

australian marxist review

Theoretical journal of the Socialist Party of Australia

- ★ *On Democratic and
Bureaucratic Centralism*
- ★ *How Peking policies
imperil world peace*
- ★ *The Politics of an
Economic Policy*
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power of a class*
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on State Power*

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Basic concepts and the 3rd SPA Congress

This issue of AMR carries important material reaffirming the principle of the need for a basic change in class power if there is to be a correct approach to the objective of establishing a socialist society in place of capitalism.

This is an issue on which there has been considerable discussion arising from the debate around what is loosely termed "Euro-communism."

"Euro-communism" is a non-scientific concept. It even contradicts the line put forward by those who proclaim it as a "new path" to socialism. It is obviously unscientific to use a term which presumes there is some pervasive path to socialism that can be common to all European countries. Significantly, for instance, E. Bértinguer, leader of the Communist Party of Italy has rejected the term.

Enthusiasts for the un-Marxist "Euro-communism" fad, in fact, put forward precisely the line that there can be no common path to socialism; that each country must decide its own path to socialism in accordance with its own particular conditions.

Here, the "Euro-communism" make the dialectical mistake of advancing the concept in isolation from other basic aspects.

To give two examples:-

Here, the "Euro-communists" depart from a dialectical approach. They make the mistake of one-sidedly advancing this concept in isolation from other basic aspects.

Firstly, it is true, (as the Soviet Union and other socialist countries themselves point out) that the Soviet model or the model of other socialist countries, should not be mechanically copied by fraternal Marxist-Leninist Parties in their fight for socialism in their particular countries. Nevertheless, there are some fundamental features of the Soviet and other experiences that could and should be studied and emulated with advantage.

Secondly, in stressing the scientific truism that the working class movement of all countries must decide its own path to socialism, it is necessary

to observe the need to take full account, not only of national peculiarities, but also to observe the objective laws and principles that apply to all revolutionary situations regardless of given national conditions. Basic change in class power or the transition to the mass democratic power envisaged in the dictatorship of the proletariat is one of these universal principles.

To merely advance the concept of each country developing its own path to socialism in accordance with national conditions in a one-sided way and ignore the need for an all-sided, dialectical approach can actually do grave diversionary disservice to the achievement of socialism. More, unless there is a clear understanding of the need to thoroughly carry through the replacement of one class power for another: for fully supplanting the capitalist state with the socialist state there can be no consolidation of socialism. Without firm establishment of a socialist state or rule by the class power of the workers and their allies, there will at some point of time, be a counter-revolutionary threat for re-establishment of the state power of the capitalist class. (Chile is a classical example — see statement on dictatorship of proletariat by L. Corvalan — this issue).

It is essential that universal principles such as the dictatorship of the proletariat, in one form or another, together with other universal fundamentals including firm adherence to proletarian internationalism are always taken into account in creative application of Marxist-Leninist science to the particular conditions of any country.

At the same time, it is not only the right but the responsibility of any party of scientific socialism to apply itself to creative and thorough going application of Marxist-Leninist principles to their particular country.

This is a major challenge before the Socialist Party of Australia. Already some good work has been done. But much remains to be done.

During the years of the Federal Labor Government the SPA Central Committee decided to write to Prime Minister Whitlam setting out a comprehensive anti-monopoly policy. In a non-sectarian way, the SPA set out the need to build a broad anti-monopoly alliance as a basic means of combatting the serious encroachment on the living standards and democratic liberties of the Australian people by the undemocratic power of local and foreign monopolies.

This course has become even more important since the 1975 coup and subsequent destruction of the democratically elected Whitlam Government by the undemocratic, extra-parliamentary forces the local and foreign

monopolists.

The third Congress of the SPA is now in preparation. The basic documents are being drafted. That they will contain a fundamental restatement of Party adherence to the universal laws and principles of socialist solidarity and advance is certain. At the same time, new depths of analysis and creative application of SPA policy as applied to Australia need to be developed. This is not just a question for the Party leadership at various levels. It is the democratic task of the whole Party membership.

Basic immediate and ultimate policies need to be discussed.

How can the Party program best serve the immediate interests of the Australian people, their living standards, their right to life in a world at peace, their democratic liberties and other basic social needs be best advanced side by side with advancing socialist consciousness, the understanding of the need for basic social change from capitalism to socialism in Australia? These are questions requiring the most vigorous, principled and democratic discussion throughout the Party at all levels from now right up to and into the deliberations of the coming Congress.

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On Democratic And Bureaucratic Centralism

by LES KELTON

(A statement presented to Party Building Seminar,
March 4, 1978, Sydney District)

There are many paths along which the growth of our Party has been and can be cultivated. Simultaneously, there is an abundance of factors, both objective and subjective, which inhibit its growth.

One of these is the element of bureaucratic centralism we inherited at the birth of our organisation and which resides with us like an unwelcome guest alongside and in contradiction to, the democratic centralism which forms the substance, the indispensable essence of a Marxist Party's method of organisation.

To capitalism, bureaucratic centralism is common-place. Capitalism provides incubation facilities for it, and is riddled with bureaucratic centres throughout its industry, commerce, financial institutions and elsewhere, all well insulated against possible intrusion of member-opinion. Whether they are elected by some 'safe' procedure or appointed, their substance remains the same. Firstly, they are not really subject to democratic control by the mass of members of the organisation concerned. They couldn't be. On the contrary, the bureaux actually control the members. Secondly, their decisions don't have to be in keeping with the aspirations of the members. They usually could not afford to be. On the contrary, the members are expected to mould their aspirations to be in keeping with bureaux decisions. The more benevolent bureaucratic centres go to some pains to acquaint members with decisions taken 'on their behalf' and to even greater pains to persuade members that the decisions taken are 'correct' and should be supported.

Such a style in organisation is not confined to classical bourgeois institutions. It spills over into organisations of the working class as well. Some trade unions which rely on it are able to survive mainly because the capitalist state (in current Australian conditions) makes it compulsory to belong to a union. Their members would readily vote with their feet and walk out of such an organisation if there were any attractive alternatives.

But then in trade union circles, most people expect to find some bureaucracy and some centralism in the middle of a lot of talk about

democracy. There are very few unions which claim to foster the principle of democratic-centralism in organisation as Marxist Parties do. However, it spills over not merely into the trade union movement. It appeared in Lenin's Party quite early and caused him to say the following in his last recorded work "Better Fewer, but Better." "Let us hope that our new Workers' and Peasants' Inspection will not suffer from what the French call prudery, which we can call ridiculous primness, or ridiculous swank, and which plays entirely into the hands of our Soviet and Party bureaucracy. Let it be said in parenthesis that we have bureaucrats in our Party offices as well as in Soviet offices."

That it certainly spills over into the organisations of the working class is beyond question. But it remains a system of organisation which is acceptable, even essential to the bourgeois establishment, or any other establishment which cannot afford to permit the mass of the members to decide their own destiny or the fate of their own organisation. It is however, totally unacceptable to the Marxist Party which does want the mass of the working class to learn how to decide its own destiny and whose members should want, — and take good care to ensure that, **during all ordinary times**, the mass of party membership decides the fate and fortune of their party. That is possible only to the extent that bureaucratic centralism is overcome by democratic centralist methods of organisation.

So many miss the substance of Leninism on this question that it is worth noting the Lenin draft resolution on Party Unity adopted by the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in March 1921, an extract of which said, — "the Party will unceasingly continue — trying out new methods — to fight with all the means at its disposal against bureaucracy, for the extension of democracy and initiative, for discovering, exposing and expelling alien elements from the Party, etc."

If bureaucratic centralism is a necessary organisational method for institutions of the establishment, its counter style, democratic centralism is the necessary alternative method of organisation in a revolutionary Party.

As far as I know, all Marxist parties subscribe to democratic centralism, but the ratio of democratic to centralist components vary necessarily from Party to Party. It may also undergo some variation within any one party from time to time. This happens both by accident and design. Lenin in "The Primitiveness of the Economists and the Organisation of Revolutionaries" said "The character of the organisation of every institution is naturally and inevitably determined by the character of the activity that institution conducts," — "A Party conducting primarily

open forms of struggle adopts an organisational form which is different to what it (or another party) would if the forms of struggle could not be open. It is pointless therefore, to think this question is settled once and for all. On the contrary, in certain social institutions, both bureaucratic centralism and democratic centralism exist simultaneously as two identifiable opposites in constant conflict with each other over long periods of time.

Within a Marxist Party which has to operate in a sea of capitalist bureaucracy, the simultaneous existence of these opposites is almost inevitable and the duration of the struggle between them is in equal proportion to the durability of the capitalist bureaucracy itself. Furthermore, the day to day outcome of the struggle between them has a decisive influence on how well the Party can see; whether it sees through the eyes of all its members or only those of its leaders; how well the Party can feel, — whether through the touch of all its members or only that of a few; How well the Party can think, understand, lead, replenish its ranks. So it is a really important question.

How is democratic-centralism to be defined? I know of no document in which an adequate definition is given. Our constitution says a little about it without getting to the kernel. It refers to election of officers and the responsibility of various committees. Although elections by genuine democratic processes is one of the features of democratic-centralism, it is by no means the essence of the question. Liberals elect their officers by some means or another, but they certainly don't follow the principles of democratic centralism.

A re-examination of all that Lenin had to say on the subject of democracy, centralism and bureaucracy would be instructive; then a penetrating look at our own understanding of the subject and the practices we adopt would be useful.

Democratic-Centralism is surely:-

- ★ a process by which a centre, having been created by the membership, is obliged to adopt and express policies, and organise activities which correspond with the aspirations and will of the majority of members.
- ★ It is simultaneously a process in which the mass of the membership are obliged to support such policies and action.
- ★ In a democratic-centralist structure, the basic right of members is to choose the fundamental direction of all primary affairs, the horizons to be conquered.
- ★ The responsibility of members is to help conquer them, and by and large they will where they are involved in making the decisions.
- ★ The basic responsibility of the centre is to create a well informed and equipped mass membership, equipped in the area of ideology

and organisation, the more capable therefore of forming wise judgements about the horizons to be conquered and how to do it.

- ★ The basic right of the centre is to formulate policy details which reflect the will of the majority and to expect mass participation in supporting action.

If the members of an organisation don't have the basic rights and responsibilities referred to, what is the point of talking about 'democratic.' At the same time, if there is not to be a centre, powerful as a result of the processes referred to, there is not much point talking about the Socialist revolution particularly in the circumstances Australia finds itself in.

Countless factors impel leading centres to rely on bureaucratic rather than democratic centralism, even though the leaders may prefer it otherwise. It is easy for individual leaders to become imprisoned by a system of leadership which depends less and less on the wisdom of the widest collective (which is the total membership) and more and more on an ever decreasing circle until finally, — 'the whole world is queer save for thee and me, and even thee is a little queer!'

The widest use of collective methods in making decisions, carrying them out and then analysing the result is so vital for the development of any peoples organisation, that every leader really has to struggle — "trying out new methods" — to provide new opportunities for the mass to express themselves and thereby learn how to instruct the centre in general terms about the issues the members want to busy themselves with.

I am confident there is no other area in which friends of Lenin have so misunderstood and misused him as on this subject. Lenin was for centralism to whatever extent it was necessary, primarily to maintain successful and secret organisation against the police. In the circumstances of pre-revolutionary Russia, that was a substantial extent. There were other reasons as well, of course, but with the Party illegal, its leaders under constant threat of arrest and exile, a high degree of centralism and secrecy was an indispensable condition of existence.

Simultaneously, he valued the collective wisdom of the members and depended on it. The totality of circumstances in which an organisation exists, has a substantial bearing on the rights and duties of members, along with the democratic and centralist components in organisation. In the circumstances of pre-revolutionary Russia, Lenin struggled for incredible rights for the membership including even the right to begin the revolution without waiting for approval. In his letter to members of the Central Committee on the eve of the revolution. he claimed for

the revolutionary mass, — rather than their representatives in the Soviets, the right to begin the revolution. He wrote, “It would be a disaster, or a sheer formality, to await the wavering vote of November 7 (October 25). The people have the right and the duty to decide such questions not by a vote, but by force; in critical moments of revolution the people have the right and the duty to give directions to their representatives, even their best representatives, and not to wait for them.”

In conditions of endless police terror, he said in “What is to be Done,” “Only a centralised, militant organisation that consistently carries out a Social-Democratic policy, that satisfies so to speak, all revolutionary instincts and strivings, can safeguard the movement against making thoughtless and prepare it for attacks that hold out the promise of success.”

A centralised organisation whose policies fulfil the aspirations, the strivings of its members was Lenin’s model.

And what of rule 3 of the General Rules of the International Working Men’s Association drawn up by Marx and adopted at the London Conference of that Association in 1871; “There shall annually meet a General Working Men’s Congress, consisting of delegates of the branches of the Association. The Congress will have to proclaim the common aspirations of the working class, take the measures required for the successful working of the International Association and appoint the General Council of the Society.”

Why bother proclaiming the aspirations of the class, if they were not to form the basis of policies? No suggestion here by Marx, that the learned Congress delegates should first work out policy points and have the working class adopt them. His rule was first proclaim the common aspirations of the class, then work out policy points which reflect them.

Consider the current interpretation and application of democratic centralism in the highly successful socialist German Democratic Republic. Quote from Panorama DDR 6-V11-4/1.1 article entitled ‘Structure of Society and State in the GDR.’

The representative bodies have the right to decide on the basic goals and tasks of the socialist development of Society. Their decisions, formulated as generally binding laws and based on the political line laid down by the party of the working class are an expression of the people’s will.

This principle applies throughout and is based on democratic

centralism, i.e. the local governments and assemblies, too, decide on affairs of their localities and people in line with the will of the population.”

I have already suggested that a close investigation would likely find evidence of both bureaucratic and democratic centralism at work in our Party. There is no suggestion here that we are exclusively one or the other.

But how many leading committees feel any obligation **under normal circumstances**, to get an instruction from the bulk of members concerned, before making vital decisions affecting the whole. Aren't leading committees more inclined to feel it is both their right and duty to make the decision first and then persuade the members to support it later? Aren't we even inclined to justify this method of leadership on the ground of security, — to consult the members first would be to forewarn our class enemies of some intention, and to forewarn is to forewarn?

We go through the formality of discussing policy prior to congress and that is useful, but the mass of membership is so unaccustomed to formulating general policy guidelines, is so inclined to 'leave such matters to the Party leadership,' that the opportunity is half lost before it has begun. Multiply this 'leaving it to' process several times, and we get the mass of the membership leaving it to the lower committees, who in turn tend to leave it to the higher committee, whose members tend to leave it to the executive and so on.

Which leading committee has ever thought of calling mass, aggregate meetings of members in its regions as a matter of course two or three times through its term to hear their instructions; and which leading committee, which after all is the custodian of the members affairs, would dare to pass full authority over to the mass membership for that one day?

Which leading committee is prepared to organise a special "members bulletin" to carry internal Party comments from members as a means of establishing a consensus of opinion on the main issues of the day?

No suggestion is here made that leading centres must receive instructions from the membership daily or on every subject. But democratic-centralism does not give the centre a mandate to make decisions **in the normal course of events** that are not in keeping with the will and aspirations of the majority of members.

The Communist Party of Australia leadership brought down a series of decisions to change policies regardless of the aspirations of its

membership in 1968, at a time when it was still proclaimed a Marxist-Leninist Party. From the point of view of the majority of the CPA National Committee in 1968 it was 'correct' to effect a turn in the policy of the United Front and in attitude to the USSR.

There could not have been a turn in those policies had the majority on the N.C. of CPA not felt free to adopt policies alien to the will of the membership. The overwhelming majority of the total Party membership were not anti-Soviet; furthermore they favoured the United Front. But that meant nothing to the architects of the policies referred to. They went ahead and introduced them because they considered them 'correct' even though they contradicted the aspirations of the membership. The cost to the Australian working class movement was enormous.

That is why safeguards against such procedures should be built into our constitution and also the daily routine of our work. It is rather doubtful we will ever reach near to our full potential until we do.

If centres at various levels insist that the only criterion is that the decisions they make must be 'correct' decisions, even though at the time they may be in conflict with the main current of opinion among the membership, they ought not fool around with the term democratic-centralism. They should simply attempt to justify a little bureaucratic centralism even though that is clearly in conflict with the main current of opinion among the membership.

The centre has every opportunity through its journals, press and otherwise, to influence member-opinion before making basic decisions as a general rule. If it follows that method as a norm of conduct, the respect gained will ensure the members loyalty on those rare occasions when time compels some short-cut to be taken. On the other hand, if it fails to employ this method as a general rule and goes ahead with an unpopular decision, it should not be surprised that half the team runs dead when it comes time for action.

So building the Party is a many-sided process, one vital feature of which is learning better to understand democratic-centralism and to experiment with ways to extend its application. This however is no simple matter because an extension of democratic-centralism causes a contraction of bureaucratic-centralism, and that can be a rather painful process.

If what has been said is misunderstood, I will not be surprised; if it is opposed, I will not be surprised. But if it is judged to be anything other than an attempt to help strengthen the Party, I will be disappointed and will know it will have to be said more often.

How Peking policies imperil world peace

by **W.J. BROWN**

The latest rejection by the present Peking leaders of a Soviet proposal designed to improve relations between China and the USSR is a matter of profound concern for all serious minded people regardless of political standpoint.

Some strategists of the capitalist world may seek to draw comfort from this development but this is a most shortsighted approach. The question of Sino-Soviet relations is not just important for the Soviet Union and the other Socialist countries. It is a question vital to the people of all lands, including the Chinese people themselves.

The present Peking leaders' line that "war is inevitable" and their fatalistic concept of unavoidable nuclear conflict between the USA and the USSR would condemn all humanity, including the Chinese masses, to no future other than global incineration.

The latest Soviet peace-seeking overture was made in a message to China's fifth National Congress just before it met in February. The message proposed a joint statement which would pledge both sides to building relations on the principles of peaceful co-existence, including the non-use of force.

The rejected Soviet proposal was for a meeting in either Peking or Moscow at a sufficiently high level to agree on a text for the projected statement in the shortest possible time.

A reason given by Peking for rejecting the Soviet proposal was stated to be continued differences over border questions. This contrasts oddly with the fact that Peking envoy Wang Ping-nan visited India last month and pledged China to "a new era of peaceful cooperation" and put forward optimistic views on settling the China-India border dispute.

Wang Ping-nan declared: "Sometimes even brothers quarrel but brothers are brothers. Quarrels are temporary. Our fraternity is everlasting."

This leaves good grounds for asking why Peking can make such friendly approaches to the present rightwing rulers of India on the border issue yet use the same issue as a reason for continuing to spurn

Soviet moves to either restore fraternal relations or at least, agree to sit down around a conference table and talk to each other.

While the Peking communique to the Soviet Union continues a hostile stance towards the Soviet Union, the *Sydney Morning Herald* correspondent Yvonne Preston (March 27) estimated that "Despite this latest rebuff, the possibility that Peking may eventually move to reduce border tensions cannot be ruled out. Embarked on a program of economic growth, China would suffer a serious setback in the event of a costly border clash."

Whatever internal pressures there may be for a turn towards a more reasonable approach by the Peking leadership it is obvious that pressures of mass international opinion also need to make themselves felt against the irresponsible course which continues to emanate from Peking in regard to normal relations with the USSR.

No nation and no people can ignore the grave danger presented by the course being followed by China's present leaders.

The programmatic decisions of the Fifth National Congress of the PRC further underlined this problem. It set a 10 year plan which significantly under-wrote a call by China's army chiefs for "rapid modernisation" of the armed forces to "meet the Soviet threat." Demonstrably there is no Soviet threat. Yet the cold reality is that China's 900 million people are being geared to build their country into a major nuclear strike nation in the immediate future. And all the time Peking leaders repeat their mega-death dogma that "war is inevitable" for the world at large.

In March, when an important national science Conference opened in Peking as part of China's new thrust for scientific advance, a new nuclear test was exploded. Despite criticism, the Peking leaders have declared they plan to continue with more new tests.

Such proclaimed intention to push on with the nuclear arms race adds up to a grim picture — for the socialist and capitalist world alike.

Peking's stubborn adherence to a negative line against better relations with the Soviet Union calls for deeper analysis of current trends. Where are they taking China and what are the ultimate goals sought by the Peking leadership?

The foreign policy of the Peking leadership is developing more and more similarities with the capitalist world.

The trend towards closer identity of policy between China and major capitalist countries is even reflected in areas of trade.

One of the latest indications of this occurred last February when the European Economic Community (EEC) initialled a trade agreement with the People's Republic of China.

It might be said "but isn't it also the policy of the Soviet Union to develop maximum trade with the capitalist world?" But as the EEC officials themselves admitted, the agreement with China goes considerably beyond commercial limits. To give just one example — it is well known that the EEC countries place a strict ban on export of "strategic material" to Communist countries. At a press conference after the agreement was initialled, EEC delegation leader Roy Denman stressed that the agreement "does not envisage any restriction on sale of strategic goods to China."

Another significant feature is that the initialling of the agreement conveniently coincided with moves by the Chinese leaders for possible purchase from NATO countries (which are also EEC members) of certain weapons. Bonn announced that Peking trade envoys are negotiating for purchase of Messerschmitt military helicopters.

On a more direct military front, China recently joined with NATO and reactionary Arab forces in sending arms to Somalia. This fact was put before the United Nations in late February by Mohammed Hamid Ibrahim, Ethiopia's UN Ambassador. The Ambassador directly charged the Chinese leadership with "siding with the aggressor, thereby taking a stand against the Ethiopian revolution." By contrast, the Ambassador added "the Soviet Union, Cuba and other Socialist countries are aiding Ethiopia to defend its own soil from invading aggressors."

While the Peking leaders seek to camouflage their real foreign policy strategy with "revolutionary" phrasemongering, their actual position as allies of the capitalist States is becoming increasingly obvious.

An International Affairs article (February, 1978) quoted the conclusion of one Soviet writer on current Chinese politics that "differences (between China and the capitalist states) have ceased to be the result of general contradictions between the two world systems — the socialist and the capitalist."

The same article states that "as a result of the Chinese leaders' departure from socialist positions within the country stemming from the profound deformation of the socialist social system, the PRG's foreign policy **has ceased to be one of a socialist country.**" The article adds that "In the conditions of dictatorship of the military bureaucratic

groupings, this policy no longer serves the broad masses, but becomes an instrument of the narrow ruling clique.”

Such conclusions merit analysis. They meant that now Chinese foreign policy no longer serves the advance of socialism. Certainly there is abundant evidence from China’s own actions that this conclusion is correct.

But the statesmen of the capitalist world might think more deeply before drawing any conclusion that the current course being followed by Peking of hostility to the USSR means that China can be seen as a dependable, consistent ally of what is loosely termed the “West.”

The present Peking leadership, at this stage is certainly adopting an aggressive attitude to the Soviet Union. But does this mean that China’s present leaders can be regarded as “dependable” by Western strategists?

Any serious analysis of the Peking leaders’ position must take into account the erratic history of Maoism. Stemming from its basic pragmatic and nationalistic characteristics, China’s home and foreign policies have swung wildly from extreme to extreme.

Take a brief look at recent inconsistencies of Maoist foreign policy!

In 1959 Peking was beginning to unfold a theory of the “three chief enemies” — US imperialism, “Indian reactionaries” and the Soviet Union. Today, the strident, super-militant denunciations of “US imperialism” as the main enemy have disappeared. Now friendly, conciliatory tones are adopted for US imperialism. Today, the Peking leaders never miss an opportunity to proclaim the Soviet Union as “Enemy Number One.”

However, this offers no real assurance to capitalist strategists that the present Peking leaders will not turn in a different direction to the USSR as they develop their nationalist and expansionist tendencies. History has some obvious lessons in this regard.

The record of erratic twists and turns of Maoism can be ignored by capitalist world leaders only at their peril — and at the peril of world peace.

In home policy, at the recent fifth National People’s Congress the present leaders in the name of “continuing Maoism,” directly repudiated the late Chairman Mao’s restrictions on education and science. They set aside Mao’s opposition to material incentives and re-asserted managerial authority over “disruptive workers’ committees.”

In foreign policy the Congress did not restore Mao's earlier definition of US imperialism as "No 1 enemy." They preferred to retain Mao's latterday proclamation of the Soviet Union as the main target of Peking's spleen. But the point is plain. The experience of Maoist leaders and application of Maoist policies shows that they are bereft of basic political principle.

Capitalist statesmen would be wise to note that Peking may at any time change its allies, replace one set of slogans with another if they think it will suit their ultimate objectives.

Then what are the ultimate objectives of the present leadership?

Basically, they are no different in foreign policy to the objectives set by Mao Tse-tung as he departed more and more from international Communist principles and degenerated into nationalism. These sought to define China in every basic "super power" terms as the country destined to lead the world; to hold hegemony over all peoples.

The new Maoist leader's policy continues to be based on great power chauvinism; of establishing China in the role of "world leader." It is an expansionist course with serious global consequence.

This extreme nationalist policy is fatal to the peace of the world, fatal to the security of the people of all lands, including the people of China itself. It is a policy hostile to detente, disarmament and the right of all peoples to develop their country in peace. It is a policy that openly puts forward the inhuman line of inevitable outbreak of nuclear war.

Western statesmen should never forget the callous Maoist concept is that in any new world conflict, the countries which the Peking leaders see as its main enemies — the USSR and the USA — will destroy each other. Then having "watched the two tigers fight to the death" the Peking leaders will descend from their mountain top to give "enlightened" leadership in "rebuilding a new world from the ashes of the old."

What then can be done?

The doomsday policy of "war is inevitable" is plainly not in the interests of any people — including the Chinese.

World public opinion, the voice of the people for a sensible course of stopping the arms race and reconversion of war industries into industries serving peaceful construction is again rising around the globe. On all sides voices are being heard, en masse, in support of the Special Session

on Disarmament to be held at the United Nations in May/June.

World public opinion is a great power.

If peace is to prevail the movement for peace needs to be made the greatest mass world force of our time.

In the now resurgent world movement for detente, disarmament and the right of all nations to develop in peace the main focus will need to be made on the imperialist countries which hold a vested interest in continuing the arms race regardless of the end result in nuclear disaster for all humanity.

At the same time, world public opinion needs to be made known to the present Peking leadership and, above all, to the peace loving Chinese people themselves.

As repeated Soviet statements indicate, the door to return to normal relations with China is open. It is a door that can lead to the negotiating table for return to peaceful co-operation between the Soviet and Chinese people and their governments. It is a door that could open the way to one of the most decisive steps in human history.

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The Politics Of An Economic Policy

by **VIC WILLIAMS**

The SPA needs an immediate economic policy, needs to continually re-assess it, but this needs to be done within the ambit of Australian and international politics as well as economics.

Since the most probable way of having any of that policy implemented is through a Federal Labor Government, the stated policies, previous actions of the Labor Party and the policies of the trade union movement need to be considered in working out a program. This is not to base it only on the progressive elements of ALP policy, nor in any way to defer an independent propaganda campaign for socialism as the only ultimate solution to the economic, political and social crisis of capitalism.

The effect of militarisation and war spending on development of crisis and inflation in the last fifteen years cannot be overlooked. Victor Perlo in *The Unstable Economy* shows the effect of militarisation and war spending on development of the economy. From 1953 to 1969 the average annual growth rates of Japan, Italy, Western Germany, France, USA and Britain were in inverse proportion to the percent of the GNP spent for military purposes in 1966 with the exception of Britain, last in economic growth, second in militarisation. Japan's growth rate was 13.6% military spending 1% of GNP, USA growth 4%, military spending 8.5% GNP.

Perlo says there are other factors determining growth rate.

“But the general conclusion is inescapable. In the present day world, high military expenditures substantially impede economic growth...War and militarisation tend to increase cyclical economic fluctuations.”

The USA has had a permanently militarised economy for many years.

Other capitalist countries, especially those themselves with heavy military spending and very big trade links with USA have been influenced by the crises and inflation of USA. Japan, for instance, with a low military budget is influenced by extensive US military operations and spending in its territory and by large US military orders to Japanese capitalists and has suffered from very high inflation.

With the increased military budget under Fraser, with Australia now the fourth biggest buyer of American arms, and USA Australia's biggest trading partner, the crisis and inflation, an integral part of the development of capitalism, is accentuated by the influence of USA. Victor Perlo writes, "Apart from the overall crisis, military spending fluctuations have been the most important source of local economic booms and busts in recent decades."

An economic program for Australia, that does not take into account the effect of war spending on the economy, does not set out to counter it, is building a house under a falling tree. The demand for detente, for reduction in spending on armaments is an economic as well as a political demand. The ALP policy at the Perth Conference was for detente; the proposal of Hayden for a 2% increase in defence spending can be isolated and defeated; a Labor Government could cut war spending that to a big extent is US armaments.

The policy of Fraser, acting for the Pentagon, has been to try to get ASEAN nations to form a military bloc, and as part of this process to help the arming of Indonesia and to continue joint naval exercises with the Indonesian navy. The almost unanimous opposition at the ALP conference to the Indonesian invasion of East Timor would mean that a Federal Labor Government could end this support for Indonesia, in the same way as it withdrew Australia out of the Vietnam war.

A Labor Government, beginning to move away from the American alliance in politics could also carry out an economic policy of advantage to Australia in regard to war spending.

A policy of nationalisation of key industries, of building the public sector, such as in uranium mining and extraction, of "buying back the farm" of increasing taxation on profits, particularly those going overseas, of increasing social service payments; these are an essential part of a progressive economic policy and have in part been policy or carried out by the ALP.

To do this an Australian Labor Government would have to borrow overseas. Where it is borrowed from is vital. Former Labor Treasurer Hayden suggested that the Federal Government borrow substantially from the International Monetary Fund. To do this would be to ignore the experiences of many countries who have borrowed from the IMF and the World Bank and found the conditions with the loans are that they must build the private sector for the IMF frowns on Government ownership. The Governments "must show a willingness to accept and to implement advice from outside experts," the undermining of national independence. In November 77 the Sri Lanka Government applied for a World Bank Loan and were told they would get the loan if they cut social spending, abolished the system of distributing prime necessities among the poor people and devalued their rupee. It has now accepted the conditions, abolished food rationing, devalued the rupee, and opened the door to US monopolies and endangered the State sector of industry. Portugal, Italy, and Great Britain

found the IMF to be big capital's policeman, ordering them to carry out austerity programs in the same way as developing countries have been dictated.

The IMF is a body dominated by the USA with 25% of the vote. The World Bank rates are high; January '75 they went up to 8.5%.

The Labor Government in 1975 was negotiating for a loan of Arab money. No details of the country or the rate were made public, but it seemed by the reaction that the Labor Government was looking to move out of the orbit of American and allied international finance. This may have been a progressive move, but when Saudi Arabia offered a \$250 million loan to Portugal it demanded a stronger anti-Communist policy and strengthening ties with NATO.

More and more of the developing countries are turning to the International Investment Bank set up the CMEA countries in 1971. There they can get credit from CMEA countries for machinery and plants on a fifteen years basis, with interest at 2.5% and repayment and interest not beginning until the plant starts producing, and part of the repayment being some of that production, so guaranteeing a market.

The implementing of such political and economic policies by an Australian Government would also result in a changed trading pattern towards the socialist market. At present the Soviet Union buys much more from Australia than Australia buys from the Soviet Union; the Australia-USA trade is also unbalanced the other way. The Soviet Union could sell much of what USA sells to Australia, and would then be able to further increase trade. Such a change in trading pattern would arouse great hostility and economic reprisals. It would be unrealistic to propose a progressive policy within the capitalist system without estimating the political implications of such a policy, without alerting the working class to the opposing forces and the necessity of moving towards a decisive break with the American Alliance.

This is part of the struggle for national independence, the historic role of the Labor Party. This was substantially achieved by the Curtin-Chifley Labor Government, but has been eroded, and must be won again in the face of USA as well as British imperialism working in a neo-colonialist way.

The Australian working class have greater responsibilities and opportunities to carry out the struggle for economic and political independence than they had in the period 1939-45.

While increased trade with the socialist market can be of advantage to the rural industries and farmers as a whole, a working class economic program should also include specific assistance to the working farmers, the economically small farmers who are three quarters of landholders.

Party Building and The Role Of Youth

by PAT GORMAN

A basic feature and responsibility of the ongoing work of a Marxist-Leninist Party is its ability to continually replenish and develop its revolutionary cadre force.

On this question Karl Marx in 1867 wrote: "The most advanced workers fully realise that the future of their class and consequently of all mankind wholly depends on the education of the rising generation of workers." (1)

Lenin recognised this when in 1905 he wrote: "All we have to do is to recruit young people more widely and boldly, more boldly and widely and again more widely and again more boldly, without fearing them.....The youth, the students and still more so the young workers will decide the issue of the whole struggle." (2)

These two quotes from Marx and Lenin clearly illustrate the importance that the founders of scientific socialism placed on the winning of youth to the vanguard of revolution. However it should be clearly understood that they in no way attempted to represent youth as the most advanced or leading force in social revolution, as revisionist and bourgeois ideologists endeavour to do.

While recognising the tremendous importance of winning youth to the struggle for socialism we must see them as a component of the overall struggle based, not on the generation syndrome perpetrated by revisionist and bourgeois ideologists, but on the Marxist-Leninist principle of the leading role of the working class.

Historically, the international communist movement has always placed particular importance on the development and extension of its work amongst the youth, particularly young workers.

Recent years have seen even more attention being paid by our fraternal communist parties to the struggles of young people particularly after the massive youth struggles of the late 1960s.

The increased social and political activity of youth against a background

of the deepening of the general crisis of capitalism reflected itself in more revolutionary demands.

However, because of the spontaneous nature of this struggle and given the diverse class composition of youth, particularly the strong petty-bourgeois influence in the student movement, the Communist parties found that they did not command any great influence in the youth struggles.

This was and remain today, an important objective problem for without the leadership of the vanguard party the essential class nature of youth's struggles continue to be submerged beneath the superficial social character of their struggles.

Recognising the immediate need to win these new forces, who were objectively fighting against the many manifestations of the contradictions inherent within the capitalist system, Communist parties throughout the world began to re-analyse their approach to youth.

An international seminar on work amongst youth was held in Moscow in 1973. It was found that of the 75 fraternal communist and workers parties in the non-socialist world who attended, 71 had produced programmes on activities amongst youth.

Of these 71, 45 parties had developed special documents on various aspects of work amongst youth.

The Socialist Party of Australia, however, is one Marxist-Leninist party that does not have a concrete policy of work amongst youth. The coming 3rd Congress of the party provides the opportunity for this to be rectified by the adoption at Congress of a comprehensive policy of work amongst youth Australians, as an important and integral part of our overall party programme.

As the general crisis of capitalism continues to deepen more and more young people are coming to realise that this society cannot satisfy or fulfill their ambitions and aspirations. Australia now has the second highest rate of youth unemployment in the western world. For over 200,000 young unemployed it is apparent that this system that denies them the most fundamental of all human rights — the right to work, is a system without a future yet the future belongs to youth.

Today the younger generation lives in an epoch of fundamental social change, an epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism on a world wide scale. The balance of forces in society has changed in favour of peace, democracy and socialism. Imperialism is forced to adapt to the

new international situation.

The historic confrontation of the two systems, capitalism and socialism is taking place in conditions of the scientific and technological revolution, mounting political consciousness of the masses and an atmosphere of acute ideological struggle.

As the contrast of life in the socialist world to the capitalist world becomes more apparent the forces of imperialism resort to every method to divert the people away from class struggle.

Imperialism has concentrated its main ideological attack on the youth in an effort to divert their attention from the inability of this system to offer them any future. With more than 50% of the world's population under 25 years of age this battle for the minds of youth takes on additional significance.

Imperialism promotes all types of fads and crazes amongst youth, but it cannot obliterate the objective reality of the antagonistic contradictions the capitalist system creates.

The material base to bridge the gap between present consciousness and objective reality of the struggles of youth exists today.

However, the very important subjective factor of the role of the Marxist-Leninist party to effectively and concretely guide and lead the youth needs to be made a major and urgent priority in Australia.

The problem we face in extending our influence amongst young people with a view to building our Party is not without parallel.

At the 17th Convention of the Communist Party of USA, the average age of party members was the oldest of any party in the international communist movement. However, recognising the importance of winning new young forces to the party that Convention instructed its members to give priority to developing work amongst the youth. (3)

At the 18th Convention Gus Hall happily reported that 25% of the party membership was under 23 years of age. Shortly afterwards, with the assistance of the CPUSA, the Young Workers' Liberation League (YWLL) was established. The YWLL late last year held its fourth Convention and nearly 800 young people from all over the USA participated. The CPUSA continues to extend its influence amongst the young and recognises this as an essential component in developing the revolutionary movement. (4)

Communist parties throughout the world are finding that their increased support is coming mainly from the youth. In Italy the proportion of communists in parliament is much higher than in the Senate.

Explaining the reason for this the Communist Party of Italy point out that the voting age for the Senate is 25 while for Parliament is 18.

It is worth noting that Australian voting trends in the last Federal election showed that the section of voters in the 18 to 25 age group strongly favoured Labor. (5)

Indeed recognising the importance of winning the youth to its ranks the Queensland State Executive of the ALP last January decided to launch a recruiting campaign aimed mainly at young people. As part of this move it was decided to revitalise the Queensland Young Labor Organisation. Commenting on this decision the Queensland secretary of the ALP, Gerry Jones said: "New blood into the party means new ideas and thoughts and gives us a broader base." (6)

How best to win more Australian youth into the Socialist Party of Australia? I would like to put forward two considerations:-

Firstly, the more politically developed and conscientious youth can and should be attracted directly to the Party. But before this can be done they must have an understanding of our party's attitude towards their struggles. This can only be so if we have a party programme which explains our position on the vital and important issues facing the youth of Australia today.

In this, the year of our 3rd Congress, the party has a tremendous opportunity to develop concretely its own work amongst youth, through wide party discussion on the most effective way to consolidate our influence amongst the struggling youth of Australia. To be effective, this work should culminate in the adoption by the 3rd Congress of a concrete and comprehensive program of work amongst youth.

Secondly, young people can also and must be won to the party through the Young Socialist League of Australia. Emphasising the importance of winning youth to the Party and the role of the YSL the Party Program adopted at the 2nd Congress states:-

"The Socialist Party fully supports young people in their many struggles, and has a most important responsibility to propagate the ideas of scientific socialism, counteracting both the outright ideology of the ruling class and the false theories which parade under a revolutionary cloak.

The Socialist Party is fully aware of the importance of young people in a political organisation and aims to win wide support amongst young people, to enrol many of them into the Party and to encourage their active participation in the work of the Party and in its leadership.

“The Socialist Party highly esteems and assists the Young Socialist League of Australia. While the SPA and the YSL are organisationally independent of each other, they have fraternal ties based on the ideology of Marxism-Leninism.

“The YSL has a special task of working among young people for their needs and interests and winning them to Marxism-Leninism.

The SPA regards the YSL as a reliable helper and reserve for the Party.” (7)

But whereas the YSL serves as a reserve for the Party it should not substitute for the Party and objectively play the role of a young communist party. Unfortunately in the absence of a developed party youth policy there remains **complete** reliance on the YSL programme to implement party policy amongst the youth.

To best serve as an effective reserve for the party the League needs to be a mass youth organisation capable of attracting all progressive and democratic youth. It must at all times avoid being sectarian.

In 1935 Georgi Dimitrov warned of the dangers of sectarianism to the youth leagues. He said:

“Our Young Communist Leagues, in a number of capitalist countries, are still mainly sectarian organisations divorced from the masses. Their fundamental weakness is that they still try to copy the Communist Parties, to copy their forms and methods of work, forgetting the **YCL is not a Communist Party of the youth** (Dimitrov’s emphasis). They do not take sufficient account of the fact that it is an organisation with its own special tasks. Its methods and forms of work, education and struggle, must be adapted to the actual level and needs of the youth.” (8)

Comrade Dimitrov’s words are as true today as they were in 1935. The YSL, in my opinion, still has two main obstacles to overcome before it can become an effective vanguard of progressive youth in Australia and serve as a reliable reserve for the party.

We must overcome our sectarianisms and tendency to function like a CP of youth. We must learn to master the united front method of mobilising and leading young people.

The YSL if it is to play a mass role must, as Comrade Dimitrov emphasised, be attuned in its methods and forms of work, education and struggle to the actual level and needs of youth.

The YSL must actively recruit youth who are in most instances unfamiliar with the principles of Marxism-Leninism and are just coming to the struggle itself.

Gus Hall emphasised this point in his address to the 4th Congress of YWLL. He said: "Are you less Marxist-Leninist because you permit and try to recruit young people to join the YWLL who are not Marxist-Leninist? Of course not! Mass work does not dilute one's Marxism-Leninism. It enriches it. For those of you who are communists and Marxist-Leninists the test of your Marxism-Leninism is to be able to lead an organisation in which most likely the majority are not Marxist-Leninists." (9)

The work of the YSL amongst youth needs to reflect its revolutionary character and spirit. The League is studying more novel and militant styles of work designed to catch the imagination and attract the attention of the youth. The recent National Council meeting of the YSL analysed our present activities and concretely determined our perspectives for the future development of the League.

However, there remains an urgent need not only for the YSL in its own right to analyse its work amongst youth, but also for the party to have a full and comprehensive analysis of its direct work amongst young Australians.

International experience has shown that the forces of Marxism-Leninism can attract masses of energetic and enthusiastic young people to its ranks. I believe our party can also. But before we do, much discussion needs to be entered into to ensure that we do it in the best and most effective way — the way which will help build our party now and strengthen it in the future.

To work amongst youth is to work for the future. The present generation of youth is the base of the party of the future. Without full attention to its needs and development, therefore, the Party jeopardizes its very existence.

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Lenin on Marx

...if you were to ask why the teachings of Marx were able to capture the hearts of tens of millions of the most revolutionary class, you would receive only one answer: it was because Marx took his stand on the firm foundation of the human knowledge acquired under capitalism. Having studied the laws of development of human society, Marx realized the inevitability of the development of capitalism, which was leading to Communism. And the principal thing is that he proved this only on the basis of the most exact, most detailed and most profound study of this capitalist society, by fully assimilating all that earlier science had produced. He critically reshaped everything that had been created by human society, not ignoring a single point. Everything that had been created by human thought he reshaped, criticized, tested on the working-class movements, and drew conclusions which people restricted by bourgeois limits or bound by bourgeois prejudices could not draw.

Dictatorship of proletariat — and democracy

By VAL BUTTERWORTH

What is the dictatorship of the proletariat? Must it play a necessary role in the transition to socialism, or are alternative paths possible?

When the word dictatorship is used, we have been conditioned to react with a feeling of loathing and even horror. We still have memories — or have read — of the fascist-type military dictators of recent — and present-historical times, such as Hitler, Mussolini, Franco, Suharto and others.

I am afraid that most people now living in the capitalist countries (Australia included) would raise incredulous eyebrows if they were told that they are living under a form of dictatorship right now. The dictatorship of the bourgeoisie — the dominant ruling class — the capitalist class in bourgeois society. A small ruling minority who oppress and exploit the vast majority, the working people.

For such is the case in our bourgeois democracy. Democracy for the bourgeoisie and for the huge bulk of the population — the proletariat — only mythical democracy. As the Communist Manifesto (1977 reprint), P.44 expressed it:

“The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.”

What is the dictatorship of the proletariat?

Firstly, let us assume that the revolution against capitalism has taken place, that the working class has been victorious and bourgeois rule has been overthrown.

The dictatorship of the proletariat arises as a result of the successful socialist revolution and the thorough demolition of the bourgeois state machine.

Lenin defines the dictatorship of the proletariat in his (Selected

Works Vol. 2. part 2. 1951. P. 223): "If we translate the Latin, scientific, historical-philosophical term 'dictatorship of the proletariat' into simple language, it means just the following:

Only a definite class, namely, the urban workers and the factory, industrial workers in general, is able to lead the whole mass of the toilers and exploited in the struggle for the overthrow of the yoke of capital, in the process of this overthrow, in the struggle to maintain and **consolidate** the victory, in the work of creating the new, socialist social system, in the whole struggle for the complete abolition of classes."

It is a qualitatively new type of state and differs radically from the previous states in regard to its **class nature**, the forms of state organisation and the role it is destined to play. All previous types of state were tools of the exploiting classes used for the subjection of the working people and designed to reinforce the system of exploitation and to perpetuate the division of society into oppressors and oppressed. The dictatorship of the proletariat, however, is the rule of the working class which, together with all other working people, destroys capitalism and builds a new society, a society without hostile classes and exploitation.

The question of the dictatorship of the proletariat has naturally always been, and remains, the **pivot** of the ideological struggle of Marxism-Leninism against reformism and revisionism. Lenin called the dictatorship of the proletariat the **touchstone** for testing the real understanding and recognition of Marxism. To be a Marxist it is not enough to recognise the struggle of classes, he said. You can only be a Marxist if you extend recognition of the class struggle to recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The suppression of the bourgeoisie, however, is not an aim in itself for the proletariat. Its **main** aim is to build socialism, to create a new socialist economy. What makes this task so difficult is that the socialist revolution begins when there are no ready economic forms of socialism. It is the task of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the proletarian state, to organise the economic life of society, to build up a new type of economy superior to capitalism, the economy of socialism. Lenin wrote, in his — Selected Works, Vol. 2. Part 2. 1951. P.222--" The dictatorship of the proletariat, is not only the use of force against the exploiters and not even mainly the use of force...The proletariat represents and creates a higher type of social organisation of labour compared with capitalism. This is the essence. This is the source of the strength and the guarantee of the inevitable complete triumph of communism."

The proletariat does not create the new, socialist system single-handed but in close alliance with the non-proletarian working people, mainly the

peasants (small farmers). In the course of the struggle against the bourgeoisie and for socialist construction, the working class re-educates these people. This is a very hard task, much more difficult than open struggle against the bourgeoisie. For example, prolonged, painstaking educational work is necessary to convince the peasants of the advantages of collective farming.

These are some of the main aspects of the dictatorship of the proletariat that are organically linked and constitute a unified whole. But the main thing in the dictatorship of the proletariat is...the building of a new society and re-education of the millions of small owners, small farmers, into active builders of socialism.

Only the proletarian state is truly democratic. The dictatorship of the proletariat is a qualitatively new democracy of the highest type. This, as Lenin wrote, is democracy for the overwhelming majority of the people and the exclusion of the exploiters and oppressors from this democracy. In the process of its development it increasingly turns into socialist democracy of the entire people.

A primary distinction of proletarian democracy is that it not only proclaims the rights of the working people, but also provides the conditions for their exercise. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat the working people possess not formal rights, as in a bourgeois state, but they actually govern the country and directly, or through their representatives, manage its entire economic, political and cultural life.

The working people own all the means of production, and this enables them to manage the country's economy and to exercise their right to work. Schools universities, scientific and cultural institutions, health and holiday homes give them the opportunity to exercise their rights to education and to rest and leisure.

In a word, proletarian democracy, as Lenin said, is a million times more democratic than any bourgeois democracy.

In the book (Anarchism And Anarcho-Syndicalism) which comprises writings by Marx Engels and Lenin we find on P.149 a question from Bakunin "What is meant by the proletariat transformed into the ruling class?" The reply very clearly, gives us a further answer to the question, "What is the dictatorship of the proletariat?! "It means that the proletariat, instead of fighting individually against the economically privileged classes, has gained sufficient strength and is sufficiently well organised to employ general means of compulsion in its struggle against these classes."

On P.167 of this same book is an even more concise version of this

question "The proletariat seizes political power and turns the means of production into state property."

To conclude this first part of the question I use a quotation from Marx taken from the book Marx Engels Marxism by V.I. Lenin P.398.....

"Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but **the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.**"

Must it play a necessary role in the transition to socialism, or are alternative paths possible?

History answers this question very well for us as if we examine the revolutions of the last 60 years beginning with the Russian Revolution. We find that in each case, where the power of the bourgeoisie was overthrown that it was the proletariat that lead the fight against capitalism. Not all of these revolutions were permanently successful and the main reason for the failures could be that the proletariat were not strong enough in the military and political field and so the forces of capitalist reaction have temporarily been able to turn the historical clock back. Cases in point, are Spain in which country a peoples' government was elected to power, but the reactionary forces of General Franco, assisted by the church (and the German Airforce) were too powerful for the un-consolidated working class. Chile suffered a somewhat similar fate as American Imperialism (C.I.A.) could see the weakness of the proletarian movement there and with the aid of the Chilean ruling class was able to (temporarily) win the day. Tiny Cuba on the other hand, situated right on the doorstep of the mightiest Imperialist power, was able to survive because Castro could see the need to arm the proletariat, and weld them into a dictatorship and the defeat of the forces of reaction, at the Bay Of Pigs, is history now.

Lenin, whose genius was the guiding hand in the Russian Revolution implacably fought against the reformist leaders and revisionists who denied the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat. He tirelessly proved that the dictatorship of the proletariat is the **only means** for building socialism and history has fully corroborated him. It is due to the dictatorship of the proletariat that socialism scored complete and final victory in the Soviet Union, and that other countries are successfully advancing along the socialist road.

Present day revisionists, however, continue to deny the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat, although they do so in more refined ways than their predecessors. Unable to ignore the existence of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the countries of the socialist world, they

regard it not as a universal, law-governed form of transition from capitalism to socialism, but as a national form applicable only to economically backward countries like tsarist Russia was. In highly developed countries, in the opinion of the revisionists, the transition to socialism will be achieved via "pure democracy," actually meaning **bourgeois** democracy

The views of the reformists and revisionists run counter to history, which convincingly shows that it is impossible to build socialism without the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the course of socialist construction, the dictatorship of the proletariat solves a number of major problems which determine the main aspects of its activity. Let us now examine some of these aspects.

In the transition period, the class struggle does **not** end, and at certain moments becomes very acute. Deprived of political power, the bourgeoisie of **any** country will not reconcile itself to its defeat and the loss of its domination and privileges. It therefore frenziedly resists the victorious proletariat.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary for overcoming the resistance of the bourgeoisie, for defeating it in fierce class battles. In the book, Marx-Engels-Marxism P.89. Lenin wrote, "The dictatorship of the proletariat is a most determined and most ruthless war waged by the new class against **a more powerful enemy**, the bourgeoisie, whose resistance is increased **tenfold** by its overthrow..." And further..."the dictatorship of the proletariat is **essential**, and victory over the bourgeoisie is **impossible** without a long, stubborn and desperate war of life and death, a war demanding perseverance, discipline, firmness, indomitableness and unty of will." (P.90 *ibid*). This coercive aspect of the proletarian dictatorship must not be underestimated. The working class has more than once paid with its blood for underestimating this aspect, for being too soft-hearted and for making concessions to the bourgeoisie. The Paris Commune in 1871 and the revolutions in Germany, Hungary and Finland from 1918 to 1919 were drowned in seas of blood. Thousands of the finest sons of the Hungarian working class perished at the hands of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie in October 1956. The deeds of Suharto, the Indonesian butcher, are still vivid memories and the dark deeds in Chile are still in progress. All this conclusively shows that the working people have **no other road** to socialism except through the dictatorship of the proletariat. The book, Anarchism And Anarcho-Syndicalism, comprised of writings by Marx, Engels and Lenin, abounds in quotations which reinforce the statements already made in this essay. Here are some of them: P.83. "This constitution of the proletariat into a political party is **indispensable** to ensure the triumph of the social revolution and of its ultimate goal: the abolition of classes."

P.172.....“the proletarian class will first have to possess itself of the organised political force of the State and with this aid stamp out the resistance of the Capitalist class and reorganise society.”

P.262. “The proletariat, on the other hand, if it wants to uphold the gains of the present revolution and proceed further, to win peace, bread and freedom must “smash,” to use Marx’s expression, this “ready-made” state machine and substitute a new one for it...”

P.289. “And yet it would be extremely stupid and absurdly utopian to assume that the transition from capitalism to socialism is possible without coercion and **without dictatorship**. Marx’s theory very definitely opposed this petty-bourgeois-democratic and anarchist absurdity long ago.”

Thus it would seem that **no alternative** paths are possible and if such paths were to be embarked upon, grave dangers would be encountered by those who genuinely wish to overthrow capitalism and establish socialism.

Some will shrink from the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat but there are no short cuts.

Power is always the power of a class

by **SAMORA MACHEL**,

(from speech to First Assembly of the People’s Republic of Mozambique,
August 31, 1977)

These elections are of great historic significance; they are the first to be held throughout our country, the first in which millions of men and women, millions of workers, will elect their representatives at all levels. Two years after the proclamation of our Independence, an Independence that is at one and the same time a rupture with the colonial power and the emergence of a state founded on the worker peasant alliance, the creation of the People’s Assemblies means the consolidation of class power, of People’s Power. This is an important moment when the people, in an organized way, affirm the reality of their power. The power of the people serves the people; strengthening it improves the people’s lives.

The democratisation of working methods and the popularisation of the political line that accompany the elections and the founding of the

People's Assemblies, establish irreversible situations in the evolution of our revolutionary process. The masses become conscious of the fact that they are responsible for their state, that their state will be what they decide it should be.

The masses assume their responsibility as the creators and masters of their destiny, the creators of their own happiness. This awareness and determination makes the people's conquests irreversible, and will block and annihilate any attempt by reaction and imperialism to bring down our People's Republic.

The exploiting class are thrown from power once and for all, the working class and its principal ally, the peasantry, are installed in the supreme organs of state.

The question of power is fundamental to the Revolution.

The Nature of Dictatorship

Power is always the power of a class. When a class imposes its will, those who refuse to accept this imposition must be forced to, those who oppose this will must be repressed. That is why we say that all state power, any State, any power, is a dictatorship. For example, colonialism forced us not to be Mozambicans, forced us to accept and to say that we were not Mozambicans, forced us to accept the *machila*, forced labour, the *palmatoria*, the pillage of land and cattle, forced us to accept the lack of medical assistance, the lack of schools, illiteracy etc. If we did not accept all this we were beaten, arrested, deported, murdered, massacred. This was colonial-capitalist dictatorship exercised by the colonial-capitalist state.

In our country this colonial-capitalist dictatorship was exercised through the particularly oppressive forms of fascism: deprivation of all liberties and the prohibition of any form of political activity. The people had to impose their will on Portuguese colonialism. The people had to repress colonialism with weapons in hand. The antagonistic contradiction that set us against Portuguese colonialism took its most acute form with the war that lasted ten years. After winning national independence we had to continue imposing our interests and our will on the class enemy, and on imperialism which attacks us. That is why we are engaged in creating a strong army, in strengthening our defensive capacity in order to force imperialism to respect the frontiers of our State and our sovereignty.

A third aspect that characterises our power is that it practises dictatorship and repression against an exploiting minority, thus

enabling the broad masses to benefit from greater democracy, the fullest liberties. Our power represses the exploiters, prevents them from pillaging our riches and keeping the broad masses in permanent misery. If we had not wielded our power against the land speculators, we could not have benefited from free land on which to build the house we live in. If we had not destroyed the power of the landowners it would have been impossible for us to create the state forms and co-operatives, that improve the peasants' lives and provide us with abundant, good and cheap agricultural products. If we had not repressed the saboteurs of our economy, we would not have foreign exchange to buy the tractor for the cooperative, to import the essential articles that we do not yet produce.

This repression that we practise against a handful benefits the vast majority. We are freeing ourselves from hunger, nakedness and misery because we were capable of exercising our power against those who were the agents of these evils. No-one gave us the land or the buildings. We will only have what we are capable of imposing.

It is in this way that real freedom is being born, real democracy, not the freedom of words.

Despite our limitations in personnel and cadres, despite the backward economic development we inherited, the masses are mobilised; they have a deep sense of their interests and that they are fighting to improve their life. The soil is fertile for the progress of the Revolution.

This situation determines the nature of our power, the nature of the dictatorship we practise: democratic, revolutionary dictatorship.

Our dictatorship is democratic by virtue of the very nature of the classes that wield power, the working class and the peasantry. It is democratic by virtue of the liberties that are won and practised by the broad working masses; our people, through the Assemblies, will effectively wield power; our people are materialising the right to education, to health, to housing, to work, the right to clothe and feed themselves properly, the right to a better life, to progress. Our dictatorship is revolutionary because it introduces radical transformations in the social relations of production, transformations in the consciousness of men, transformations that enable the transition to the next stage — the stage of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the stage of socialist democracy.

Chilean Communist view on State Power

by LUIS CORVALAN

from a report to Central Committee
of Communist Party of Chile

Some people seem to be determined to establish a theses of the impossibility of entente today or tomorrow due to the fact that we communists recognize the principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

First of all, throughout the 56 years of struggle of our Party, we have recognized that principle and simultaneously we have always consistently struggled for democratic freedoms, which shows that there is no contradiction between the one and the other. Secondly, we are talking about the recognition of an objective fact: any Government, any State which exists in a society divided into antagonistic classes is a form of dictatorship. To put it in another way, in such a type of society the State is not above the classes. What was the Government of Jorge Alessandri? Perhaps the Government of all Chileans? Certainly not. His policy was fundamentally at the service of one class, the bourgeoisie. The Popular Unity Government, for its part, was fundamentally at the service of the workers and the people. In establishing that in a class society all Governments are always at the service of one or several of the antagonistic classes, but never at the service of all, we do not deny the fact that there are different forms of dictatorship. There are dictatorships at the service of the upper bourgeoisie, which use brutal methods of oppression of the workers, and others which use more or less democratic methods. There are terrorist, tyrannical, arbitrary dictatorships which do not submit to any legal norms. There are others which do submit to such norms. In this sense, for example, there are important, public and notorious differences between the Governments of Alessandri and Pinochet, but in both cases there is class dictatorship.

At the same time, it cannot be ignored that the dictatorship of the proletariat, that is the conduction of society and the State by the working class and its allies in the initial period of socialist construction, is scientifically conceived not only as an historical fact, but also as a transitory necessity. Thus Marx, Engels and Lenin conceived it. The founder of our Party, Comrade Recabarren, in his pamphlet "What do we socialists and federalists want?" had this to say on the subject in 1921:

“We are currently living under a permanent and rigorous dictatorship which obliges us to live naked, hungry and enslaved. The dictatorship of the proletariat means making the bourgeoisie submit to the will of the people which will not tolerate exploitation or oppression. Once its organization is assured in such a way that the regime of exploitation cannot ever rule again, the dictatorship of the proletariat will cease of its own accord.”

★ ★ ★

LENIN ON THE STATE

The state is a special organisation of force: it is an organisation of violence for the suppression of some class. What class must the proletariat suppress? Naturally, only the exploiting class, i.e., the resistance of the exploiters, and only the proletariat can direct this suppression, can carry it out. For the proletariat is the only class that is consistently revolutionary, the only class that can unite all the working and exploited people in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, in completely removing it.

The exploiting classes need political rule to maintain exploitation, i.e., in the selfish interests of an insignificant minority against the vast majority of the people, and against the insignificant minority consisting of the modern slave-owners — the landowners and capitalists.

State and Revolution, Chapter II, section 1.

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