

PARTY OF THE WORKING CLASS

**Organisational Principles and Methods of Work
of the Communist Party of Australia.**

By L. AARONS

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INTRODUCTION

THIS booklet aims to set out the main principles of organisation of the Communist Party of Australia.

The program and policies of the Communist Party are clear and open, for all to see and understand. In the long run all the distortions and lies about the Party's policies spread by the capitalist class only serve to show, by contrast, the correctness of what the Party advocates and works for.

Equally, the organisational principles of the Communist Party are an open book. The Communist Party is far more democratic than any other political party in Australia. The truth about the Party's organisation and its methods of work is vastly different from the fantasies spread by press, films and T.V., picturing the Communist Party as a mysterious and sinister "conspiracy".

It is of course true that the organisational principles of the Communist Party differ from those of other parties. That is because the aims and policy of the Party are different, above all because the Communist Party works for a Socialist Australia. Organisational principles arise from and serve the political aims, and a genuine party of socialism must be so organised as to enable it to carry on the struggle for its aims.

This booklet was read in manuscript by many members of the Communist Party, and by some workers who are not members. Over fifty people have made suggestions and criticisms aimed at improving its presentation. I wish to thank all who gave such valuable help, and to say that every effort has been made to include their ideas. Remaining weaknesses in the booklet are my own responsibility, and any further criticisms would be very welcome.

It is hoped this booklet will whet the appetites of readers for further study of the principles of communist organisation. Suggestions for further reading are given in footnotes and at the end of the booklet.

L. AARONS,
July, 1959.

I. THE WORKING CLASS NEEDS ITS OWN PARTY

The Australian working class formed the Communist Party after almost a century of experience in the struggle for social progress in Australia. This experience included many glorious victories and advances, as well as many setbacks, disappointments and bitter defeats.

Learning from these experiences, the most advanced workers formed the Communist Party of Australia in 1920. Since then it has played an ever more important part in Australian politics. This is why the Party is constantly attacked by all the forces which want to keep things as they are.

From their viewpoint, these reactionary forces are quite right in recognising the Communist Party as their main political enemy, for it is the Party of the working class, which leads the workers in their aim of changing Australian society.

The reality of Australian society is that the majority of its people are workers. Eighty-two per cent of Australian breadwinners are wage and salary earners (figures taken from 1954 census). A closer analysis shows that 58 per cent of breadwinners are wage-earners who work in giant factories and mines, in building and transport, earning only sufficient to keep themselves and their families from week to week.

These workers have to sell their labour power to the owners of the means of production, because they themselves possess no means of production. They make up the working class, or *proletariat*.

At the opposite end of society are the wealthy ten per cent of the population, the owners of Australia and their highly paid administrators and servants in private industry and the state apparatus. These are the capitalist class, the owners of the means of production, the industries, the banks and the land.

In this group are to be found the real owners of Australia, the less than one per cent of the population who own virtually all the large-scale means of production.

These are the monopoly capitalists and bankers, the big squatters and landowners. Because of their ownership of the

means of production, these capitalists are able to hire workers to labour in their industries and pocket the difference between the wages they pay and the value created by the labour of the workers. This is called *exploitation*, since all material values are created by labour, but the capitalists, who do not produce at all, get the lion's share of the wealth created by the workers.⁽¹⁾

Between these two main groups are the middle sections, thirty per cent of the people. They include many salary earners, sometimes called the white collar workers, whose salaries are very little higher than those of the industrial workers. In this middle section are the working farmers, who own some means of production but are exploited by the big monopolies, are unable to keep far ahead of debt and are subject to market fluctuations and the vagaries of the climate, as well as the small businessmen, constantly squeezed by monopoly and threatened with bankruptcy.

These are the main classes in Australia. The concept of social classes is briefly and clearly explained in these words:

"Classes are what permits one section of society to appropriate the labour of the other section. If one section of society appropriates all the land, we have a landlord class and a peasant class. If one section of society possesses the mills and factories, shares and capital, while another section works in these factories, we have a capitalist class and a proletarian class." (Lenin: *The Tasks of the Youth Leagues*.)

The class division of Australian society results in a struggle between these classes, which have different interests and aims. The class struggle is not the invention of "wicked agitators", nor has it become out-of-date through any changes in capitalism. The most important change in Australian society in the past generation is the growth of giant monopolies, which has sharpened class differences and class struggle.

To protect and advance its interests, the working class has to struggle against its exploiters, the capitalist class. The working class can and must win allies from other sections of the working people, also exploited by monopoly capital.

Although the very existence of this class struggle is often denied, it is a historical fact that the class struggle lies at the

(1) For a simple explanation of the process of exploitation, see the first pamphlet in this series, "Economics for Workers" (Chapter One).

bottom of every political issue, every strike, every movement of the working people, as well as the clash of ideas and social theories.

The Communist Party takes part in all the struggles of the people, concerning itself with getting the best results for the people from these struggles.

The Communist Party fights to raise living standards under capitalism, for higher wages, shorter hours, improved social services, better education. It plays a leading part in working class resistance against all attacks made upon living standards.

Viewing world peace as the most urgent need of our times, the Communist Party opposes the Australian and international capitalist groups which benefit from war preparations, and threaten war for their economic and political interests.

Regarding democratic rights as being necessary to the people in their struggle against the ruling class, the Communist Party works to extend democracy. It opposes capitalist attempts to restrict or abolish democratic rights which favour the workers in their struggle, such as the legal attacks on the right to strike and union independence, the limiting of free speech, and political spying and intimidation.

The daily work of Communists is the defence of every interest of the working people.

But the aim of the Communist Party is wider and more far-reaching than this struggle for immediate interests.

THE WORKING CLASS WILL RUN SOCIETY

The workers cannot confine themselves to an unequal contest in which the cards are stacked against them. The struggle between capitalists and workers is unequal so long as the former own all the means of production, have the power to hire and fire, have enormous wealth and influence, control governments, courts, police and army, and own all the main means of influencing the thinking and ideas of society in its favour.

These powers give the capitalists the upper hand, enabling them to run Australia even though they are a small minority. Even when economic and political conditions favour the workers' struggle, the capitalists are able to delay reforms. Witness the way arbitration legislation is loaded against the workers.

The working class can only achieve its aims by taking the means of production out of the hands of the wealthy, making them the property of society, of the working people who created them by their labour.

In striving for this goal, the working class is not pursuing any selfish aim. Socialism is in the interests of the vast majority, ninety per cent of the Australian people.

SOCIALISM WILL CHANGE AUSTRALIA

A Socialist Australia will be a glorious country. All the necessary material conditions exist for a flowering of our land, for advancement of industry and agriculture by giant bounds once it is freed from the fetters of monopoly control.

Australian production is now determined by the narrow and selfish aims of a handful of monopolists. In Socialist Australia, the producers of wealth — workers, farmers and technicians — will democratically plan the development of society. There will be no depressions or unemployment, no artificial barriers to the growth of production.

Instead of half the nation's income going to the wealthy few as it does now, the working people will receive the full benefit of their labour in increasing living standards and a rich cultural life, after laying aside enough to take care of the future growth of production to ensure continued rises in living standards. Socialism will abolish poverty.

When a world socialist commonwealth comes into being, war will become an impossible barbarity, since the economic and political conditions which cause war will have disappeared from the face of the earth.

Arising on a firm Socialist material base, culture and science will flourish and develop, with every citizen encouraged and given the opportunity to develop individual talents in every direction.

Instead of the glorification of idle luxury and the vulgar display and cultural emptiness of capitalist society, socialist Australia will honour creative labour, scientific discovery and creation of a rich culture for the whole people.

Freed from class divisions and distinctions, from the insecurity and violence of capitalism, mankind develops a new morality

and outlook, based upon voluntary co-operation, the brotherhood of man.

A Socialist Australia is the glorious goal of the working class.

Some say this goal is good, but is impossible of achievement. The Communist Party is certain that Australia will become socialist, because the working class will come to realise its interests can be achieved only by socialism, and will struggle for it, at the head of all working people who stand to gain from this social change.⁽¹⁾

The ideas of socialism have gained ground in Australia over the past 30 years, largely due to the work of the Communist Party.

The change from capitalism to socialism is a world-wide process. Forty-two years ago, the whole world was dominated by capitalism. Today, one-third of the world is socialist. The superiority of the socialist system is being demonstrated in practice by the tremendous and rapid advances in production, science, living standards and cultural life in these countries.

SOCIALISM CAN BE WON ONLY THROUGH STRUGGLE

This glorious future can only be won in arduous, complicated and difficult struggle.

The capitalist class has too much at stake to give up its vested interests simply because the majority of the people want them to, or because it is in the national interests.

In times of acute industrial and political struggle, the powers of the State are used without regard for democratic rights or even the laws of the capitalist state itself.

In 1890, when the workers of Australia defended their living standards and trade unions, police, troops and courts were called in to give victory to the employers. A premier of Queensland, Sir Thomas McIlwraith, spoke "as a member of the Government and the Australian Pastoralists' Association", while Colonel Price sent his troops into action against Melbourne wharves with the order "Fire low and lay 'em out".

In 1909, miners' leaders were jailed for taking strike action, and were led into court in leg-irons.

(1) The Communist Party view of the struggle for a Socialist Australia is set out in its program "Australia's Path to Socialism".

After the N.S.W. General Strike of 1917, an official Commission published a report on the struggle, and summed up the ruling class attitude to legality in these words:

"It was recognised that there are times of civil commotion 'when for the sake of legality itself the rules of law must be broken'."

In the depression of the thirties, the workers fought back against the attacks of the capitalist class. This led to the Governor of N.S.W. dismissing the elected State government, in defiance of the constitution.

The New Guard and other fascist bodies were organised to fight the labour movement, and the workers had to defend themselves from the violence of these would-be stormtroopers.

The Chifley Government's 1947 proposal to nationalise the banks was met by a violent campaign of abuse, misrepresentation and open threats of violence and civil war. This campaign was organised and financed by the banks.

In all these cases the capitalist system itself was not under all-out attack. In most, the issue was only one of wages and conditions, of trade union struggles. Yet the capitalist class threatened or used force and violence.

The same methods are used today to keep the workers in check. In place of iron chains, governments have riveted legal chains on to the unions, aiming to abolish the right to strike and make the trade unions powerless to act effectively.

Australian workers have experienced in their struggles the truth which workers have learnt everywhere: that capitalism will resist the workers' demands by all methods. When their system is at stake, they stop at nothing to hold back social progress.

SOCIALISM IS BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE PEOPLE IN ACTION

A Socialist Australia can be achieved only through a complete change in society. It is a *social revolution*, which can only be carried through when the majority of Australians not only want a change, but are prepared to take decisive action to bring it about.

The working class strives for a peaceful revolutionary change. Whenever and wherever violence has been used, it has been

unleashed by reactionary forces, not the people. The people have had to answer such violence, and put down the forces which try to thwart the will of the majority.

THE WORKING CLASS NEEDS A STRONG COMMUNIST PARTY

Every class has its own party, to work out its aims and policies, and to lead it in gaining its objectives.

The working class has the great aim of ending capitalism. In so doing, the working class will not set itself up as a new exploiting class, but will end forever the division of societies into classes, end inequalities and exploitation, class struggle and war.

This cannot be done unless the capitalist class is defeated politically, its power destroyed.

Such a powerful enemy cannot be defeated except by a united, militant and determined working class. This unity and determination can only be built up under the influence of a leadership which sets out to inspire the workers with confidence in their mission and strength.

The task of this leadership is to work out the correct strategy and tactics at each stage of the struggle, to crystallise and express the real interests of the working class. It seeks to further the socialist cause in each movement and struggle against capital.

The Communist Party is such a leadership. Only the Communist Party believes that the working class can lead the struggle for Socialism and must run society.

Only the Communist Party seeks to prepare itself for the task, taking part in every struggle of the working class, studying past history and analysing present-day Australian reality, basing itself on the glorious militant traditions of the Australian working class and learning from the experience of the workers of all countries.

The Communist Party is different from other political parties precisely because it has the great aim of transforming society, and believes in the ability of the working people to make this great change.

The Communist Party is built and organised differently from other parties precisely because it aims at final victory for the working class in its long struggle with capital.

II. COMMUNISTS ARE UNITED BY COMMON OUTLOOK AND IDEAS

Joining the Communist Party is a voluntary act. No one is forced to take this step, nor is membership of the party a road to a cushy job and a life of ease.

Communists join together in a voluntary union because they have the same ideals and outlook, the advancement of the working people and the establishment of a socialist society.

Communists have the same fundamental outlook on economic, political and social questions; "the Communist Party is a voluntary union of like-minded people". (Rule 1, Constitution of the Communist Party of Australia.)

The ideas which unify the Communist Party are loyalty to the working class, devotion to its interests, determination to fight capitalist exploitation and domination, unshakeable belief in the victory of the working class and a Socialist Australia.

Communists resist all capitalist influences and ideas, and are not deterred by victimisation, intimidation and force by the capitalist class and state.

This is the Communist outlook and class stand, acquired in struggle and by education. All communists, whether workers, intellectuals or members of the middle class, need to strive conscientiously to adopt a firm working class stand on every issue, overcoming all the influences of capitalist ideas.

Far from believing that ideas are unimportant in society, communists believe that men's thinking determines all their actions, including their political activity.

The real question is: what is the source of men's ideas, and why is there a constant clash and struggle of ideas?

In class society each social class develops its own outlook and theories, to express its standpoint and aims, and the methods of struggling for these aims in society.

There is a wide gulf between the ideas of workers and capitalists on every important issue. To take only one example: the working class attitude to scabbing in a strike is clear cut — it is one of contempt and abhorrence. But the capitalist attitude is quite the opposite—the scab is represented as a heroic individual with a fine moral spirit, one who deserves praise and support.

CAPITALIST IDEAS ARE A POWERFUL FORCE TO MAINTAIN THEIR SYSTEM

The vast majority of people in capitalist society are not capitalists, and their interests are very different from those of the capitalists.

If the workers, farmers and middle class united together and acted resolutely to end capitalist exploitation, capitalism would cease to exist almost overnight.

The capitalist class meets this threat by dividing the people, trying to influence their thinking so they accept capitalism as the only possible form of society.

The capitalist class uses many means of influencing the thinking of society. It controls education, literature, the press, films, TV and radio. It is able to count upon the force of tradition, of thousands of years in which there have always been classes, rich and poor, rulers and subjects.

The ideas, theories, principles and beliefs of the capitalist class, taken as a whole, make up *capitalist ideology*. This ideology assumes many forms, but all these forms have the same main features.

Capitalist ideology upholds the view that society must always be run by a few wealthy and powerful men — the “elite”. It declares that the ownership of the means of production by a few individuals is right, inevitable and sacred, and that the majority must work to enrich these few.

Capitalist thought sneers at the masses of workers and farmers, declaring that only business tycoons and their executives can run society. It regards the masses of people as the “common herd”, without ability, playing no part in making history, which is made by captains of industry, generals, kings and statesmen.

Capitalist ideology upholds the right of individuals to make profits at the expense of the wellbeing of the masses of the people and to the detriment of national development. It glorifies selfishness and individualism, spreading the psychology of “Blow you Jack, I’m alright,” the viewpoint of not worrying about others but seeking only individual riches, advancement and security irrespective of what this means to others. Having such an outlook, the capitalist class attacks the idea of voluntary co-operation for the benefit of society as “slavery”, upholding exploitation of the people by a few as the highest expression of freedom and the “rights of the individual”.

Capitalist ideology asserts that wars are caused because human nature is inherently evil, while efforts to change society are countered by claims that “you can’t change human nature”.

Capitalism is held to be the highest form of civilisation, and those who want to change it are called agitators, troublemakers, and “enemies of civilisation”.

Capitalist ideology is a powerful force. However, it is more and more coming into conflict with the realities of life, being exposed as a false outlook which serves capitalism to the detriment of the majority.

In the socialist countries, the working people are running their countries better than any capitalist countries are run, achieving better results in national development, living standards and cultural advances.

The flowery phrases of capitalist propaganda about “freedom of the individual” and “spiritual values” are wearing thin; the reality of capitalist dictatorship is seen more and more clearly.

All the talk about “free enterprise”, the fairy stories about how workers can become millionaires, and Australia being “a land of opportunity” come hard up against the reality that the rich get richer and more powerful while the majority of people have to work to produce these riches for the monopolists.

It is a very important task for the working class movement to expose capitalist ideology before the people, stripping away the sugar coating to show the bitter pill beneath.

It is also very important to realise that capitalist ideology surrounds the working class, and influences the whole labour movement. This is not only because of its constant repetition but also because capitalist relations constantly influence men’s thoughts.

CAPITALIST IDEOLOGY ADAPTS ITSELF TO INFLUENCE WORKERS

Most workers, and many other people, reject capitalist ideas in their most open and blatant forms. But the capitalist ideology is subtle and insidious, assuming many different disguises to serve the interests of the capitalist class.

Seeing they could not stop the workers organising trade unions to protect their interests, the capitalists finally accepted

the inevitable. They then tried to influence the trade unions to restrict their activity to industrial problems only, and not to interest themselves in political matters. Their aim is to get the workers to confine themselves to the effort to win reforms under capitalism, leaving the capitalist system intact.

The great struggles of the Australian workers for the 50 years up to 1890 developed the militant trade union movement, which won many reforms including the eight-hour day, wage rises and the right to organise and strike. These struggles laid the foundation of the militant democratic tradition of the Australian workers, such a powerful force to this day.

This trade unionism, however, suffered from the defect that it confined itself to the militant struggle for reforms under capitalism. Having no scientific working class theory, it took no independent part in political affairs, leaving these to the capitalist parties who ran the state apparatus.

When the big employers and squatters forced an all-out struggle against the unions in the nineties, the whole power of the state was thrown in on the side of the employers, and the unions were defeated.

The trade unions turned to political organisation, forming the Australian Labour Party. However, this Party took over the same outlook of acceptance of capitalism, and confined itself to working for reforms within the system. It thus accepted capitalist ideology, adapting it so that it can influence the working class to accept capitalism.⁽¹⁾

REFORMISM IS CAPITALIST IDEOLOGY ADAPTED TO THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

This outlook is called "reformism", and is the main form of capitalist ideology in the labour movement.

Reformism is not a clear-cut, consistent and scientific theory. Reformism includes many different and contradictory ideas. All have common features—the acceptance of capitalism, efforts to reconcile the workers and the capitalists, and opposition to working class action and struggle.

(1) A more detailed treatment of the early history of the Australian trade unions and the Labour Party is given in E. W. Campbell's excellent study "History of the Australian Labour Movement".

One reformist theory is that there is no need for socialism at all, that the working class should only work for reforms, such as higher wages, shorter hours, and improved social services. Many unionists and some reformist union leaders sincerely believe this, and struggle resolutely for these aims.

Right-wing union officials carry this theory further, and say that there should be no struggle or action at all, that the unions should merely present their claims to the Arbitration Courts or governments. It is only pressure from the workers that forces such officials to accept struggle even for reforms.

The majority of Labour politicians have this outlook. They say the workers should elect Labour Governments and leave the rest to them. This line of thought hinders the workers' struggle for reforms. As Labour politician G. R. Bryant said recently: "Whatever else, one indispensable task of the unions is not to hinder the A.L.P.'s bid to get dominant power in Canberra." But the whole history of the past fifty years shows that Labour Governments in office present no threat to the capitalist system at all.

Labour Governments have introduced reforms from time to time, under pressure from the workers. At other times, Labour Governments have also acted just as harshly as tory governments, attacking living standards and refusing to grant workers' demands. State and Federal Labour leaders signed the "Premiers' Plan" in 1931, along with tory premiers.

The Labour Government gaoled union leaders and broke the miners' strike in 1949. Labour Governments have encouraged the growth of monopolies and boast of "encouraging private investors" and of creating "a golden age" for businessmen.

All these actions are the logical outcome of the reformist theory of accepting capitalism, that Labour in office must confine itself to administering capitalist society, not changing it.

The reformist theory also adapts itself to the demand of the working class for Socialism. The A.L.P. has had the socialist objective in its platform since 1921. But the various Labour governments which have ruled Australia have never made even one tiny step to socialism. They have not even curbed the monopolies, which flourish under Labour and Liberal governments alike. Dr. Evatt stated the A.L.P. leaders' views quite clearly, when he

said, "Big business is entitled to make reasonable profit, but not to make excessive and outrageous profits."

The majority of Labour politicians do not believe in socialism at all. But there are some politicians and other Labour leaders who speak in favour of socialism, mainly because they consider this necessary to stop the workers supporting the Communist Party. Their theory, "Democratic Socialism", is another type of reformism.

This theory says that socialism is necessary, but must come gradually and without class struggle. It says the capitalists are little democrats who will accept the people's will, little gentlemen who wouldn't dream of using lies, fraud and force to maintain their rule.

There are all sorts of ideas mixed up together in this theory. Some say that by gradual improvements in wages and social services, the capitalists' profits will be reduced to nothing. Others say that the capitalists can be taxed out of existence. Still others say that the government should enter into competition with the monopolies, or go into partnership with them.

All these ideas, whether sincerely held or not, are wrong in theory and unworkable in practice, as experience shows.⁽¹⁾

The Australian Labour Party can never lead the working class to socialism, because its policy and methods of action are decided by the theory of reformism, a form of capitalist ideology which upholds the system of capitalism.

The working class can only win their struggle when they reject all forms of capitalist ideology, guiding all their actions by their own working class theory.

MARXISM - LENINISM — THE WORLD OUTLOOK OF THE WORKING CLASS

Their life, labour and experiences in class struggle give the workers a class stand of solidarity against the boss, hatred of exploitation and injustice, and opposition to the capitalist system.

This instinctive working class ideology moved the workers to heroic struggles against the employers, to creation of the trade

(1) For a much fuller analysis of "Democratic Socialism" see L. L. Sharkey's pamphlet "Socialism in Australia".

unions, and to visions of a new society in which there would be no capitalists and no poverty.

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, two of the greatest thinkers in human history, identified themselves with the struggles of the working class. Their great contribution was to give a scientific explanation of social development and change, showing the causes which lie beneath the division of society into classes. They showed that capitalism was not an eternal system, but that other social systems had existed before it, and that capitalism itself would give way to socialism.

This concept is known as the *materialist conception of history*. Engels explained this briefly in these words:

"The materialist conception of history starts from the proposition that the production of the means to support human life and, next to production, the exchange of things produced, is the basis of all social structure; that in every society that has appeared in history, the manner in which wealth is distributed and society divided into classes or orders is dependent upon what is produced, how it is produced, and how the products are exchanged. From this point of view the final causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in men's brains, not in men's better insight into eternal truth and justice, but in changes of the mode of production and exchange. . . .

The growing perception that existing social institutions are unreasonable and unjust, that reason has become unreason, and right wrong, is only proof that in the modes of production and exchange changes have silently taken place with which the social order, adapted to earlier economic conditions, is no longer in keeping. From this it also follows that the means of getting rid of the incongruities that have been brought to light must also be present in a more or less developed condition, within the changed modes of production themselves. These means are not to be *invented*, spun out of the head, but *discovered* with the aid of the head in the existing material facts of production." (Anti-Duhring, pp. 369-70.)

Using this materialist method, Marx analysed capitalist society in his great work "Capital". He showed that capitalism, once a progressive stage in social development, becomes a fetter on progress.

Furthermore, capitalism creates the working class, exploits it, and causes it to organise and fight for its interests. Thus it creates the very social force which will end capitalism and build a new society.

Marx and Engels took part in the practical work of the labour movement. They played the leading part in forming the International Working Men's Association. In the course of this practical work in the class struggle, they worked out the scientific theory of the working class, explaining the principles of working class strategy and tactics, the need to wage both economic and political struggle. They explained what the capitalist state was, and showed the need for the workers to establish their own state power.

Lenin, the great thinker and leader of the working class, developed Marxist theory in the new situation created by the growth of monopoly, the epoch of imperialism and imperialist wars, and explained the significance of this new stage of capitalism. He showed it was the last stage of capitalism, the era of imperialist wars and of socialist revolution.

Lenin's theoretical work was done in the midst of great practical labours. He played the leading part in formation of the first Communist Party, guided its activity in leading the struggles of the workers and peasants of Russia to victory in the Russian Revolution in 1917. He worked out the main principles of building socialism in the Soviet Union. He gave invaluable assistance to the communists in other countries, explaining the significance of the experience of the Russian working class for workers everywhere.

THEORY THE GUIDE TO ACTION

Marxism-Leninism is not an abstract theory divorced from life. Marx said: "The philosophers have interpreted the world in various ways; the point however is to *change* it." (Theses on Feuerbach.)

Marxist-Leninist theory is the method by which the Communist Party studies the economic and political situation in Australia, with the aim of changing it. On this basis, the Party works out the policy and tactics of the workers' struggle and the tasks of the Party. Marxism-Leninism demands a close study of economic and political developments, for it is a theory which develops

along with the life itself. The Communist Party decides its policies in accordance with the facts of the situation studied in the light of Marxism-Leninism, and not on any subjective desires or preconceived ideas.

Marxism-Leninism sums up the whole experience of working class struggles throughout the world. Its conclusions are a guide for workers everywhere. But they must be applied to the conditions and circumstances of each country. The Constitution of the Communist Party of Australia states this principle:

"The programme, policies and organisational principles of the Party are based upon Marxism-Leninism, applied to the conditions of Australia."

THE STRUGGLE OF IDEAS

The Communist Party carries on the struggle of ideas all the time, upholding Marxism-Leninism against all attacks.

These attacks come from all sides. The reactionaries assail Marxism-Leninism, and so do the reformists. But even this is not enough for capitalism, which finds it necessary to fight this theory from within as well, knowing that infiltration of capitalist ideology into the Communist Party will weaken its unity, fighting spirit and capacity to lead the working class in its struggle.

At present some ideas are spread with the pretended purpose of bringing Marxism-Leninism "up-to-date". Some of these are: "Monopoly capitalism has changed its nature; it now 'gives' higher living standards to the workers. Capitalism is so organised nowadays that there will be no more economic crisis. Political democracy changes the exploiting nature or curbs the rapacity of the monopolies."

"There is no need for a social revolution to achieve socialism, which will come gradually. The working class does not need to set up its own political power, its own state organisation to consolidate its rule and build socialism."

"Not the class struggle but propaganda of general truths and moral maxims will bring about socialism. From this it follows that not the working class but intellectuals are leaders of the socialist cause."

These and similar ideas are called "revisionism", because they would "revise" Marxism-Leninism in such a way as to get rid of its class-conscious spirit and revolutionary meaning.

Just as reformism is capitalist ideology changed a little to make it suitable for sale in the labour movement as a whole, so revisionism is capitalist ideology in a new wrapping to make it suitable for retailing in the Communist Party.

In fact, revisionist ideas are taken over, almost without change, from reformist or even openly capitalist sources.

The Party has the duty to say to people with such ideas: "If you no longer adopt a communist standpoint, and if you reject Marxism-Leninism, you have a right to do so. But you cannot remain in the party, since it is a union of like-minded people who accept Marxism-Leninism as their method of understanding and changing the world."

This is the communist stand. A working class party can no more allow "freedom" for non-working class ideas than a soccer club would allow freedom for people who are "all for soccer", but only want to "change it a little" by introducing an elliptical ball.

It is no more possible to conceive a communist party which allows freedom to advocates of non-Marxist, capitalist ideas, than of an Astronomical Society which allows freedom within it to advocates of the "theory" that the sun revolves around the earth, or a trade union which includes employers as well as workers.

The Communist Party is marked by the unity of outlook of its members, the basis of its solid organisation. Revisionism logically proceeds from opposing Marxism-Leninism to opposing the organisational principles and structure of the Communist Party.

Lenin advanced the theory of the organisational structure of the Communist Party, showing that it logically follows from the working class theory. In 1904 he wrote these prophetic words:

"In its struggle for power, the proletariat has no other weapon but organisation. Divided by the rule of anarchic competition . . . ground down by slave labour for capital . . . the proletariat can become, and will inevitably become, an

invincible force only when its ideological unity around the principles of Marxism is consolidated by the material unity of an organisation, which unites millions of toilers in the army of the working class. Neither the decrepit rule of Russian tsarism, nor the servile rule of international capital will be able to withstand this army." (One Step Forward, Two Steps Back.)

III. ORGANISATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Arising from the realities of life under capitalism, a society torn by class struggle, Marxism-Leninism draws the conclusion that the working class Party must be firmly united and closely-knit, organised differently from other parties which do not set out to serve and lead the working class in its struggle for socialism.

The unity of the Party arises from the devotion of the communists to the cause of the working class, regarding this as the most important cause in the world.

Each member has a responsibility to the Party to work for the interests of the working class, to uphold its policy and tactics, to put forward its views and defend it from all attacks, to help decide its policy and present views gained from work among the people, and to build up the Party's press sales, membership and organisation.

At the same time, the Party has a responsibility for its members, who represent the Party to the people among whom they work and live. This responsibility is to help educate the member to become a better fighter for the working class, assist in developing individual talents for leading the people's struggle.

Therefore, there are certain minimum conditions of membership which must be met by all members. These are set out in the Party constitution:

“ . . . acceptance of the Party Program and Constitution, activity in a Party organisation, observance of Party decisions, and payment of dues.”

Communists are not just ticket holders, but activists who work for the cause they believe in, leading the struggles of the working people and explaining the relationship between these struggles and the struggle for socialism.

Bound together by devotion to the working class, serving the noble ideas of peace and socialism, it is not difficult for communists to work selflessly for the party's progress as members of a team.

Party organisation is typical of its working class character. The working class has learnt by its experiences over centuries

that collective organisation and struggle of the class is the only way to the advancement of each member of the class. This idea is expressed in the trade union movement. This understanding is reinforced by the collective labour of the workers who in co-operative effort produce all the material wealth, amenities and technological wonders of modern society.

This class experience is expressed in the Communist Party as the principle of democratic centralism.

DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

Democratic centralism combines two essential principles in working class organisation — the widest democracy and firm organisation. Democratic centralism is “democracy under centralised leadership, and centralised leadership on the basis of democracy”.

All leading committees in the Communist Party are elected by the membership. But even more important than this, democratic centralism demands that leading committees of the Party should draw upon experiences of the branches and of the working people. The communist method of work is learning from the experiences of the working people in their struggles, earnestly seeking to discover their opinions and ideas.

Every Communist has the right to express his views on Party policy and decisions. This is not only the right — it is the duty of all members. This is given reality by the opportunities for discussion of all policies and decisions.

The Constitution lays down that all documents to be discussed by the Party's supreme body, the National Congress, must be circulated throughout the Party two months before the Congress assembles. Every effort is made to develop the fullest discussion and testing of the correctness of the proposals made, including seeking opinions of workers who are not Party members.

METHODS OF LEADERSHIP

The working class needs its leading Party, composed of the most advanced, class-conscious and far-seeing members of the class. The Party must win the respect and leadership of the class by its selfless work in defence of the immediate interests of the people and by the correctness of its policy in advancing the

long-range political interests of the class.

This is a long and difficult task, particularly where capitalist ideology and its offspring, reformism, are strongly entrenched. The patient day-to-day work of the communists is the only way to win and merit leadership.

The very nature of capitalist society and the influence of capitalist ideology make it inevitable that the whole class will not always be class-conscious and active. Only in times of acute political crisis does the great majority of the class come into action.

A serious working class party does not wait for such times of crisis, knowing that without a strong, experienced and firm party which has educated the class and established unbreakable links with it, the outcome of such a crisis can only be defeat for the working class and continuance of capitalist exploitation and oppression. This has been shown many times in Australian history: for example, in the 1890 general strike, the 1917 general strike in N.S.W., and in the economic crisis in the 1930's.

Thus the Party works patiently to strengthen its ties with the class and win leadership all the time, knowing that the working class learns not only through education and propoganda, but above all through its experiences in the class struggle.

The Party leads by carefully seeking all the views of the working class, studying these views and using the Marxist-Leninist method to analyse them in the light of the economic and political situation in Australia and the world. The result of this analysis is expressed in the program, policies and decisions of the Party.

Those decisions are then applied by the Party organisations and members in giving leadership to the struggles of the working people, and are thus tested in practice.

This experience is further studied, decisions modified and changed, and again taken back to the working people. This is a continual process, repeated again and again, which educates the working class, develops the ability of the party to give leadership, and binds the Party and class firmly together as an invincible force for progress.

This is the relationship between Party and class, a leadership

won by hard struggle, devotion, persistence and by always learning from the working people.

Similarly, the Party needs leaders, responsible people who win their leadership by their ability, devotion and persistence in the cause.

Leaders are not born, but made, and they must be given the opportunity to develop, assistance in education, and the help of the whole party by both encouragement and criticism. A most important task of the working class Party is to develop a core of leaders, experienced and tested in long years of struggle, educated in the Marxist-Leninist method, and closely linked with the working class.

Communist principles of organisation reject bureaucratic methods of work by leaders, refusal to learn from the membership, or separation from the life and experience of the working class.

Equally wrong is hostility to the conception of a centralised Party, decrying the need for leaders.

A task of leadership is to encourage and train new leaders, assisting them to learn and be promoted in the Party, to gain experience and to grow in political stature.

COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Communist leadership is collective leadership, which brings into play all the talents, energies and wisdom of the whole Party. It is a truly democratic method of leadership.

The principle of collective leadership arises from the theoretical truth that the people are the source of wisdom and the makers of history.

Collective leadership means that all decisions on important matters are made by the Party organisations (branches or committees) at properly constituted meetings and after full airing of all opinions.

Decisions cannot be made by individuals or a group of individuals without Party standing. No individual can claim or be conceded any monopoly of wisdom or power.

All these are important principles, but by no means all that is meant by collective leadership.

When properly applied, collective leadership expresses the whole communist method of leadership, of collecting the views and learning from the workers and taking back to the workers the decisions made by the Party upon this basis.

Therefore the formal principles of collective leadership need to be given vigorous life by making sure all Party work is conducted on the principle of wide discussion and seeking out opinions. Every Party meeting should be properly prepared, and opportunity given for all views to be heard and considered.

So far as possible, all important decisions should be made only after exhaustive consideration, before the meeting as well as at it.

All Party organisations, from branch to Central Committee, are made up of men and women who work among the people, whose task it is to know the views and opinions of the people with whom they work. Each member has the responsibility of submitting these views to their Party organisation, and helping to work out policy on the basis of these views. The wider the contact, the more varied the sorts of work the members of the Party organisation are acquainted with, the more firmly will policy and decisions be based upon reality.

After decisions are taken, they are in turn tested out by being applied among the people.

Each member of the Party has responsibility to help in making policy and contributing to all decisions, as well as carrying them out. This is set out in the Party Constitution, which sets out that the first two duties of the Party branch are:

- (i) *To work among the masses, organising them in struggle for their political, economic and cultural needs.*
- (ii) *To convey the views and opinions of the masses to the leading Party bodies.*

Collective leadership is the method by which these duties are carried out, it is the way in which the Party is kept in touch with reality and a correct policy is worked out.

Mistakes are of course possible, and do occur, but collective leadership cuts down the number and seriousness of mistakes, and makes for their more rapid correction.

Collective leadership does not mean that no one has fixed responsibility. The task of the collective body is to make decisions on policy and organisation, and to give specific jobs to individuals within the framework of those decisions.

Collective leadership includes business-like checking on decisions to make sure they have been carried out, and at the same time testing whether the decision is right or not.

THE PARTY LEARNS FROM EXPERIENCE

The Communist Party always studies the way its work is done, analyses its experience and learns from mistakes and weaknesses as well as from successes and strengths.

Strengthening the Party is carried out in the way all human knowledge is accumulated, that is, by engaging in practical work, studying the results of that work, and drawing general conclusions which are added to the store of knowledge, called theory. In turn, theory is applied in further practical work, and this again adds to knowledge.

A worker becomes skilled in his work by learning from his mistakes, analysing them and perfecting his skill; a scientist conducts experiments and draws conclusions from the results, often taking years to test his theory and also making many mistakes before reaching a correct solution. An apprentice gets help and criticism from the tradesman, and scientists exchange ideas and criticise theories in the interests of truth.

This process is developed to a consistent theory in the Communist Party, and is called *criticism and self-criticism*.

Criticism and self-criticism is a method of developing the Party, of solving contradictions which arise between theory and practice, right and wrong policies and methods of work.

The Party is devoted to the cause of the working class, therefore it criticises its mistakes and shortcomings quite freely and openly, since this is a way to educate the Party and the class, and raises the Party's prestige among the workers rather than lowers it

Similarly, individual Party members who make mistakes in policy or methods of work should not be concerned with personal prestige but with the interests of the working class, with correcting those mistakes and becoming better communists.

Criticism and self-criticism is a duty of Party members, as well as a right. It must be properly carried out, at Party meetings and not in the form of gossip or idle chatter. Criticism should be constructive, with the aim of helping the Party and the individual, not to disrupt or to further personal ambitions or feuds.

Members of leading Party committees have the main responsibility to set the example, drawing lessons from their own mistakes and shortcomings, adopting a correct attitude to criticism from others, and helping others to see weaknesses and shortcomings through constructive criticism. This is set out in Rule 9 (b) of the Party Constitution: "It is the duty of all leading Party bodies to practise self-criticism and to promote criticism from below."

The main purpose of criticism and self-criticism is to fight against all forms of non-working class and un-communist ideas, practices and methods of work, that is, of the various forms of capitalist and middle-class ideology. It also enables us to criticise and correct wrong ways of thinking which do not study reality but are concerned with imposing preconceived ideas upon reality.

Criticism and self-criticism is a very important part of democratic centralism, contributing greatly to a vigorous democratic life in the Party.

CENTRALISED LEADERSHIP AND A STRONG ORGANISED PARTY

The previous section describes how democratic centralism develops a wide and vigorous democracy in the Party. At the same time, democratic centralism welds the Party together, gives it discipline, solidarity and strength.

This is ensured by some organisational principles which are clear, simple and necessary.

First of all, the decisions of the majority are binding upon the minority. This is a simple democratic principle, adopted in most organisations.

The principle of majority rule is correct and necessary, otherwise the Party would not be able to work as a unified whole. Therefore, once a decision is taken by the Party or any of its organisations, it is binding upon all members. Those who have minority views must accept the majority decision and loyally carry it out. It is an un-communist attitude only to carry out decisions with which one agrees; the interests of the class and party are greater than the individual.

Decisions of the whole Party or its leading bodies are binding upon all communists. The Communist Party does not tolerate flouting of decisions, such as are commonplace in other parties—for example, the way that A.L.P. parliamentarians disregard the socialisation objective and ignore decisions made by A.L.P. conferences and the wishes of the members of the Labour Party.

This is a further example of the consistent, thorough-going democracy of the Communist Party, which places all members, no matter what their position, under the guidance, direction and control of the Party, and rejects the "right" of individuals to thumb their noses at Party decisions in the name of "freedom".

Proceeding from the principle of consciousness as the guarantee of unity and discipline, there is full and thorough discussion in the Party of all questions. Should there be differences of opinion, the Party seeks to convince those with differing or minority views, and always sets out to obtain as many opinions as possible before even proposing a decision, let alone making one.

Nor are opinions arbitrarily forced upon individuals or a minority. On the contrary, the right to reserve one's opinion in case of disagreement with Party decisions is expressly secured, providing the decision is carried out and proper channels are used to seek the change of any decision believed to be wrong. However, this right to reserve opinions does not mean the right to disagree with the principles of Marxism-Leninism, general Party policy as decided by the Party as a whole, or any right to flout the constitution. It safeguards the individual right to disagree with any decision and to seek a change.

Party unity is a great source of strength, and this is reinforced by the fact that there cannot be any factions in the Party. That is, no dissident groups are allowed to set up their own

organisation within the Party, publish their own journals, or advocate a policy in opposition to the policy decided by the Party.

There will always be differences of opinion about policy, methods of work and organisation within the Party. The conflict of ideas is a source of strength, not weakness, if it is properly conducted. In any conflict of opinion, the approach of all concerned must be to reach a decision which is in the best interests of the working class and the Party, and to accept the decision when it is finally made.

Influences of capitalist ideology, such as selfish, personal aims, hostility to opposing individuals, extreme rancour against divergent views, should all be criticised and rejected.

Democratic centralism calls for unqualified acceptance of majority rule, prohibits backstairs manoeuvrings and factionalism, and lays down the method of conducting the conflict of ideas.

Democratic centralism lays down the rule that decisions of the Party must be obeyed, that lower Party bodies should carry out the decisions of higher bodies, and that in the case of differences of opinion the higher body's opinion must prevail.

This organisational principle is necessary to meet the needs of the class struggle so the Party can always act as a united body, working on one national policy.

In applying this principle in practice, great care should be taken that full initiative is given to the responsible body on the spot, that decisions are not arbitrarily imposed, and that all views are carefully studied before arriving at decisions.

Higher Party bodies must seek the opinions of the lower bodies, studying these views and the local situation before making decisions.

Lower Party bodies must submit their views on important questions of policy, supplying full facts to help the leading body make its decisions.

If the lower body considers that a higher committee's decision should be modified to suit local conditions, it should submit its views and the reasons for them. In such a case the higher

committee must discuss these views with the lower organisation and consider these views before making a decision.

After this is done, the decision of the higher body prevails.

PARTY DISCIPLINE

The unity of the Communist Party is a powerful force, which draws its main strength from the consciousness of its members. At the same time, the Party must have its code of behaviour and discipline, so as to enforce its decisions.

This discipline is of course misrepresented and slandered by the Party's opponents. But Party discipline is conscious, acceptable to its members because they are united in a noble cause. Because they are volunteers in the struggle, there is a great difference between communist discipline and the discipline imposed by the capitalist on his employees, with unrestricted right to hire and fire, or military discipline imposed by force.

Precisely because it is consciously accepted and understood, the discipline of communists is firmer and more binding than any other.

The disciplinary powers of the Party are set out in Rule 8 of the constitution: warning; reprimand; removal from assigned work; suspension from official positions and/or from attending Party meetings, pending investigation of charges; removal from office, expulsion from the Party.

The most extreme step, expulsion from the Party, is taken only in cases of deliberate acts against the interests of the working class, or after all steps have been taken to correct anti-Party activity.

HOW PARTY ORGANISATION WORKS

The Communist Party's structure is built up in conformity with the principle of democratic centralism.

The basic organisation is the Party branch. There are two main types of branches: industrial and locality.

The industrial branch is formed of three or more members working in a factory, ship, mine, office or other place of work. It is in the workplaces that the workers come face to face with capitalist exploitation. The workplace is the centre of working class struggle and organisation, where the workers are organised

around their common interests. Party branches in workplaces take part in the struggles of the workers, give them leadership, spread the ideas of communism, and build up Party organisation and influence among the industrial workers.

Locality branches are organised of three or more members in a suburb, country town or area. The local branch takes part in all movements of the peoples in the locality, and builds its connections with all the bodies they set up to advance their interests. The locality branch puts forward party policy and builds up party influence and organisation.

The party branches are the direct link between the Party and the working people, and give leadership to their struggles.

A working class Party could not exist without organised active branches. At the same time, branches alone cannot form a unified Party — they must be welded together through a common policy, program and organisation.

These questions are all worked out and decided by the Party Congress, held every three years.

In between Congresses, a Central Committee is elected to carry out Congress decisions, and is the political leadership of the Party between Congresses.

Congress and the Central Committee make broad policy decisions, which are applied by the branches in accordance with local conditions.

To fit the political, economic and geographic situation, the Party has state committees which apply the national policy to conditions in each state, and give leadership to the branches in the state.

Where necessary and desirable, the state is divided into districts, where policy is again applied to the special conditions of a district (such as in Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney, Newcastle).

In some cases, districts are divided into sections, covering a number of branches (both industrial and local).

In every case all Party bodies are elected.

The officials of the branch are elected. The branches elect delegates to section conferences, which elect the section committee and delegates to district conference.

District conferences elect the district committee and delegates to state conference.

State conferences elect the state committee and delegates to the Party Congress.

Party Congress elects the Central Committee.

Thus, at all stages, democracy is fully practised, the membership determines policy and elects those they consider the most capable, devoted and energetic leaders.

The process of Party leadership, elected from below, works downwards again, from the Central, State, District and Section committees to the branches, applying the methods of leadership described earlier.

IV. THE PARTY AND THE WORKING PEOPLE

The Party's main work is the work it does among the people, its *mass work*. The Party is concerned with everything that concerns the working people, and takes part in every movement, struggle and action in which the working people seek to advance their interests.

Communists regard no issue as unimportant, and throw themselves into every struggle or movement with all their energy. Their aim is two-fold. First, it is to help win the demand or aim of the movement, whether it be a wage rise or job condition, the struggle to defend jobs and industries (such as the mining and shipbuilding industries of recent times), or a local issue such as opposition to high rates, for footpaths or a swimming pool, or whether it be a state or nationwide movement, such as that in defence of education.

The second aim is to lift the level of those taking part in the movement, to help them see the relationship between the partial demand (affecting only a section) and the general struggle between capital and labour. This has two sides. Every individual movement must be considered in its relation to the class struggle as a whole, according to the conditions at that time. At the same time, "The Communists fight for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of the movement." (The Communist Manifesto.)

For example, the tactics of an industrial struggle should be worked out not only in light of the situation in one factory, union or industry, but take into account the political situation, attitude of other workers, the farmers and middle class, the strength or weakness of the capitalist class as a whole as well as of the individual employer.

A struggle against high rates imposed by one municipal council must be considered not only as it affects one council, but the general effect of the Federal Government's policy in starving councils of finance for local needs.

These are examples of how individual struggles are related to the overall struggle.

In "representing the interests of the future" in any movement, the communists are concerned with showing that the struggle of the working class for their demands is a constant one, and that the struggle for socialism is the only final solution to the thousand-fold problems of life under capitalism. The communists work to strengthen the confidence of the working class in their political power, to show that unity of the working class is such a powerful force that the power of capital cannot withstand it.

The main concern of the communists is to develop unity in action. All movements for winning immediate demands for reforms can succeed only through united action, and communists ceaselessly proclaim this truth and work for its realisation.

Enemies say that the Communist Party is not interested in winning reforms, but only in "causing trouble", strikes and public unrest.

However, this is quite untrue, since communists are the most resolute and tireless workers for reforms, and the workers get best results in their struggle for reforms precisely where communist policies, tactics and leadership have won mass support.

It is true, and is never hidden, that the Communist Party fights not only for individual and piecemeal reforms, but also for a socialist Australia.

This is the essence of communist mass work: that breadth and flexibility in uniting with diverse elements in pursuit of progressive aims held in common is combined with tireless exposition and advocacy of the struggle for socialism.

From this it follows that the primary task of all communists is to work as communists among the broad masses, and that the main job of all Party organisations is to work out correct tactics for the mass movement, tactics suitable for the level of consciousness of the people taking part in the movement and help to lift their consciousness and confidence still higher.

Where communists and Party organisations work in this way, not only do the people win their demands and become more politically conscious, but the Party also grows in prestige, numbers and organisation, since the leading role of the Party is clearly seen.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY WORKS FOR UNITY OF THE CLASS

The workers can only advance by acting as a class, uniting their forces for action to win their immediate demands. In the course of this continuous action, the working class will become firmly united around their class aim of creating a socialist Australia. The key question in building working class unity is the relations between Communist Party and Labour Party workers.

Starting on the firm ground of working class demands, the Communist Party is prepared to unite with all sections of the labour movement for those aims which are held in common—the struggle for higher wages, the 35-hour week, repeal of anti-union legislation, and the burning issue of working for peace. In course of united action, the working class is able to judge which party and policy is best for them.

At the same time, the Party advances its own program and criticises the errors of reformist ideology as well as the attempts of reformist leaders to evade mass action and dampen down the struggle.

The struggle for working class unity is the constant concern of the Party. It will be won only by communist work among the masses, conducted on principled lines of “uniting with and fighting against” the reformist leaders and reformist ideology.

The aim of the Party's work is to unite the workers in struggle for their interests, and to show that the way forward is to take the path of struggle for socialism, not the reformist path of accepting capitalism and piecemeal tinkering with the system.

In carrying out this policy, the Party must avoid two mistakes. One is the “leftist” mistake of all struggle and no unity, which tries to race ahead of possibilities, simply abuses the reformist leaders and avoids the hard work of convincing the workers through their daily experiences that reformist policy is not enough. The other is the “rightist” mistake of all unity and no struggle, which shirks the development of mass action and the task of combating reformist ideas.

A very important task for communists is explaining Party policy, aims and methods to workmates, associates in people's organisations and movements, and neighbours — the direct and

patient method of convincing individual men and women, answering capitalist arguments and prejudices, and convincing them of the need to support, join and strengthen the Party.

BRING FORWARD THE PARTY AND ITS POLICY

The Party works among the people and in their organisations, to strengthen unity, to give leadership to their actions and build up their organisations. But this does not exhaust the mass work of the Party.

The Communist Party conducts its own independent work among the people. Over the past 30 years, the Communist Party has started and carried through many great national campaigns, as well as countless factory, industrial and local movements.

In the early 1930's, the Party initiated and led the struggle of the workers against the capitalist offensive. It played a leading part in organising the unemployed to fight for work and food, against the starvation policies of the governments of the day. The Party called and worked for unity of the trade unions to resist wage-cuts in this period.

When the economic crisis eased a little, the Party played a leading part in working for trade union unity in the fight to win back the wage-cuts taken during the depression.

With the rise of Nazism in Germany and the threat of a new war, the Party threw itself into the struggle against fascism and war. Its policy was clearly vindicated by the course and outcome of the war.

After the war, the Party worked for immediate honouring of the promises made to the workers during the war, and played a leading part in the working class victories of the 40-hour week, increased margins and the basic wage rises.

When the “Cold War” was started, the Communist Party took the lead in defending world peace, opposed atomic weapons and worked to unite the Australian people for peace. The communists showed that the war program was a direct cause of inflation, high taxation and lower living standards.

The correctness of communist policy has again been proved. This is shown in the fact that most Australians today support ending of atomic tests, oppose nuclear weapons and favour

peaceful co-existence. Not so long ago, only the Communist Party put forward this policy, in the teeth of a bitter campaign by the capitalist class against these aims.

In all these movements, the Communist Party was the first to come forward in the people's interests. Its independent policy won recognition and mass support, and inspired united action by people of diverse political opinions. In all these movements, the Communist Party advanced the idea of socialism.

That is what is meant by the independent work of the Party, which is an indispensable part of its mass work. The Party takes up its own stand on all issues, and communists work to win support for the Party policy, while co-operating with all people and organisations on mutually-accepted aims and programs.

SPREADING THE IDEAS OF COMMUNISM

It is vital that the Party's ideas reach the people. The Party does not hide its aims and policies, but tirelessly holds meetings, talks and discussions in factories and workplaces and in the streets and halls and in the homes of the people in city and country.

The most important single means of spreading the ideas of communism is the Party press, which consistently explains Party policy, carries news of the life and struggles of the working class, and upholds the noble aims of peace, democracy and socialism. The papers "Tribune" and "Guardian" serve the working class, and play a powerful role in the struggles of the people. The "Communist Review" analyses the economic and political developments in Australia and abroad, explains and develops Marxist-Leninist theory and fights against capitalist ideology.

Reporting and writing for the press, and taking it among the people, is communist mass work, and opens up the way to widening the party's influence and building up its membership and organisation.

A very important part is played by Party pamphlets and leaflets, and by the Party bulletins in the factories, workplaces and localities.

PARTY FINANCE COMES FROM THE PEOPLE

The Communist Party engages in all the struggles of the people and fights against capitalism in all spheres of social life. The

work of the Party cannot be carried on without money, nor is most of its money spent at election times. The Party needs a regular flow of finance, sufficient to maintain and expand its organisation and influence.

Because of its aims, policy and principles, the Communist Party cannot expect support from the wealthy. It is wellknown that all other political parties receive secret funds from Big Business. The Communist Party would never accept such finance, even in the most unlikely event of it being offered.

The Communist Party depends for its money upon one source — the working people. Party finance comes from the self-sacrificing donations of its members and supporters, in the form of donations, direct and at meetings and functions.

It is an important part of the work of Communists to raise money for the Party, and it is an important political act to ask for and receive money from the workers.

BUILD THE COMMUNIST PARTY !

A strong Communist Party is a powerful instrument for the working class in its struggle. The need to build up the Communist Party is shown by study of the realities of capitalist society in Australia, by the experiences of the Australian workers in their struggles, and by the successes of the socialist countries achieved by the working people led by their communist parties.

Building the Communist Party is a many-sided task. The Party is strengthened by deepening the individual and collective understanding of Marxism-Leninism by the Party and its members, understanding which comes by study of theory and its application to the situation in Australia and practical work in the class struggle. It is strengthened by the Party's practical work in the struggle, creating firm links between Party and the working people.

The Communist Party is built by strengthening its ideology, opposing all forms of capitalist ideas, and by strengthening its organisation and unity.

The Communist Party is also strengthened by enrolling in its ranks all those who want to serve the working people and fight for their interests. There is a place in the Communist Party for all who want to end class oppression, poverty and war, to help in the struggle for a Socialist Australia.

Books for Further Study

Readers who wish to study the principles of Communist organisation more deeply are recommended to read the following books:

Constitution of the Communist Party of Australia.

Manifesto of the Communist Party—Marx & Engels.

What is to Done?—Lenin.

One Step Forward, Two Steps Back—Lenin.

On the Party—Liu Shao-chi.



Constitutional Aspects
of the
Royal Commission
on the
Communist Party

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THE Australian Council for Civil Liberties, in publishing this document, does so for the purpose of informing responsible public opinion. The publication was not inspired by nor is it a brief for the Communist Party. The Council has no connection with any political party, and is responsible only to its own members. Their names listed on the opposite page are, it is believed, a sufficient warranty for the good faith of the Council as a non-party, undenominational body.

During the thirteen years since the Council was founded, it has defended individuals and groups, irrespective of their political affiliations, when they have been treated unjustly or have stood in peril of injustice.

The express aim of the Council, printed in its constitution in 1936, is to assist in the maintenance of citizens' rights "against infringement by executive or judicial authority contrary to due process of law, or by the tendency of governmental or other agencies to use their powers at the expense of the liberties which citizens of this country have enjoyed."

To-day, as in 1936, signs of such a tendency to abuse powers are to be observed. In the opinion of the Council's legal advisers, the Victorian Royal Commission (Communist Party) Act 1949 is a grave abuse of the powers of Parliament at the expense of the independence of the Judiciary.

So the Council, according to its practice, applies itself to informing the public of facts and implications of this measure which the Victorian Government initiated and the parliamentary majority carried—though after strong protest from leading members of the Labor Party and one of the two conservative parties.

In the pages which follow, the Council quotes not only such known anti-Communists as these, but also more august authorities, in evidence of the hurt which this legislation does, not Communists in particular, but the structure and operation of parliamentary democracy in the State.

THE main objection to the appointment in May, 1949, of a Royal Commission to investigate the Communist Party in Victoria has nothing to do with the pros and cons of Communism or with the case for or against the Communist Party, on its State record, which the Commissioner was required to examine. The objection resides in the lack of concern which Parliament showed, not only for principles of common fairness and natural justice, but also for the Constitution or basic law of the State.

For by the Royal Commission (Communist Party) Act, the parliamentary majority swept away the principle of the independence of the Judiciary from party-political disputes and thence from subjection to pressure by Governments and by the parties and pressure-groups behind them.

Mr. Cain (Leader of the Labor Party): Under the Victorian Constitution there are three forms of government. The first is this Legislature, comprising the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council; the second is the Executive which administers the law—the Government of the day—and thirdly, there is the Judiciary which enforces the law. The two branches for the administration of justice are separate, and it is not right for the Executive, or even for this Parliament, to compel the Judiciary to act in this way.

On the part of Parliament this is a most serious failure of responsibility; a flouting of constitutional principles which were surely understood at least by the Premier and the Attorney-General of the offending Government. It is a threat to maintenance of that delicate balance of opinion, which, when persons known to have had political party affiliations become Judges, has still conceded that constitutional practice permits citizens to rely on their impartial administration of justice. For, on the Bench, in their aloofness from political controversy, they have been able to comport themselves without fear of Government pressure, or hope of Government favour.

Mr. McDonald (Country Party, Leader of the Opposition): I hope I am not wronging him [Mr. Reynolds, Liberal member for Toorak, who had originally suggested the appointment of the Royal Commission], but I suggest that because of what appeared in the newspapers . . . those associated with the present Government felt that it was necessary to ready-up something that might have a political significance.

Mr. Reynolds: That is untrue.

Mr. McDonald: I am sorry if I am not stating the facts, but in view of what happened I can only suggest that what I have stated is correct.

Mr. Reynolds: It is a perverted view.

Mr. McDonald (Country Party, Leader of the Opposition): It has been the tradition of Parliament that the prestige and the absolute independence of the judiciary should be upheld. . . . However, here is a Liberal and Country Party Government seeking to direct the judiciary in what it should do. There has never been a greater departure from the high principle that the judiciary

should be completely free and untrammelled and should administer the laws of the State without direction from anybody, including Parliament.

This is no longer the case. The Government has impressed the Supreme Court into political service, and it is not true now, as it was for Mr. Hollway's predecessor of 1923 in the Premiership, that "the Government feels it is powerless to interfere with a Supreme Court Judge." That was "absolutely a sound basic principle" to the Premier then, but not the Premier now. For this willingness to leave the Judges untroubled in their function of doing justice, Mr. Hollway has substituted the statement, "Parliament is above the Judges."

No doubt Parliament is. But no Parliament of the past has been so ill-advised as to assert its supremacy in the manner the present Government has chosen by ordering a Judge from his Court and requiring him to conduct an enquiry which every informed sensible person well understands to be a mere political manoeuvre.

The terms of reference which the Act lays down for the Royal Commissioner fall for the most part into two classes. Either they are inappropriate for judicial enquiry, or else they are capable of being investigated, under existing laws, in the law courts according to ordinary principles of justice. An example of unsuitable matters for reference to a Royal Commissioner is "the origins, aims and objects of the Communist Party in Victoria." These are surely matters for experts—political scientists and philosophers. Another such, from the terms of reference in the Act, is "the indoctrination of children and young people with beliefs and ideas." This also is a matter for experts—educationists, child psychologists, social workers, philosophers and theologians. Matters for the Royal Commission which are capable of being investigated under existing laws are—"whether that party . . . advocates or encourages the overthrow by force or violence of established government . . . intimidation or fraudulent practices . . . the dislocation, interruption or retardation of industrial production." These are acts for which offenders may be prosecuted under the Crimes, Arbitration and other Commonwealth and State legislation. There is no occasion for a Royal Commission on them.

Without necessity, indeed, and without exercise of powers already available under the law, the Victorian parliamentary majority has simply scrapped the principle, fundamental to our democratic separation of the Judiciary from the Executive or governmental power, which was enunciated for example sixty years ago by Lord Randolph Churchill on the occasion of the Parnell Commission, and upheld by the practice since of United Kingdom Governments, including that led by Lord Randolph's son, Mr. Winston Churchill."

It is submitted that it is the highest degree unwise and, indeed, unlawful, to take the Judges of the land out of their proper sphere of duty, and to mix them up in political conflict. In this case, whichever way they decide, they will be the object of political criticism and animadversion. Will any Judge emerge from this enquiry the same for all judicial purposes, moral weight and influence as he went into it? Have you a right to expose your Judges, and in all probability your best Judges, to such an ordeal?

WHAT are the specific matters which the Premier told Parliament justified the appointment of a Royal Commission in Victoria to investigate the Communist Party (which has its headquarters in another State)? They are allegations by a former Communist, Cecil Sharpley, which were published in daily newspapers in April, regarding "rigging" of ballots for the election of officials in trade unions, and similar allegations which were made, about the same time, by some delegates to the annual conference of the Australian Labor Party (Victoria). What was alleged was that Communists had taken part in "rigging" ballots, to the stultification of trade union democracy.

Now, ballot "rigging" is criminal—a criminal conspiracy where, as in these instances, concerted action is alleged. Interference with the proper conduct of elections is to be deplored wherever and whenever it appears, and it is in the public interest to prosecute and punish offenders, of course whether they are Communists or of another political colour. But the Criminal Court is the regularly appointed place for the investigation of such charges; a Royal Commission is not.

Moreover, in this context the extraordinary means of enquiry by a Royal Commission is singularly inapt and objectionable, in the circumstance that already before the Royal Commission was projected by the Government, publication of allegations by Sharpley had been followed by the issue of Supreme Court libel writs, by officials of the Communist Party in Victoria, and a trade union officer alleged to have participated in "rigging," against three publishers of the allegations. Thus, by the ordinary process of law, substantial matters named in the terms of reference for the Royal Commission were to be investigated, in the judicial atmosphere of the courts, by a Supreme Court Judge.

Mr. McDonald (Country Party, Leader of the Opposition): This is another important aspect: Communists have issued writs against the Herald and other newspapers, and so it would be possible for the Royal Commission to be enquiring into similar matters and taking similar evidence to that being given before the Supreme Court in relation to those writs. No matter how much the Government dissembles and tries to hide responsibility, probably both the Royal Commissioner and a Judge sitting in the Supreme Court could subpoena witnesses on similar issues at the same time.

ON yet another practical ground there is serious objection to the procedure which the Government has adopted. If it is proper to pass an Act of Parliament to investigate the doctrines, associations and finances of one lawful organisation, then it would appear to be proper to do the like by any other. A Labor Government of the future, which desired to expose the associations and finances of the Liberal Party and the Australian Constitutional League, or the Institute of Public Affairs, could reasonably point to the precedent which this Royal Commission Act of 1949 furnishes.

Sir Albert Dunstan (Country Party): The Government has submitted a Bill which in my opinion will create an undesirable and dangerous precedent which could be used by future Governments for the purpose of dealing with anyone with whom it had a political quarrel. There is nothing to prevent any future Government from ... appointing a Royal Commission to determine the activities of an organisation which could be of a religious nature.

In this new theory of law in relation to voluntary organisations of citizens, no such organisation is secure from public investigation, at the instance of an unfriendly Government, by a Royal Commissioner who is given power to force citizens to give evidence and to punish witnesses who on grounds perhaps of repugnance to the role of common informer, are "recalcitrant," and refuse to answer tendentious questions. As Lord Randolph Churchill pointed out in the 1889 statement which is published at length on other pages:

The tribunal will conduct its proceedings by methods different to a court of law. The examination will be mainly conducted by the tribunal itself: a witness cannot refuse to reply on the ground that the answer will incriminate himself. Evidence in this way will be extracted which might be made the basis of a criminal prosecution against other persons. Indemnities might be given to persons actually guilty of very grave crime, and persons much less guilty of direct participation in grave crime might, under such protected evidence, be made liable to prosecution.

The nature of the injury which constitutional democracy suffers through the Victorian Government's action is stated clearly in the observations of Sir William Irvine and Lord Randolph Churchill, which are quoted below.

SIR WILLIAM IRVINE'S STATEMENT.

Mr. Lawson (Premier): I informed the House last week that the Government proposed to ask that the services of a Supreme Court Judge should be made available for the purposes of this investigation. Pursuant to that decision, the Attorney-General wrote to the Chief Justice and asked that a Judge might be made available. In reply to our request, we have received from His Honour the following letter, which I will read for the information of the House:—

Judges' Chambers, Melbourne.
14th August, 1923.

My dear Attorney-General,

After full consideration I have decided that I cannot accede to the request of the Government to invite one of my colleagues to act as a Royal Commissioner to enquire into the charges made in connection with the Warrnambool breakwater. I have come to this conclusion after consultation with, and with the full concurrence of all the Judges of the Supreme Court.

As this decision involves a refusal to comply with the expressed desire of the Government, I think it is necessary that I should state fully the reasons which compel me to take this course.

The duty of His Majesty's Judges is to hear and determine issues of fact and of law arising between the King and a subject, or between subject and subject, presented in a form enabling judgment to be passed upon them, and when passed to be enforced by process of law. There begins and ends the function of the Judiciary.

It is mainly due to the fact that, in modern times at least, the Judges in all British communities have, except in rare cases, confined themselves to this function, that they have attained, and still retain, the confidence of the people. Parliament, supported by a wise public opinion, has jealously guarded the Bench from the danger of being drawn into the region of political controversy.

Nor is this salutary tradition confined to matters of an actual or direct political character, but it extends to informal enquiries, which, though presenting on their face some features of a judicial character, result in no enforceable judgment, but only in findings of fact which are not conclusive and expressions of opinion which are likely to become the subject of political debate.

The subject-matter of the Commission proposed in this case involves charges of both departmental inefficiency and of corruption in the Public Service. The enquiry must, in its very nature, extend beyond the investigation of any particular charge of bribery against any named person or persons.

If it could be limited to such a charge it may be the subject of judicial determination in the Criminal Court; until it is so limited it cannot strictly become the subject of judicial determination at all. Even assuming that the Judges might, where a public necessity demands it, be asked to deal with questions of fact of a purely non-political colour, it seems to me impossible to frame any Commission which could in this case disentangle such

issues from subjects of parliamentary controversy, whether such controversy turned upon suspicions of corruption or allegations of administrative incapacity.

Having stated these reasons for the course taken, I desire to add that my colleagues and myself are conscious that only weighty considerations would be sufficient to justify us in declining to comply with the request contained in your letter.

I have the honour to be,

Yours truly,

(Sgd.) W. H. Irvine,
Chief Justice.

Mr. Lawson (Premier): The Government feels it is powerless to interfere with a Supreme Court Judge. That is absolutely a sound basic principle. We must not attempt to disturb that position.

(Victorian Parliamentary Debates, Session 1923-4, vol. 164, p. 523, August 14, 1923. "Warrnambool Breakwater and Outer Port Development," Appointment of Commission.)

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL'S MEMORANDUM.

THE case of "Parnellism and Crime" is essentially a political and Parliamentary difficulty of a minor kind. A newspaper has made against a group of Members of the House of Commons accusations of complicity in assassination, crime, and outrage. In the commencement the parties accused do not feel themselves specially aggrieved. They take no action; the Government responsible for the guidance of the House of Commons does not feel called upon to act in the matter. A Member of Parliament, acting on his own responsibility, brings the matter before the House of Commons as a matter of privilege, and a Select Committee is moved for to enquire into the allegations.

The Government take up an unexceptionable and perfectly constitutional position. They refuse the Select Committee on the ground marked out by Sir Erskine May, that matters which may or ought to come within the cognisance of the courts of law are not fit for enquiry by a Select Committee. The Government press upon the accused parties their duty, should they feel themselves aggrieved, to proceed against the newspaper legally, and, with a generosity hardly open to condemnation, offer to make the prosecution of the newspaper, so far as expense is concerned, a Government prosecution. The offer is not accepted, the view of duty is disagreed from by the accused persons, the motion for a Select Committee is negatived, and the matter drops, the balance of disadvantage remaining with the accused persons.

Owing to an abortive and obscurely originated action for

libel, the whole matter revives. The original charges are reiterated in a court of law by the Attorney-General, but owing to the course of the suit no evidence is called to sustain the allegations. A fresh demand is made by the accused persons for a Select Committee, and is refused by the Government on the same grounds as before, and, as before, with a preponderating assent of public opinion. So far, all is satisfactory, except to the accused persons and their sympathizers.

For reasons not known, the Government take a new departure of a most serious kind. They offer to constitute by statute a tribunal with exceptional powers, to be composed entirely of Judges of the Supreme Court, to enquire into the truth of the allegations. To this course the following objections are obvious and unanswerable:—

1. The offer, to a large extent, recognizes the wisdom and justice of the accused persons in avoiding recurrence to the ordinary tribunals.

2. It is absolutely without precedent. The Sheffield case, and the Metropolitan Board of Works case, are by no means analogous. Into these two cases not a spark of political feeling entered. The case of "Parnellism and Crime," in so far as it is not criminal, is entirely political. In any event, the political character of the case would predominate over the criminal.

3. It is submitted that it is in the highest degree unwise and, indeed, unlawful, to take the Judges of the land out of their proper sphere of duty, and to mix them up in political conflict. In this case, whichever way they decide, they will be the object of political criticism and animadversion.

Whatever their decision, speaking roughly, half the country will applaud, the other half condemn, their action; their conduct during the trial in its minutest particulars, every ruling as to evidence, every chance expression, every question put by them, will be keenly watched, canvassed, criticised, censured, or praised.

Were Judges in England ever placed in such a position before? Will any Judge emerge from this enquiry the same for all judicial purposes, moral weight and influence as he went into it? Have you a right to expose your Judges, and in all probability, your best Judges, to such an ordeal?

4. The tribunal will conduct its proceedings by methods different to a court of law. The examination will mainly be conducted by the tribunal itself; a witness cannot refuse to reply on the ground that the answer will in-

criminate himself. Evidence in this way will be extracted which might be made the basis of a criminal prosecution against other persons. Indemnities might be given to persons actually guilty of very grave crime, and persons much less guilty of direct participation in grave crime might, under such protected evidence, be made liable to prosecution.

The whole course of proceeding, if the character of the allegations is remembered, will, when carefully considered, be found to be utterly repugnant to our English ideas of legal justice, and wholly unconstitutional. It is hardly exaggerating to describe the Commission contemplated as "a revolutionary tribunal" for the trial of political offenders. If there is any truth in the above or colour for such a statement, can a Tory Government safely or honourably suggest and carry through such a proposal?

I would suggest that the constitutional legality of this proposed tribunal be submitted to the Judges for their opinion.

It is not for the Government, in matters of this kind, to initiate extra-constitutional proceedings and methods. One can imagine an excited Parliament or inflamed public opinion forcing such proceedings on a Government. In this case there is no such pressure.

The first duty of a Government would be to resist being driven outside the lines of the Constitution. In no case, except when public safety is involved, can they be justified in taking the lead.

They are the chief guardians of the Constitution. The Constitution is violated or strained in this country when action is taken for which there is no reasonable analogous precedent.

The proceedings of the tribunal cannot be final. In the event of a decision to the effect that the charges are not established, proceedings for libel against the newspaper might be resorted to, the newspaper being placed under a most grossly unjust disadvantage. In the event of a decision to the contrary effect, a criminal prosecution would seem to be imperative.

(Lord Randolph Churchill's Memorandum, July 17, 1889, quoted in T. P. O'Connor's "Memoirs of an Old Parliamentarian," vol. 2, p. 175.)

A ROYAL Commission having been legislated for, in spite of the convincing argument on record from the authorities just quoted, it remains to inform citizens of the powers vested in the Royal Commission. They are as follows:

Any citizen may be subpoenaed to give evidence to the Royal Commission and to answer such questions as the Royal

Commissioner, Mr. Justice Lowe, may permit to be put to him by counsel assisting the Commission, and by other legal counsel appearing.

Having the same powers as are vested in any Judge of the Supreme Court trying any Court action, the Commissioner may compel witnesses to attend, to answer, and to produce books and documents as called for.

The Commissioner may order the punishment of persons guilty of contempt or disobedience.

The Commissioner will formulate his own rules for the conduct of the enquiry, and no doubt one of the few reassuring features of the whole sorry business is the high standing and the twenty-two years' judicial experience of Sir Charles Lowe, the Royal Commissioner.

Moreover, the Premier (Mr. Hollway) stated in the Legislative Assembly, on May 10, 1949, that the normal provisions for protecting witnesses would not be diminished. A witness could not be compelled to incriminate himself, and if he did incriminate himself it could not be used against him.

Citizens who are ordered to appear to give evidence should bear in mind that they can seek the protection of the Commissioner against questions which counsel may put to them, which they feel may place them in a false position. For example, should counsel require a "Yes or No" answer to a question, and the witness feels that an answer in such a form would be inappropriate, he may turn to the Commissioner and request that he be permitted to answer in his own way, with what he feels to be proper qualification.

But one of the unfair features of an enquiry such as that which has now been legislated for, is that witnesses may not be protected by the ordinary procedural rule that they need answer only questions which are relevant to the matters at issue. In this instance where the terms of reference range from matters as comprehensive as "the subversion of law and order" to fraudulent activity within trade unions, almost anything might be held to be relevant, and a heavy burden of responsibility falls upon the Commissioner to restrain counsel from turning the proceedings into a witch hunt of the character which has made proceedings of the Un-American Activities Committee of the United States House of Representatives a byword throughout the democratic world.

That Committee is notorious for its browbeating of suspected persons haled before it for political reasons, for its utter disregard of the law of evidence.

Citizens may with profit note the Premier's implied admissions, in the Legislative Assembly on May 10 and 11 (Mel-

bourne Age, May 11, 12, checked by Hansard), that the Supreme Court Judges objected to the coercion of one of their number, or any Judge of the County Court, to preside at a political enquiry.

MAY 10.

Sir Albert Dunstan: Could you obtain a Supreme Court Judge to act as Commissioner without the passage of the Bill?

Mr. Hollway said the Supreme Court Judges were not anxious to take part in Royal Commissions. In this case it had been suggested that the Bill should be passed. It would clear the way for a Supreme Court Judge to act.

Mr. Cain: Is it a fact that Judges have refused to act as Royal Commissioners?

Mr. Hollway said the Judges felt they should not be called upon by a Government to conduct enquiries.

Mr. Cain: Do you not realise that you are embarrassing Parliament by asking the Judges to do something they do not want to do?

Mr. Hollway said Parliament was above the Judges.

MAY 11.

Sir Albert Dunstan asked Mr. Oldham (Attorney-General) to deny that the reason for the Bill to establish the Royal Commission was to force a Judge to act as Commissioner.

Mr. Oldham did not reply when Sir Albert Dunstan first asked the question, but when it was repeated he said, "No, there will be no compulsion." . . . The Chief Justice (Sir Edmund Herring) was approached and asked could he appoint a senior Supreme Court Judge as Commissioner. Sir Edmund Herring had drawn attention to a memorandum by a former Chief Justice (Sir William Irvine), which emphasised the dangers of Judges being drawn into political controversies . . .

Sir Albert Dunstan: Will not a Judge be compelled to act. He cannot defy an Act of Parliament. . . .

Sir Albert Dunstan said no Judge, in his opinion, would refuse to accept dictation by the Government in face of an Act of Parliament.

Mr. Cain (Leader of the Labor Party): This is one of the most unjustified measures that have been submitted to Parliament for many years. Having been taken out of the hands of the Attorney-General, it was left to the Premier to submit the Bill. That honourable gentleman made such an exhibition of himself in its presentation that it is now proposed to permit the Attorney-General to say what the Premier forgot to say.

SUMMARILY, then, the position is that at the Victorian Government's instigation Parliament forced the Supreme Court into a situation where it had either to supply a Judge to do what Judges conveyed it was improper for them to do, or else defy the Government (and almost certainly precipitate an election in which the Judges and their views would have been a bone of party contention).

The Government insisted on proceeding with its legislation to coerce the Judges, although the Chief Justice had made known to the Premier and the Attorney-General that it would be wrong of the Government to assign a Judge to preside at a "political" enquiry.

The Government of Victoria wilfully strained the constitutional fabric of the State, coerced the Judges, in order to hold an investigation quite inappropriate to the substantial matters which have been alleged—when the executive officers of the affected Party had already brought civil actions in relation to allegations made, and when the Government for its part had the plain and proper alternative of taking criminal proceedings against Communists or others suspected of breaking the law.

Mr. Cain (Leader of the Labor Party): If I understood his correctly, the Attorney-General said that the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court had asked him to have this legislation passed through Parliament, and that he would then provide a Judge.

Mr. Oldham (Attorney-General): I did not say that.

Mr. Cain: I wish to ask the Attorney-General whether the Chief Justice advised him to have the Bill passed and state that he would then provide a Judge, or did the Attorney-General suggest that?

MR. OLDHAM: I DEPLORE THE SORT OF COMMENT WHICH THE LEADER OF THE LABOR PARTY HAS MADE BY INFERENCE. NATURALLY I, AS ATTORNEY-GENERAL, HAVE HAD INTERVIEWS WITH THE CHIEF JUSTICE WHEN SEEKING THE SERVICES OF A SUPREME COURT JUDGE. I DO NOT PROPOSE TO BE CROSS-EXAMINED. I PREPARED A CAREFUL STATEMENT AND I SUBMITTED IT TO HIS HONOUR THE CHIEF JUSTICE, WHO GAVE ME PERMISSION TO MAKE COPIES AVAILABLE TO PARLIAMENT. I NOW HAND COPIES TO THE LEADER OF THE LABOR PARTY, TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNTRY PARTY, AND TO HANSARD. THE STATEMENT HAS BEEN CAREFULLY PREPARED AND IT IS IMPROPER THAT I SHOULD BE ASKED TO SAY ANYTHING MORE ABOUT IT.

(The sitting was suspended at 5.57 p.m.)

STOP PRESS.

Melbourne Argus, May 28, 1949, published on p. 5 an item beginning "A challenge to the Victorian Government to appoint a Royal Commission to enquire into the source of all political parties' funds was issued last night by Mr. McDonald, Opposition Leader.

Here is the logical next step in a process introduced by this Royal Commission (Communist Party) Act. That the suggestion should have been made at this time by the Country Party leader is surely confirmation of one of the points made in this booklet.

Constitutional Aspects
of the
Royal Commission
on the
Communist Party

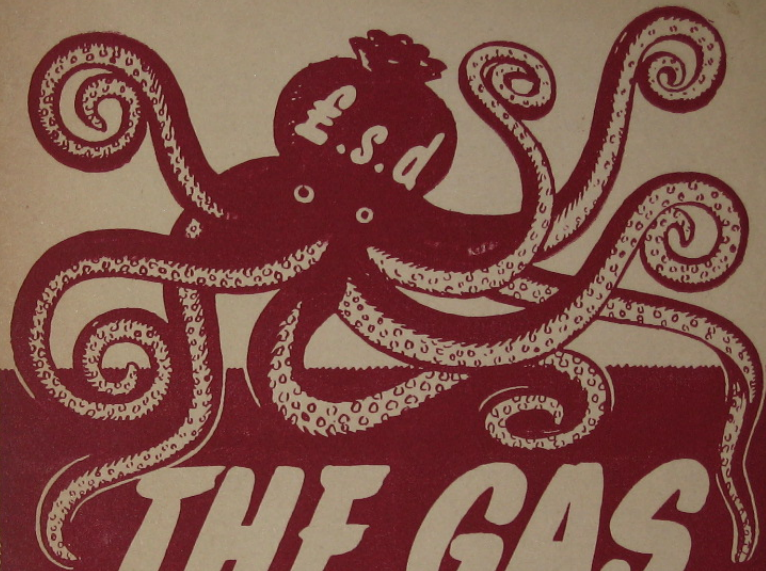
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THE GAS MONOPOLY

***COMMUNIST PARTY
REVEALS THE FACTS . . .***

PRICE 3^d

Melbourne's No. 1 Gas Monopoly.

The Metropolitan Gas Company has a monopoly of gas supply in the City of Melbourne and inner suburbs.

From small beginnings in 1850 it has swollen in 1946 to a giant concern with capital of £5,781,000. Its sale of gas and residual products in 1945 brought a gross revenue of £2,279,000.

Its profits on ordinary share capital for many years have rarely been below 13 per cent. These profits have been maintained through wars and depressions.

Gas Company shares are regarded as such a secure and profitable investment that £5 shares have recently sold for £13/17/-.

In 1940-41, in the midst of the war, profit on ordinary share capital was 14 per cent. Last year it was 11 per cent.

Not content with its monopoly in Melbourne and inner suburbs, the M.G.C. is reaching out into fresh fields. There are moves afoot to enable the Company to swallow up the Heidelberg Gas Works which are owned and controlled by the municipality.

BIGGER PROFITS—LOWER STANDARD.

Does the Company give a service to the public commensurate with its profits?

In comparison with other States it falls far short.

The New South Wales Gas and Electricity Act fixed the profits of private Gas Companies at not more than 6 per cent. on ordinary capital, while demanding a quality of gas with a calorific value not less than 550 British Thermal Units per cubic foot at a standard price.

The Victorian Gas Regulations do not fix any limit on profits or prices and allow a lower quality of gas—500 British Thermal Units.

Melbourne gas is thus 10 per cent. below the Sydney standard—and costs more.

Charges fixed for the Sydney Australian Gas Light

Company are 5/9d. for the first 1,000 cubic feet of 550 British Thermal Units. The Melbourne Metropolitan charges 6/1d. for the first 1,000 cubic feet of 500 British Thermal Units.

Despite its past profits the Metropolitan Gas Company has failed to keep up with the march of progress. Public demand for gas in 1940 so far exceeded the Company's production capacity that gas rationing had to be introduced although there was no lack of coal.

A Commission of Inquiry under Professor Burstall found that the Metropolitan Gas Company had failed to show foresight in planning to cope with emergencies or Melbourne consumers' expanding needs.

While recent gas rationing has been due to the failure of New South Wales coal supplies, little has been done by the Metropolitan Gas Company to adapt its plant to the use of Victorian coal. Melbourne's gas supply is wholly dependent on New South Wales coal.

FOUGHT GAS REGULATIONS.

The supposed "enterprise" of private concerns has not been a virtue of this monopoly except in the realm of profits. To defeat public efforts to bring its activities under stricter supervision, the Melbourne Gas Company in the past engaged in "enterprise" of a kind that rivals the history of Tammany Hall.

A Victorian Parliamentary Select Committee in 1923 found that the Company had used undue influence on Members of Parliament to secure a Gas Regulations Act favorable to the Company.

In its report, the Select Committee stated—

"That the Act incorporating the Metropolitan Gas Company is highly favorable to such Company, but not equally advantageous to the public; and whilst apparently grounded on English legislation, differs in several most important points.

"The evidence having shown that the large sum of £3683/1/- had been paid for the costs of passing the Act, without details thereof being furnished to the Company, your Committee were unfavorably impressed by the circumstances."

PAYMENTS TO PARLIAMENTARIANS

Here the Select Committee gave details of expenditure, including one payment of £210 to Mr. A. K. Smith, M.P. Regarding these items it declared:—

"Respecting the payment to Messrs. Smith and Nimmo, your Committee desire to point out that the acceptance of remuneration by Members of Parliament in connection with Private Bills is liable to misconception, and should therefore be avoided; and your Committee suggest that the Rule should be clearly enunciated that payment for services rendered under such circumstances cannot in future be accepted by Members of Parliament."

The Committee found that the Company had supplied gas "inferior to the legal requirements for some time after the Act was passed," and gas "not so pure as English legislation requires." It concluded:—

"RETURN PROFITS TO PEOPLE."

"A Company which obtained the right to control a public utility for private profit by the methods reported on this Committee cannot complain, after its 55 years of huge profit-making, should Parliament now make a necessary adjustment and return to the people that which was acquired in the manner stated."

This recommendation was not acted on by the then "Liberal" Government of Victoria. Despite the exposure of racketeering by this monopoly, "private enterprise" was held more sacred than public welfare.

The 1923 Select Committee Inquiry had been preceded by a Gas Board Inquiry in 1912, which was equally damning. It found:—

"The Metropolitan Gas Company had in the years 1888, 1889, 1908, 1909, and 1911 set aside out of profits and carried to the reserve fund amounts in excess of the limit allowed under the Act. Further, the practice of the company in transferring profits from the net revenue account to meet contingent liabilities, such as works reconstruction account, resulted in the true net profits of the company not being disclosed to possible purchasers. The maximum price (7/- per 1000 cubic

feet), which regulated the payment of dividend, is excessive."

REGULATIONS STILL INADEQUATE.

The Victorian Gas Regulations (1933) do not yet adequately protect the public. The State Gas Examiner is required to give gas companies notice before a test is made, while provision is made only for a snap test. English legislation requires gas testing by continuous recording instruments—and no notice is given.

Gas works producing no less than 25 million cubic feet of gas a year are not subject to the Gas Regulations at all. There are, in fact, only four of the 28 Victorian country gas works that come under the supervision of the State Gas Examiner.

The Colonial Gas Association Ltd. and the Gas Supply Company Ltd. own twelve country gas works. Although they charge the high minimum rate of 10/- per month to country consumers for any quantity of gas from nil to 1000 cubic feet, and 9/6 for the next thousand, no official check is made, under the Act, by the Gas Examiner.

Country gas consumers are thus at the complete mercy of unregulated private enterprise—in this case, big monopolies.

NATIONALISATION WOULD HELP COUNTRY PEOPLE

Granting that gas production and supply costs are higher in the country, this strengthens the need for nationalisation of the whole Victorian gas supply.

By equalising and lowering both country and city rates, nationalisation would aid country development and decentralisation.

Melbourne's gas is not cleansed of organic sulphur and certain resin forming compounds. The organic sulphur causes the corrosion of copper bath heaters and copper pipes resulting in the well-known green sulphate deposit. The resin forming compounds frequently cause blockages in automatic gas appliances, with damage and inconvenience to consumers.

These impurities could be removed with little extra cost to gas monopolies.

SOUTH MELBOURNE GAS NUISANCE

In its greed for more profits, the Metropolitan Gas Company has shown flagrant disregard for public health and welfare. For more than 20 years the Company's South Melbourne works have been a constant nuisance to nearby residents. Its chimneys have belched clouds of black dust and fumes on surrounding streets and houses, causing injury to health and property.

Although found guilty and fined, the Company has done nothing to remedy this position.

Directors of the Metropolitan Gas Company are linked closely with other leading Australian financial and industrial monopolies—D. Yorke Syme is a director of the National Bank and the Mt. Lyell Mining Company. V. Y. Kimpton is a director of the Commercial Bank, the N.Z. Loan and Mercantile Ltd. and the National Mutual Life Ltd.

F. P. Derham is a director also of the Gas Supply Coy. G. J. Coles Ltd., and McEwens Ltd. He is legal counsel for the Employers' Federation and chairman of the anti-Labor Australian Constitutional League, which is linked with the Liberal Party.

Among big shareholders in the M.G.C. are Australian Glass Manufacturers Pty. Ltd., the Baillieu family and Sir William Angliss. Australian Glass Manufacturers are a part of the great A.C.I. monopoly. Its 2799 £5 shares are today worth £38,000. Sir William Angliss' 1011 shares are worth £13,600.

"COLONIAL" AN OVERSEAS COMPANY

The Colonial Gas Association Ltd. has a monopoly of gas supply in Box Hill, Footscray, Oakleigh, Dandenong, Frankston and eight country towns. Its interests reach interstate into N.S.W., Queensland and W.A.

In his "History of the Gas Industry," (1933) Mr. C. Crofts, Secretary of the Gas Employees Union, throws some interesting light on the growth of the Colonial. He writes:—

"When it changed its name from the Australasian Gas Association to the Colonial Gas Association it sub-divided the £10 shares into two £5 shares, and

gave to the holders of the founders' shares in the company's capital £600 from the reserve fund."

"At a later period it used part of its reserve funds to purchase shares in the Charters Towers Gas Company. It would be interesting to know whether this Association has from time to time used its reserve funds to buy up gas works throughout Australia, as it now has between 20 and 30 works as against 12 works in 1912.

"This Association is registered under the Foreign Companies Act, but has gained a great influence over gas undertakings in Australia."

Mr. Crofts adds:—

"The Metropolitan Gas Company is paying 13 per cent, Ballarat is paying 12½ per cent. on its paid-up capital, but it doubled its capital from its reserve fund, and now pretends it is only paying 6¼ per cent, Bendigo pays 7 per cent."

In 1945 the total assets of the Colonial were valued at £2,531,000 while its gross revenue amounted to £605,000.

Like the M.G.C. the Colonial Gas Company has found gas supply highly profitable. More than one third of its share capital is allotted to preference shares carrying a fixed rate of 8 per cent.

SOURCE OF HIGH PROFITS

High profits in the gas industry are derived not only from its monopoly position but from its mass production methods which greatly enhance the productivity of labor.

Official Victorian statistics reveal that value added per employee to materials in the process of gas manufacture in 1942-43 was £726—higher than in any other industry except electricity.

The benefits of this high productivity are not being passed on to workers in the gas industry or to the great mass of domestic consumers. They are going in dividends to a handful of shareholders and in reduced tariffs on bulk supply to big industrial consumers.

The M.G.C. charges 6/1 for the first 1,000 units, but it charges fall until every 1,000 over 300,000 units costs only 3/6.

MONOPOLISTIC BY NATURE

Gas supply is a public utility which by its nature does not permit of competition. Rival gas companies operating in the same territory would cause chaos and absurd economic waste. Two, three or more sets of gas mains with consumers choosing or changing their supplies according to competitive prices, would drive councils, roads boards and taxpayers to ruin or insanity.

Governments have long recognized that gas supply must operate as a monopoly in any territory. Private gas companies are allowed to operate only under Government charter, with regulations more or less rigid—according to the government which makes them—to protect the public from uncontrolled exploitation.

Monopoly means unchallenged economic power. Without the most rigid control it can mean power to dump on the public an inferior product at a price limited only by the producer's greed for profit.

Monopolies in private hands carry with them not only the danger of unbridled exploitation—they can act as dead weights to technical progress. They can completely ignore the changing and expanding needs of the community.

Numerous independent gas works in city and suburbs are an obstacle to fully efficient supply. This requires a single, centralised system. State ownership and control alone can give this result.

HOLD BACK TECHNICAL PROGRESS

The private gas companies are not in a position to develop Victoria's big brown coal resources by the modern method of underground gasification. This efficient method of gas production has been applied to brown coal deposits in Germany and the Soviet Union for many years. It would make Victoria independent of outside coal supplies—a good thing for Victoria, but bad for the B.H.P. coal barons who are closely linked with the gas monopolists.

The underground gasification of brown coal, moreover, would render the monopolies' existing plant obsolete and largely valueless. They are therefore likely

to use their not inconsiderable influence to oppose this development.

Clearly, scientific development has reached a stage where control of all fuel and power should be vested in a State Fuel and Energy Commission, which would carefully plan and co-ordinate the exploitation of all existing and future sources of Victorian energy.

There is only one way to end a position which has prevailed for so many years in the gas supply system of Melbourne—NATIONALISATION.

LABOR'S NATIONALISATION PLEDGE

The Victorian Labor Premier, Mr. Cain, in his election policy speech of October 18, last year, pledged to transform the Victorian gas industry into "a State-controlled public utility not conducted for profits."

The Cain Labor Government can properly fulfil this pledge only by speedy nationalisation of the gas industry. In doing so it should take into regard the fact that the gas companies have built up their great wealth by exploiting their workers and the public; and in some cases by flagrant law breaking and political intrigue. Those who have held large parcels of shares in the gas monopolies over a number of years have been more than compensated for their investment. Full compensation should therefore only be awarded to small necessitous shareholders.

In Nationalising Melbourne's gas supply the Cain Government should set an example by nationalisation along labor, rather than capitalist lines. Gas workers, technical workers, the Gas Employees Union and other related unions, should be given a full voice in management, together with representatives of the Housewives Association and other representation of the consumers.

Nationalisation on these lines, while still a measure of State capitalism, bringing cheaper service to big capitalists as well as household consumers, would bring more power to the people. It would place them in an improved position to fight for a socialist system in which all industry will be owned by the people.

Trade union, labor and other progressive organisations can hasten the introduction of nationalisation by pressing the Cain Labor Government to bring in the necessary legislation without delay.

