975 Direct Action started publishing weekly. The SWP joined the Fourth International, one of the international Trotskyist organisations, and we participated fully in the intense internal debates that were engaging the FI at the time. For several years Jim served at the FI centre in Paris

By the end of the '70s, Jim was national secretary of a larger organisation, still a small propaganda group, but one which was independent and could increasingly think for itself. The majority of our members were now workers, some gaining invaluable experience in a range of industrial struggles. In 1980 the SWP took an ambitious step, setting up its own

school, with 8-10 of its activists taking time off from the struggle for four months at a time to read, study and discuss the classics of Marxism, especially the works of Vladimir Lenin, the inspirer and leader of the Russian Bolshevik Revolution. This school continued into the early '90s, just before Jim died, and educated more than 300 SWP cadres.

Jim gave a report to the SWP National Committee in September 1980 that launched the school. It has often been reprinted, with the title "Four Features of our Revolutionary Party." Jim stressed four of the most important features of the party we had built, and they're important for any revolutionary party we build in the future: firstly, he emphasised we had assembled an inclusive leadership team. "We're always trying to absorb new leaders and expand the base of that team", he said.

Expanding and broadening the team provides "a framework for new and developing leaders", and makes us "able to assimilate into the team comrades who came from different experiences". Our structured team is "not a hierarchy", is relatively politically homogenous and is able to correct our mistakes. Secondly, he stressed we were an independent party. Even if we were part of an international, as we were then, in the FI, we still had to be able to stand on our own feet, to think for ourselves, to make our own decisions, to build our own leadership. We were not anti-internationalist, and certainly very international in our concerns and perspectives. He stressed we were willing to learn from other parties, and willing to collaborate internationally, because of our party's own leadership, and the confidence it had built.

Thirdly, we were a party built on Leninist organisational principles. As part of that, he mentioned not just relying on authority to win arguments. "We must have a real clash of ideas, because out of that we want the correct ideas to emerge." He also noted the comradely tone in the party we'd established going into a period of discussion.

Fourthly, he stated we were an ambitious party. "Our ambition flows from the very nature of the task we have set ourselves, the overthrow of capitalism." He pointed to the early weekly paper we published, and the international solidarity and international work we carried out, and the full-time party school we were launching.

"It's the framework for a needed overhaul of all our

equipment. The four features of our party that I've outlined indicate that we can do it for ourselves. Moreover, if we're going to continue to strengthen our party along those lines, we must do it for ourselves. If we're to continue to have an inclusive party with a strong leadership we must do it for ourselves. If we're going to be an independent party, we must be self-sufficient. If we're to continue to be a Leninist party, we must develop our leaders and our ranks with a full understanding of Marxism so that we can have a genuine democratic discussion with Marxist ideas as the property of everyone. And to continue to be an ambitious and confident party, we must take this step because it will be the biggest step in developing the morale of the party since the weekly Direct Action."

During the following decade of the '80s, we tried many tactics for building the party – regroupments, new party possibilities, attempts at mergers. In the '80s we thrashed out many new ideas, and wrote many useful and innovative documents. Often it was Jim who initiated the new tactics, and developed the good new ideas. We tested the tactics, and when a tactic failed, there was no problem in admitting a mistake, and relinquishing it, ready to try something new. It was a decade of creative thinking and experiments, backed up by the solid educational development as a result of our full-time Lenin party school. For financial reasons, we were forced to relinquish the school in 1991.

Jim gave an important report to the DSP National Committee a year before he died, on October 7, 1991. It was published as "Party-building perspectives for the 1990s", and reprinted in a book of four of Jim's talks or reports from the last few years of his life, published in 1994. This report is well worth reading. It was in a period when it was necessary to reorient the party, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, a result of the final squandering of the legacy of the Russian Revolution as a result of Stalinist degeneration.

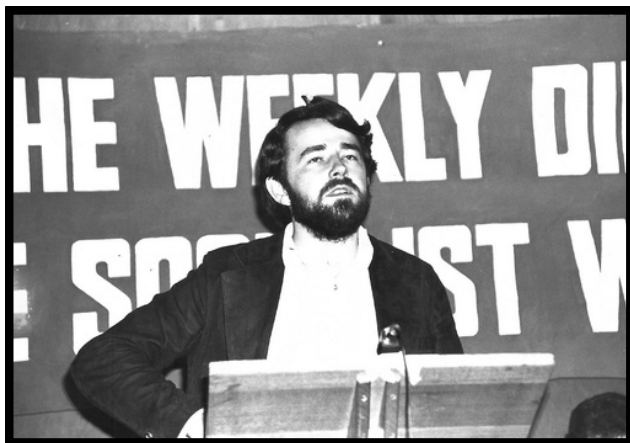
Jim felt very concerned to hammer on the continuing necessity of building a revolutionary Marxist party. When? "We have got to build it now, not just when the situation is more advanced. This point can't be stressed enough." And what sort of party? "Our basic point is that a party that strives for revolutionary social change must be composed of revolutionaries. It's a simple but controversial proposition, because it involves selection of our members. Selection both before you join, but also after you join because there are ongoing expectations of membership." He

stressed the need for a party of loyal, active and conscious members.

As I wrote in the conclusion to my book on the History of the Democratic Socialist Party and Resistance: “Jim’s political leadership was grounded on his strength of character, his seriousness, his tactical shrewdness and his socialist politics. His political judgement was sharp and quick, based on a deep understanding of Marxism – he had absorbed the methods of Marx and Lenin into his bones. Jim had a tremendous appetite for politics. He was a 100 percent; he didn’t dabble with his ideas. If a belief was worth having, it was worth acting on. Jim acted. He could sense political trends and opportunities we would otherwise have overlooked, or recognised more slowly. He had extraordinary organising skills – not necessarily on the administrative side of things, but he had the ability to get things done. He could organise others, he could weld together a team, he could plan a line of attack on a problem and carry it through. He organised the party team.”

He had a firmness and clarity the socialist movement would benefit from today. He’s fondly remembered, and sorely missed.

*Direct Action* – October 12, 2012



ABOVE: John Percy addresses the 4th SWP national conference, 1976. BELOW: John Percy sells *DIRECT ACTION*, 1973.



## **‘An extremely good SA meeting...’ (2005)**

**REPUBLICED from *The Activist*, written by John Percy**

I sat in the DSP [Democratic Socialist Perspective] Sydney branch conference on October 29 flabbergasted. I looked around at other comrades who had been at that same Socialist Alliance [SA] meeting, wondering were they as incredulous as me?

Sydney branch secretary Alison D had just described the amalgamation meeting of Sydney Central SA and Marrickville SA on Tuesday October 25 as “an extremely good SA meeting”!

I did a double take, just to make sure she wasn’t making a tongue-in-cheek joke to ensure comrades were awake during her perspectives report to the branch conference. No, she said it, and she actually seemed to believe it!

What a sorry state we’ve got ourselves in when our branch secretary can be so far off the mark. What are the facts of that “extremely good SA meeting”?

We organised the meeting to amalgamate Sydney Central and Marrickville SA branches (a total of about 90 members on the books). Marrickville in the past had been a bit of a rotten borough for the ISO [International Socialist Organization], they regarded it as “their” branch and had a modest concentration in the area, although this year for the Marrickville by-election in September we’d taken control, ensuring that we stood in the by-election, and that it was our candidate (at a meeting just attended by DSP and ISO members).

- 24 were present at the October 25 meeting: 18 DSP members, 2 ISO members, and 4 independents (though they would be more accurately described as 4 DSP periphery, one of them had tried DSP membership for a while.)
- The meeting lasted two hours, and heard “reports” on matters DSP members would have mostly heard about already: campaigning against the IR laws on November 15, and what we needed to do on the day; on Howard’s new anti-terror laws. Comrades dutifully elaborated.
- The meeting discussed amalgamating, and both previous branches voted. The ISO argued against (actually with dignity, for them). The two ISO members voted against (reserving their “right” to form a Grayndler branch in the future).

The technical achievement of the meeting, amalgamation, could have been achieved much quicker with far fewer comrades involved, but then I suppose appearances had to be kept up. As the meeting droned on I had been doing some mental calculations: 18 comrades at the meeting, going on for two hours, with an hour added for travel to and from, that's  $3 \times 18 = 54$  comrade hours. That time could have been much better spent:

- It could have been much better spent, say, selling GLW [Green Left Weekly]. Say 18 comrades, selling for two hours, at a rate of four per hour:  $2 \times 4 \times 18 = 144$  GLWs sold, for approximately \$300. Not to mention the potential in terms of political conversation and mobilisation for upcoming events, even steps to recruiting, from GLW sales on the street.
- It could have been much better spent with all comrades reading, spending the time on serious Marxist classics, or even catching up on the newspapers.
- It could have been much better spent intervening in real political meetings, engaged in real campaigns.

Or a combination of all three, rather than going through charades. It certainly was bad management of our comrades' time. But the worst casualties of the "extremely good SA meeting" were the number of relatively new DSP members who attended. What sort of training is this going to give them? What impression of politics are meetings like this one going to leave them with?

OK, those of us who've been around in politics a lot longer have been to many awful meetings. We'll grit our teeth, and bear it, hoping that our sacrifice will be for the good of the cause. Although I would much prefer not to be told barefaced in a DSP branch meeting that it was "an extremely good meeting". But such meetings (and such distorted descriptions of them) will turn new recruits off politics. (Hopefully none will get to like such a style of meeting.) It wouldn't have educated them or trained them; it would have miseducated them. Perhaps it would have de-politicised them – persisted in long enough it's even going to depoliticise some of our longer-term cadres.

Comrade Eva C made the point in her PCD in The Activist Vol. 15, No. 8 that poor, low level Sydney Central SA meetings were being repeatedly dressed up as good or very good meetings. Then at the October NC meeting Comrade Susan Price, who had been organising Sydney Central SA for much of that

time, admitted that Eva had only revealed half of how bad they really were. But until Eva's PCD all the report backs to DSP branch meetings maintained that the Sydney Central SA branch was essentially a very strong branch with lots of good meetings, and this is what comrades in other branches thought was the real situation in this important branch. After many attempts by comrades in the pre-congress discussion to point out this exaggeration as a bad political method, and that more realistic and honest assessments should be made, here we go off into the stratosphere again with Alison's "extremely good SA meeting".

But there's now also another type of justification for boring SA meetings being made, that "they're all like that", it's normal. Just think that through to its logical conclusion.

And I also understand that supporters of the NC majority feel compelled to put everything done in SA's name in a good light, pop up to speak in the discussion whenever they've encountered an SA paper member, call all SA meetings "good". But "extremely good"?

That overblown description lavished on yet another boring, wasteful SA meeting shows the extent of the hype we're now in the habit of showering on SA. It's stunning. But I fear it's also becoming indicative of the hype that's seeped into our normal political description. What does it mean?

What can we believe of political reports from our organisers if this becomes the norm? Have our expectations for political meetings fallen so low that such a meeting can now be described as "extremely good"? Is this the best we can expect? Who'd hang around for many more meetings like that?

Mostly, it shows the dead-end nature of the line that the NC [National Committee] majority is trying to extend way beyond its use by date.

– The Activist was as the internal discussion bulletin of the Democratic Socialist Party/Democratic Socialist Perspective

John Percy (1946-2015) was a prominent Socialist organizer and Student activist, alongside his younger brother Jim Percy. John was a founding member of the Socialist Workers League, which became the Socialist Workers Party. He was also a founding member and prominent organizer within the Democratic Socialist Party (1989-2003).

# Direct Action Perspectives in Relation to the DSP and the Leninist Party Faction (2008)

**REPUBLISHED from the Leninist Party Faction (LPF), May 2008**

## **Our history and place on the left**

Direct Action left the DSP because we considered the opportunist and sectarian turn it had taken after its 22nd Congress in January 2006 could not be reversed through waging an internal factional debate.

In essence, our analysis put greater emphasis than the Leninist Party Faction on the significance of the left's retreat since the late 1980s. We estimated that much of the cadre of the DSP - who were mostly recruited in this period of retreat - would not respond well to a written debate about Leninism. Our view was that only by practical example, or more likely by a major change in the course of the movement, would these comrades open themselves to the debate.

With such a perspective, we attempted a range of projects in collaboration with others over the last two years in areas as diverse as anti-racism, Latin American solidarity, progressive cultural activism and electoral activity, among others. These efforts resulted in some successes and some failures, but we consider that the period overall has principally been a positive one, both in terms of political experience gained and in practical terms of working with others on successful political projects.

Such an approach has reaffirmed for us the vital importance of providing practical, political leadership in movements, and confirmed potential for socialists to do this if approaching movements as well as other left organisations in a genuine and non-sectarian way. The value of this has been underscored for us, particularly in our efforts in building the movement in solidarity with struggles in Latin America. Like the LPF we see the current importance of this solidarity for all socialists.

While we disagreed with the tactical approach of the LPF, we have continued to consider the LPF comrades as representative of the best traditions of the old Socialist Workers Party/Democratic Socialist Party. Direct Action shares the same traditions and speaks the same language of revolutionary Marxism.

## **This can no longer be said of the DSP.**

The DSP leadership has diluted the Marxist character of the party, substituted it with left pragmatism in

tactics, and a conception of strategy that resembles the old division between the "minimum" and "maximum" program more than the transitional method of Leninism.

Despite the best efforts of its leadership to disassociate it from the far left, the DSP remains part of it and may still play a role, as we hope many other left organisations and individuals will do, in the future development of mass revolutionary politics in this country. This will of course fundamentally depend on the course of the movement.

However, the current leadership of the DSP makes it an impossible organisational framework for the necessary revolutionary propaganda and agitational work, without which the left cannot grow in this period.

## **Perspectives on the international and Australian political situation**

The working class movement in Australia remains characterised by the long term retreat dating back to the 1980s - since the beginning of the neoliberal offensive in the industrialised heartlands and compounded by the ideological retreat of the post-Soviet era. However, while there are yet no signs of the sort of persistent struggle and fightback that could provide the impetus for a new class struggle leadership in the mass workers movement, there has been a growing number of localised struggles in many of the advanced countries, including Australia, since the late 1990s.

These struggles reflect the growing political crisis of neoliberalism, manifest most notably in the weak links of the imperialist chain. This political crisis has two outstanding features:

1. The centrality for imperialist policy of waging war; and
2. The growing generalised and organised character of the rebellion in Latin America; at the centre of which is the first socialist revolution in the "post-communist" era, unfolding in Venezuela.



## Perspectives on building a revolutionary party in Australia

The far left in Australia is more fragmented than it has been for sometime. On a larger scale not much has changed since the demise of the old Communist Party in the 1980s, though what steps forward had been taken since have been lost in recent years, in particular as a result of the retreat of the DSP into opportunist sectarianism.

There is now less collaborative discussion and action among the far left than there was prior to the Socialist Alliance experience. As the movement develops and finds new momentum in the struggles that will emerge against Labor in government and as a result of imperialism's current agenda, we need to be prepared to re-open some of these discussions and look for opportunities for developing alliances and unity projects anew.

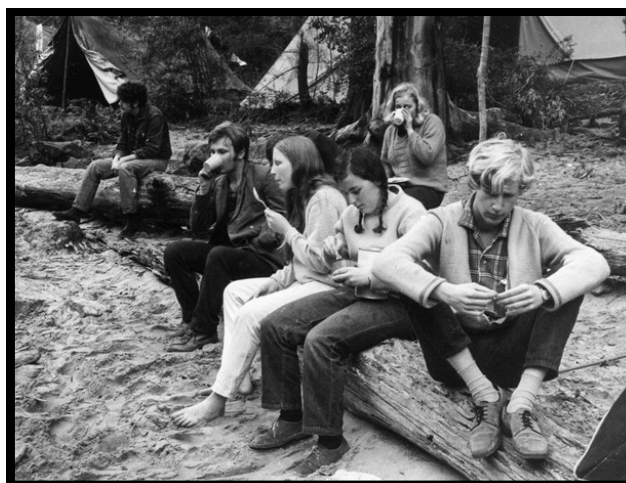
At the same time, we need to continue the ongoing tasks of revolutionary propaganda, especially among young people, as part of helping to rebuild the left movement. In our opinion, the key political foci for this agenda of revolutionary propaganda and education flow from our assessment of the period and include:

1. The revolution unfolding in Venezuela
2. The struggle against imperialist war

In addition, we have to be prepared to join struggles and develop a propaganda agenda around the variety of issues that will emerge under the Rudd Labor government.

### What is to be done?

We consider that an important start to the work of this period would be the unity of our two organisations, the LPF and Direct Action. A united organisation of the LPF and DA and its supporters would be capable of building a national organisation that could pursue this agenda of revolutionary propaganda in the short term, and play a constructive role in the much needed discussions and debates among the Australian left. We look forward to this possibility, and to testing out in action the perspectives we have outlined - recognising as all Marxists do, that the ultimate test of perspective is activity.





Melbourne Maoists counter-protest a protest against Pakistan's genocidal assault against Bangladesh in the 1970s