



# Australian Marxist Review

Theoretical journal  
of the Socialist  
Party of Australia

- ★ *SPA Programs of Action*
- ★ *Transnationals*
- ★ *Role of the state*
- ★ *France — “class peace”*
- ★ *South Africa — “legal Marxism”*
- ★ *Part-time work*
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QUARTERLY  
NEW SERIES No 12  
JANUARY 1985  
Price 60c

# **Australian Marxist Review**

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**Published by New Age Publishers  
for the Socialist Party of Australia  
237 Sussex Street, Sydney  
Phone (02) 264 5688**

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# Programs of Action — 1985

The Central Committee of the SPA at its meeting on October 27, 28, 1984 adopted four Programs of Action for the guidance of all party organisations during 1985. They should be used to help plan the work for the coming year and to turn the branches into centres of political action. These programs take up the main, but not the only, political issues and tasks at the present time.

## The struggle for peace and the development of the peace movement in 1985

The main issues are:

1. Participation by the Australian peace movement as part of the world wide movement in the struggle for the peaceful settlement of all disputes, a nuclear weapons freeze and agreement for disarmament measures, etc.
2. Intensify the movement in Australia for the removal of US bases, the abrogation of the ANZUS Treaty and the banning of visits by US nuclear armed or nuclear powered vessels and use of Australian facilities by US B52 bombers.
3. Adoption by Australia of an independent and non-aligned foreign policy, adopting the principles of peaceful co-existence in relations with countries having a different social system
4. Solidarity with the anti-imperialist struggles everywhere, support for the national liberation movements, and in particular in Central America, the Middle East, South-East Asia and Africa.
5. Support for the 12th World Festival of Youth and Students and the principles put forward by the YSL. Formation of a representative delegation to represent Australia and capable of participating in all the activities of the festival.

### **Mass activities for 1985:**

1. Support for Palm Sunday mass rallies.
2. A national conference on bases, ANZUS, ships and for an independent and non-aligned foreign policy. That discussions be initiated in the peace movement with a view to holding an anti-bases demonstration to be made an annual event.
3. 12th World Festival delegation (July).
4. Consideration be given to holding an anti-imperialist Peace and Solidarity Concert (YSL).
5. Resolutions for ACTU Congress (September).
6. Party branches to contact and become involved in local peace organisations whether APC, PND or independent.
7. Hiroshima Day (August).
8. Party to issue not less than 4 national leaflets on appropriate occasions and issues.

### **Political issues in the peace movement**

In previous statements including the Congress Political Statement a number of political issues which are encountered in the peace movement have been dealt with. They include the "two super-powers theory," "anti-Sovietism and anti-communism," the "relationship between peace and socialism," "some distortions of peaceful co-existence" and the question of the "main contradiction in the world today." It is not necessary to repeat what has already been said. However, all comrades should make themselves familiar with these arguments and know how to combat erroneous views.

There are some other theories which weaken the peace movement. These theories reject the relevance of the "anti-imperialist" slogan, the Party's independent role and the Party as part of the broad peace movement.

### **The Party's independent role**

Arising from its scientific analysis of class society and its understanding of the world revolutionary process, the Party has developed an all-round estimation of the peace movement and its relationship to other issues.

The analysis of class society shows that there are definite social classes which are the principal advocates of war preparations and war itself and there are also definite social classes which have no interest in war and who suffer as a consequence of war.

It is state monopoly capitalism which profits by war preparations and whose class rule depends on force and the aggravation of tension as a means to conceal their selfish class interests and divert the mass of the people by use of fear and ignorance. The ruling class pretends that it protects the "national interest" and claims to speak in the name of all

the people whereas, in fact, it is speaking for its narrow class interests. State monopoly capitalism at the stage of imperialism also attempts to impose its economic, cultural and political domination over the people of other countries. Many wars have arisen out of imperialist attempts to maintain or to reimpose its domination over other countries. The military attacks on Nicaragua are a vivid example of imperialist aggression and interference.

Our Party is, therefore, able to determine clearly the source of the war danger and has no hesitation in declaring that this source is imperialism.

Consequently, the Party sees the peace struggle as not only necessary to prevent the horrors of war but as part of the struggle for social change. The preservation of peace cannot be guaranteed until the social *cause* of war is eliminated and that means eliminating imperialism.

Conversely the Party is able to determine the forces for peace in the world today and list them as the socialist states and, in the first place, the Soviet Union, the working class in the capitalist countries and the anti-imperialist national liberation movements. A worldwide peace movement including all these forces and all who are opposed to war has grown up.

Because the main justification for the military preparations is the concocted slanders directed against the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, it is an obligation for the Party to defend the socialist states, expose the slanders and popularise the peace proposals of the socialist states.

The Party also has a developed understanding of such questions as the relationships between peace, national independence and socialism. We see the effects of war preparations on the social life of the working people and on democratic rights. We assert that the maintenance of peace provides the best conditions for social progress.

The Party is also a force which at all times tries to find the way to unite all the elements in the peace movement both organisationally and on the most developed policies.

For all these reasons the Party has a most important role to play in the peace movement, not only as one of its component parts, but as an organisation which has fundamental answers to the causes of international tension, the relationship between peace and other social issues, the tactics which need to be adopted to strengthen and unify the movement. The Party, while taking part in the general movement, remains free to propagate its views on these questions. This is not only a right (a right which we also defend for all other organisations as well) but also an obligation. We reject any proposal to submerge the Party which would either silence the Party's voice or lead to the sacrifice of principle. Of course, the way in which our views are advanced, the form and the timing, has to be carefully considered. What the Party does must contribute to and advance the movement as a whole and not retard or disrupt it.

## **The Party as part of the broad movement**

It is sometimes claimed that the participation of the Party is sectarian and narrows the movement. It is asserted that the general movement is broad while the party is narrow.

This is quite false. If these views were accepted they would liquidate the Party in the peace movement or silence it.

The movement can be truly broad only if it includes *all* of its contingents, *all* of the individuals and organisations which are genuinely dedicated to the cause of peace. There is no organisation more concerned and dedicated than the Party.

It is not the participation of the Party in the peace movement which would narrow it but its exclusion!

Furthermore, as is indicated in the previous section, the Party's understanding and estimation of the peace movement has great depth and breadth and the propagation of its views adds greatly to the *broadness* of understanding by other participants in the movement. In this context *broadness* becomes a political concept which relates to the increased understanding and consciousness of all the issues involved. In this regard the Party is seen to be the *broadest* of all the organisations involved.

There is no doubt that it has been the participation of communists in the peace movements of all countries that has helped substantially to build it numerically and to lift the level of understanding of many of the political issues involved.

We should, therefore, not accept the arguments of those who would exclude our Party from its rightful place in the peace movement. The adoption of correct policies and tactics will ensure the Party's participation as an effective and honoured force whose policies and opinion will be sought after by others.



## **The main issues for social advance in 1985. The exposure and defeat of class collaborationist policies.**

### **Some main issues:**

1. The development of campaigns in support of policies which will put the working people on the offensive.
2. The wages struggle in 1985.
3. The struggle for jobs and to organise the unemployed.
4. The question of taxation. The government must have revenue to meet the obligations that the people expect of it. The question is how and from whom is revenue to be levied. The need for redistribution of tax revenue away from the working people.

5. The popularisation of the concepts of the New Democratic Economic System.

### **Mass activities for 1985**

1. Proposal for a Social Rights Conference on taxation in the first half of 1985.
2. Preparation of policy resolutions for the September ACTU Congress.
3. Discuss convening of a national conference of unemployed organisations.
4. Active support for industrial and social actions for jobs, wages etc.
5. Publication of two pamphlets on the main social and economic issues and towards exposure of the Accord.
6. Publication of three to four national leaflets on these issues during 1985.

The Party's attitude towards the Accord with its class collaborationist basis and the faulty economic concepts on which it is based have already been set out in the Congress Political Statement and the earlier pamphlet entitled *The Crisis, the Accord and the Summit Communique*.

The essence of the present situation into which the working class has been put by its leaders is the propagation of and widespread acceptance of the idea that employers and employees have "common interests" and that the way forward is to be found in these two classes "getting together."

The Accord is underpinned in economic terms by acceptance of the theory that workers' allegedly high wages are the cause of the price rises and unemployment. From this it is argued that if wages are restrained and the employers make more profits, the increased profits will be re-invested in new production capacities and this will, in turn, create more jobs.

One of the main arguments in favour of the Accord is that it contains some "good things" and that in supporting the Accord it will help to get these "good things" introduced.

This point of view ignores the real essence of the Accord which is determining the attitude of government leaders and right-wing trade union officials towards these so-called "good things." They are, in the main, not being implemented.

It also ignores the fact that policies on these issues had already been formulated by the ALP and the ACTU long before the Accord was adopted. It was not necessary to have an Accord to have them implemented or to wage campaigns in support of the "good things."

It is necessary to increase our active support of industrial and social actions for jobs, wages and other issues. They provide, in this area too, the opportunity for party branches to become centres of political action and be the basis for recruiting many more workers to our party.

Our policies on such questions as wages, taxation, employment and the New Democratic Economic System have been worked out in detail.



While our policies may need to be expanded they have been, in main principles, already set down. It is not necessary to spend time on constantly working out "new programs."

The next ACTU Congress is to be held in September 1985 and this will coincide with the end of the two year period specified in the September 1983 National Wage Case decision. Trade union policies on many important matters will be up for review. Given the fact that the economic situation may well have begun to worsen again by then and that there is growing disillusionment with the Accord this congress will have very many important policy decisions to take.

A Social Rights Conference on taxation and a national conference of unemployed organisations before the September ACTU Congress could focus attention on these issues and help to advance class struggle policies, rather than class collaborationist policies.

In this field too, the Party must step up its propoganda work as the means by which we convey our policies and views and demonstrate that the SPA is an active organisation.

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## Win the youth!

**The resolution adopted by the Central Committee on the SPA-YSL relations points out that the basic question in relation to youth is the importance of the Party being able to guide the young generation.**

The Party with its Marxist-Leninist ideology, theory and practice, needs to guide the working class and other sections of the people including the youth in the advancement of society. The Party must accept its responsibility for the young generation. It follows that Party organisations must develop capabilities to carry out this responsibility.

The Party's objectives concerning youth are carried out through the YSL which the Party has created for this purpose, that is, to enable the Party to communicate with young people.

It is for this reason that the YSL is described as the "helper and reserve of the Party." The League is organisationally independent but at the same time guidance by the Party is necessary if the Youth League is to carry out work for the Party.

The resolution referred to sets out in detail how this special relationship between the Party and the Youth League is consummated in practice and the channels and consultations through which the Party gives guidance.

The Party works out a program of action to win the youth in consultation with the leadership of the Youth League. When the program is adopted it must then be conveyed to the Youth League organisations through the democratic centralist structures of the YSL and by way of the consultations at various levels between the Party and the Youth League.

All Party leaderships are advised to study the CC resolution carefully and to implement it scrupulously at all times.

**The main issues around which it is necessary to activise youth are:**

★ Involvement of youth in the struggle for peace and for solidarity in the anti-imperialist movement. For this purpose all youth league organisations should be assisted to develop a Festival movement and play a full part in the preparation for participation in the 12th World Festival of Youth and Students in July 1985.

★ The involvement of youth in the struggle for jobs and the organisation of unemployed youth. Consideration should be given to the possibility of organising a national conference of young unemployed workers and their organisations during 1985.

★ Involvement of youth in the struggle for the rights of young workers. Particular and specific attention should be given to the problems of young workers at work. The actual issues will be determined by a concrete study of each place of work. A strong campaign should be waged against the threat to reduce the wages of young workers.

★ Involvement of youth in the struggle for an all-round education, the restructuring of Australian tertiary students organisations and the development of secondary student organisation.

★ The fostering of healthy political, moral and social attitudes among youth by assisting in the political and social education of young people.

★ Attention to building the Young Pioneers.

**Some main activities in 1985 include:**

1. 12th World Festival of Youth and Students national conference (Melbourne — April).
2. 12th World Festival (Moscow — July).
3. Anti-imperialist peace and solidarity concert (second half 1985).

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## **Aboriginal Land and Mineral Rights**

### **Purpose**

The campaign for Aboriginal land rights is one of the longest running and most militant in Australia's history. Despite recent inroads by racist and other ideas, there is still widespread sympathy for Aboriginal issues, including land rights, in the labour and progressive movements.

The political significance of the national question in the anti-imperialist struggle of our epoch and the revolutionary content of the demand for land and mineral rights make this campaign important for our Party's work of building the anti-imperialist anti-monopoly movement. Within the campaign the opportunities for building unity in action and raising consciousness are considerable.

The SPA should not only be involved in the continuing campaign but should begin to take a leading role in it and influence its content and direction.

### **Political issues**

During the course of the Party's campaign, a number of political issues will inevitably arise. Part of the value of the campaign will be the discussion of such issues both within Party organisations and between our organisations and the various non-Party organisations we make contact with.

The most important political issues within the campaign are the following:

1. Our estimation that we are dealing with a genuine national question; that the Aborigines constitute a national minority engaged in a national liberation struggle.
2. Such a national liberation struggle is a component of the world-wide national liberation movement which is one of the three main anti-imperialist forces in the world today.
3. The effectiveness of these three anti-imperialist forces depends to a large degree on the unity between them. Applied to Australia, this means unity between the Aboriginal and the white working class movements.
4. National liberation movements are a part of the mass struggle against capitalism. The national liberation movement of the Aborigines is an integral element of the mass anti-imperialist anti-monopoly movement which must be built to bring about the New Democratic Economic System and then the transition to socialism in Australia.
5. The demand for Aboriginal land and mineral rights contains a democratic aspect. In a period when the social base of monopoly capitalism is narrowing and the system is inevitably becoming more oppressive, the struggle for democratic rights, including the struggle against racism, assumes growing political significance.
6. However, the demand for land and mineral rights also has a revolutionary aspect. In essence it is a demand for the basic means of production to be returned to collective ownership. It puts forward a case for expropriation of private property and presents an alternative to state monopoly and private landed property.
7. Aboriginal groups are resisting the exploitation of their land by mining and pastoral monopolies (often overseas monopolies) and directly play a part in the fight against imperialism and monopoly.

### **Immediate aims**

An SPA campaign on the issue of Aboriginal land and mineral rights provides the opportunity for *all* Party organisations, to a greater or lesser degree, to take action which should try to achieve the following objectives:

1. To build an Australia-wide movement which will ensure that legislation passed by the Federal Labor Government approximates as closely as possible under current conditions to the rights and demands of the Aboriginal national minority.
2. To increase understanding among Party members, through this concrete example, of how to select campaign issues for their immediacy, their political content and their potential contribution to the development of the mass anti-imperialist anti-monopoly movement needed to create the New Democratic Economic System.
3. To develop understanding of SPA policies among Party members — in this case of the political significance of the national question, the revolutionary aspect of the demand for land and mineral rights, the SPA policies on the national and democratic rights of the Aboriginal national minority.
4. To bring the SPA into contact with a range of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations, using the Party's principles of unity to explain the SPA attitude to these issues and seek through discussions a commonly held position.
5. To consolidate unity in action and to popularise SPA views in the course of joint actions with various organisations and individuals on the basis of a commonly held program on this question.

### **Context**

The Hawke Labor Government announced some time ago that it would bring down uniform land rights legislation that would over-ride State laws where any conflict existed. This legislation was to be based on 5 principles laid down in ALP policy and confirmed at its 1984 Conference. These 5 principles are:

- Aboriginal land to be held under inalienable freehold title;
- Protection of Aboriginal sites;
- Aboriginal control of mining on Aboriginal land;
- Access to mining royalty equivalents;
- Negotiated compensation for lost land.

The ALP platform and statements by leading Labor Party members have made it clear that "control" over mining is to be understood as the right to veto exploration and/or mining. This is based on the model of the Northern Territory land rights legislation which contains such a power to refuse projects.

It has become clear, however, that under pressure from the campaign waged by mining and farming interests and electoral considerations (particularly in WA and Queensland), the Hawke Government intends to back down on this crucial question.

Prime Minister Hawke stated on October 19, 1984: "The general position of the government is that we don't believe that the right to

veto is an integral part of having effective, fair and efficient land rights legislation.”

Uniform land rights legislation introduced by a Labor Government can therefore now be expected to include no Aboriginal control over resource exploitation by monopolies on Aboriginal land. It can also be expected that this provision will be removed from the Northern Territory legislation.

### Materials

There are four elements:

1. Education program;
2. SPA pamphlet;
3. draft leaflets (4);
4. draft letters and resolutions.

### Approach

The purpose of the campaign is to win the best Federal land rights law possible and to allow SPA organisations to make contact with a range of organisations, on the basis of the Party's principles for unity, to explain and argue for SPA policies on this issue which is topical and generally sympathetically received.

The campaign should start with the Party organisation concerned using the Party's study syllabus to ensure that all Party members feel confident about the Party's approach and policies on this question. Confidence and clarity are essential at this stage since they will be the basis for the flexibility needed in discussing the issues with various non-Party organisations and individuals to raise their understanding and to reach a common program and agreements on joint actions.

In the initial contacts with organisations, the central document will be the pamphlet *The Case for Land Rights*, which contains the SPA's policy. Some copies of an earlier pamphlet *Talking About Land Rights*, which presents the basic elements of SPA policy in simple form, are also available.

Party members active in mass organisations are essential here but as far as possible, the approach should be on an *organisation-to-organisation* basis. The contact should be frank and honest — that we seek discussions in order to reach an agreed policy and, in the process of the necessary discussions, wish to present our views and hear those of the other organisations.

These discussions should be used to raise understanding of the *political* issues involved and, on that basis, to seek to move the members of the non-Party organisation concerned from opposition to support or, more importantly, from support to solidarity in the face of the common enemy.

The Party organisation concerned should make proposals for joint

action once a common position is agreed. Examples of such action are set out below in the section entitled **Method**.

It is clear that our program is the most developed and all-round policy. It will take a considerable amount of time and work to raise the level of consciousness to the stage where all aspects of our policy are fully understood.

While arguing for our program and our understanding of the measures necessary to fulfil the needs and rights of the Aboriginal people, we should also be able to find the basis of unity of policy and action without abandoning principle.

It should also be noted that the authoritative Federation of Land Councils has endorsed the five principles and we have a responsibility to elevate the standing of this particular body among non-Aboriginal organisations.

The situation is complex and the ALP's five principles are probably the best basis for joint campaigning. However, our starting point in discussions must be our own position, criticism of the Hawke Government's sell-out and criticism of the contradictions within the five principles.

### **Duration**

It is clearly not appropriate for the Central Committee to plan campaigns with the degree of detail that branches require (weekly targets for leafletting and other tasks, etc) and there are no specific dates within this campaign which mark the end point of periods of concentrated activity (as, for example, there are in the campaign on peace with concentrated work leading up to the Palm Sunday demonstrations).

However, concentrated work can be planned in the period before the introduction of the legislation in Parliament (once this is announced) and in the period leading up to National Aborigines Day in July.

### **Method**

The campaign will have maximum impact if it is co-ordinated throughout the country by the Central Committee with a regular flow of information on developments. This will not only assist in achieving maximum success in the theme of the campaign (the land rights law itself) but will also contribute to the Party's developing experience in campaigning and mobilisation of the working people.

The campaign will have a number of stages:

1. Preparation of Party members. A general (aggregate) meeting should be called by the relevant State/District Committee at which the main political issues of the campaign are explained. The education program is available to back this meeting up by providing the basis for a branch class/discussion and/or private reading if this is thought necessary.
2. Party organisations under the direction/co-ordination of the relevant State/District Committee should select the non-Party organisations to be contacted. The Branch should then send its representatives to see these organisations and request a discussion with them.

3. Use of the pamphlet *The Case for Land Rights* to put the SPA view on this question. Seek their views on the matter. Sell them copies of the pamphlet.
4. Raise the ALP's five principles and the criticisms the SPA has of them. Raise the position of the Hawke Government and its weaknesses.
5. Through discussion of these various positions, find the points held in common. Get an agreed joint policy down on paper.
6. Look for other questions which are raised in the course of the discussions and note them for consideration by the Party organisation at another time. The contact with the organisation, once made, should be maintained and consolidated and further matters for discussion and action should always be noted.
7. Discuss possible joint action on the basis of the agreed joint policy. Such joint action may include letters, resolutions, joint submissions (SPA can supply), public meetings (with/without Aboriginal cultural items), jointly manned tables in shopping centres, rallies, demonstrations etc.
8. Distribution of SPA and/or joint leaflets in Aboriginal areas, workplaces, shopping centres etc.
9. Explore the possibilities of making wider contacts and building greater unity by, for example, either bringing together the separate non-Party organisations with which the Party organisation has reached agreement on a joint program and action or by the combined Party organisations jointly approaching a third organisation.

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# Transnationals and the developing countries

by Bill Briggs

**United Nations figures put the number of unemployed in the developing world at over 300 million. Local factories and offices in those countries, as well as those belonging to the transnationals, are all displaying "no vacancies" signs.**

The transnational companies claim that they employ millions of people, provide opportunities for workers to get higher qualifications, and they pay better than local employers.

In fact, there is a steady draining from the local industries of skilled workers, leaving a vast pool of unskilled, unemployed labour and a shortage of skilled workers. The same situation has been developing in Australia in direct relationship to the growth of overseas domination of our economy. Australia, at the same time, is a developed capitalist state with its own private companies operating in the same way in other countries.

This picture is seen most vividly in the developing countries. In Jamaica, for example, US-based aluminium companies drained skilled workers from the vital sugar industry. In Puerto Rico the US transnationals all but destroyed the fisheries industry in the same manner.

It becomes obvious that the problem of finding work for the people of the developing world is not to be solved by foreign ownership.

As for the argument that the transnationals give people the opportunity to get better qualifications, it is misleading, although technically correct. The transnationals do train workers from their "host" countries. There are now, for instance, African chemists, ship-builders and so on. However, these trained workers are virtually tied to the foreign-owned concerns. Unlike in the advanced capitalist countries, where there are several competing firms, it is common in the developing world for there to be just one enterprise in any given region. For instance, there would be one aluminium company operating in the region. The workers are all but forced to work there. To leave the job means permanent unemployment,



because once trained for a specific job the worker becomes unable to find alternative employment. The problem also exists where the company, knowing that its workers have no option but to stay, can dictate terms (often rather poor) for work. There is constant fear of dismissal.

To make matters worse, factories often manufacture products using imported components. The workers, therefore, get a very narrow specialisation. It becomes usual practice for workers to know how to assemble one small part of the item being produced. They are hired to complete monotonous, mechanical work, totally divorced from the overall scheme of production. Can it then be accepted that the transnationals provide the "vocational training" that their propaganda claims?

Another proposition put forward by their advertising managers is that they pay better than the local companies. Again this is basically true, but the workers in the foreign-owned factories are being paid for an essentially different type of work. The manufacturing processes are of an advanced, highly technical kind, making the work much more productive. By contrast, the worker in the local factory is usually engaged in activities requiring less complicated labour, with a much lower rate of productivity.

For the increased level of productivity, the workers employed by the transnationals are rewarded with slightly higher wages, but still get only ten to twelve per cent of the wage of comparable workers in the advanced capitalist countries. The level of productivity is comparable but the profit margins for the transnationals operating in the developing countries are much higher. The "fact" of higher wages for their workers, like so much capitalist propaganda, contains a degree of distortion.

It is not just keeping the wages down that makes huge profits for monopoly capitalism. Poor working conditions and lack of environmental protection saves the capitalists a lot of money. The normal practice for the transnationals is to transfer to the developing countries those plants that are considered to be dangerous to the workers' health or to the environment. Elsewhere, such plants would be banned or safeguards imposed and this would bite into the profits of the capitalists.

There is a belief that all developing countries benefit to some extent from these industrial complexes. The belief is that the employment that is created somehow helps all nations. This is not the case and is quite incorrect. Ninety per cent of the plants are to be found in just ten to fifteen of those countries termed by some capitalist with an odd sense of humour as "new industrial countries" and in countries rich in raw materials. The least developed countries and those without raw materials are virtually ignored by the foreign investor.

In the developing countries the workers employed by the transnationals are often non-unionised. The foreign-based capitalists are violently opposed to the formation of any workers' associations. It is rare to find in the factories and mines of the transnationals a unionised workforce. A number of the more reactionary governments as a gesture of support for their overseas masters have passed anti-labour laws. In Taiwan, South

Korea, Brazil, Singapore, Malaysia and Haiti, strikes, collective agreements and contacts with international labour organisations have been banned.

The most sinister of the tactics used to undermine the workers is the setting up of company unions. This tactic has been used extensively throughout Central and South America. The purpose of this is to undermine workers' unity and alienate various sections of the working class. The capitalist managers foster sentiments of "loyalty" to the company above any loyalties to class or even nation. Nestle, Lonrho and Unilever claim a "corporate citizenship" of their workers on a global scale. They are able to develop a core of workers devoted to the transnational and actually despising their own people. To quote a Zambian worker for the Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa: "I am devoted to Anglo-American first and foremost. I feel I belong to the company more than I belong to my country."

The reasoning here for capitalism is not merely to maintain a disciplined workforce, although this plays a role and is paying dividends. A more important reason lies in the habit that these companies have of interfering in the internal affairs of independent states. In Panama, for example, the authorities imposed an export tax on bananas. The result was a series of anti-government strikes. When the Manley regime in Jamaica attempted to place curbs on the US and Canadian based aluminium companies, the government was toppled, with the active participation of workers at those plants. Similar "corporate citizens" helped to overthrow the Allende Government in Chile.

Specific problems are posed for the working class movement in Australia because, on the one hand, Australia is an imperialist country whose capitalists are engaged in vigorous exploitation overseas, and at the same time our economy is becoming dominated by foreign monopoly capitalism.

What then should be the response of the Socialist Party of Australia and the working class movement generally to the implications of transnational penetration both in the developing world and in Australia?

The political resolution adopted by the Fourth Congress of the SPA points to the fact that foreign monopoly penetration of Australia has reached an advanced stage. Transnationals occupy commanding positions in key industries — in finance, mining, commerce, oil, food and agricultural production. Local capitalism has linked up with foreign capital in many instances. One example is BHP and ESSO.

Australia has also produced its own predator transnational corporations -- TNT, CSR, BHP and the Murdoch empire to name just a few.

The necessity to combat the erosion of our national independence is a pressing task. This, in turn, means the fight for a new democratic economic system, as called for by the SPA. The need for such a fight for Australia's own future is manifestly clear, but when taken as part of the entire global situation, the struggle assumes even greater significance

As each newly liberated country is a blow to the economic foundations of imperialism, then we have our part to play. The achievement of a new democratic economic system in Australia would serve our interests well and also the interests of millions in the developing world. Such a development in Australia would weaken the position of imperialism and provide assistance to those nations so horrendously exploited. This is the best "aid" program that we can offer the developing countries: aid in breaking the chains of imperialist monopoly capitalism.

This is the second of two articles on Engels' *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. The first article appeared in the preceding issue of the AMR.

## The role of the state

by Martyn Stevens

**The question of the state is the principal question which separates Marxists from reformists, and much of our Marxist understanding of the state we owe to a book written by Frederick Engels 100 years ago, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*.**

This, his most popular book, is perhaps well recognised as the major Marxist classic on women's oppression, which was examined in the last issue of the *AMR*. In this article, we turn to the importance of his book on the question of the state.

Revisionists and many reformists will admit the value of Marxism as a deeply humanist doctrine, but they constantly attempt to emasculate it of its revolutionary content with regard to the state. This makes a study of Engel's book all the more important for those wishing to have a full and proper understanding of Marxism.

"The cohesive force of civilised society," says Engels, "is the state, which in all typical periods is exclusively the state of the ruling class, and in all cases remains essentially a machine for keeping down the oppressed, exploited class." (p.173. Here and below, all quotes are from the Progress edition).

Engels explodes the myth that the state is neutral or above class struggle and he disproves the notion that the state has always been with us and always will be.

In primitive society, before private property and class exploitation arose, there was no state. It arose only when society had become split into antagonistic classes, in order that the exploiting class could hold the exploited class in check.

"Because the state arose from the need to hold class antagonisms in check, it is, as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant

class, which, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class, and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class. Thus, the state of antiquity was above all the state of the slave owners for the purpose of holding down the slaves, as the feudal state was the organ of the nobility for holding down the peasant serfs and bondsmen, and the modern representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage labour by capital." (p.168)

Engels makes it clear that the class character of the state is in no way altered by the way people vote. Indeed, he says that "the possessing class rules directly through the medium of universal suffrage." And he goes on: "As long as the oppressed class, in our case, therefore, the proletariat, is not yet ripe to emancipate itself, it will in its majority regard the existing order of society as the only one possible and, politically, will form the tail of the capitalist class, its extreme Left wing. To the extent, however, that this class matures for its self-emancipation, it constitutes itself as its own party and elects its own representatives, and not those of the capitalists. Thus, universal suffrage is the gauge of the maturity of the working class. It cannot and never will be anything more in the present-day state; but that is sufficient. On the day the thermometer of universal suffrage registers boiling point among the workers, both they and the capitalists will know what to do." (p.170)

Lenin has commented with regard to this statement of Engels that the various petty-bourgeois democrats and opportunists expect just this "more" from universal suffrage. "They themselves share, and instil into the minds of the people, the false notion that universal suffrage 'in the *present-day* state' is really capable of revealing the will of the majority of the working people and of securing its realisation." (Lenin *Collected Works*, Volume 25, p.388)

Such reformists and opportunists see the bourgeois-democratic republic as the highest form of democracy and social development; true democracy in which the will of the people manifests itself. They see it as a means of turning the class struggle into class harmony. Engels explains however, that where *formal inequality* exists between capitalist and worker (or between man and woman) it often appears to the superficial observer as the cause of the problem, and the achievement of their *formal equality* in a democratic republic as the solution. Formal inequality in reality masks the fact that economic oppression is the real basis of antagonism. It is not the cause but the result of economic oppression. The achievement of formal equality in a democratic republic strips away this mask and lays bare the economic oppression that weighs down the exploited class and the oppressed sex. And Engels concludes: "The democratic republic does not abolish the antagonism between the two classes; on the contrary, it provides the field on which it is fought out." (p.74)

The need of the working class is not to take over the state as it is, because it is a machine for the oppression of the exploited class. They must destroy it, replacing it with a state of a new type, one which is based on the rule of the working class, the first ruling class in history which does

not exploit others. The working class proceeds to build a classless society and, therefore, abolishes its own rule as a class and provides the basis for the gradual dying down and disappearance of the state altogether.

Will people then run amok? Engels' analysis of primitive society shows that people could manage their affairs and live in harmony without any state and without people turning against society. This will once again be achieved in the future but at a much higher level of economic and social welfare. This will not be prevented by human nature, as is claimed by defenders of exploitation who pass off the ugliness of oppression as "human nature." No, human nature will in fact become genuinely human, shod of all ugly features bestowed upon it by over 2,500 years of class society.

We leave the concluding words to Engels:

"The state, then, has not existed from all eternity. There have been societies that did without it, that had no idea of the state and state power. At a certain stage of economic development, which was necessarily bound up with the split of society into classes, the state became a necessity owing to this split. We are now rapidly approaching a stage in the development of production at which the existence of these classes not only will have ceased to be a necessity, but will become a positive hindrance to production. They will fall as inevitably as they arose at an earlier stage. Along with them the state will inevitably fall. Society, which will reorganise production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers, will put the whole machinery of state where it will then belong: into the museum of antiquities, by the side of the spinning wheel and the bronze axe." (p. 170)

France

## Government of "class peace"

This article, by Vitaly Semyonov, has been slightly abridged from the Soviet journal *New Times*.

**French Prime Minister Laurent Fabius has said that one of the main aims of his policy was to rally the nation for the solution of the most pressing problems facing France today. The indications are that what the leaders of the government and the ruling Socialist Party have in mind is something of a holy alliance standing above classes and political parties and aimed at modernising the economy, countering the growing crime rate, and coping with the threats allegedly hanging over France in the international arena.**

The propaganda media promptly called for a truce on the internal front and rapport among the conflicting political groups. The press, obviously taking its cue from official quarters, began to speak of the Fabius style of government characterised by repudiation of the ideological dogmas allegedly espoused by the Socialist Party and dedication to efficiency and modernisation.

Attempts to bring about a "truce" in political struggle are of course no new departure. Such attempts were made also by previous bourgeois administrations. In the late 1970s the then President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, in his much-talked-about book *French Democracy*, called for "national coexistence," an end to the division of France, for rational coexistence of the ruling and opposition parties. France, he stressed, needed to be administered by a strong central group in which there was not, and could not be any place for the opponents of the bourgeois regime, and least of all for the French Communist Party.

The idea did not win much support in those years. The leaders of the Socialist Party rightly pointed out that it was naive to ignore class and political realities. Today they have clearly developed a taste for old theses.

The exhortations to a truce emanating from the government are being followed by new moves designed to appease the right wing opposition. One such move related to the school reform bill which was designed to

limit the influence of the Catholic Church on private schools and expand the state system of education. The bill evoked a sharp reaction on the part of the opposition and the top church hierarchy. A million-strong demonstration of supporters of a "free school" held in Paris gave the authorities a serious scare. The government decided to put an end to the school war in its own way. The bill was removed from the parliamentary agenda, much to the satisfaction of the right-wing parties.

Another conciliatory gesture was made in connection with President Mitterand's proposed referendum on extending civil liberties. This initiative, too, met with strong resistance from the opposition. The project was blocked in the Senate, where the right command the majority. The propaganda clamour around the referendum soon subsided and the relevant bill is as good as forgotten.

At their Congress in October, 1983, the Socialists announced their intention to introduce an anti-trust law relating to the press. The measure was primarily directed against the domination of the media by the newspaper magnate Robert Hersant, the owner of three national and sixteen provincial newspapers who is closely associated with opposition circles. After a long delay caused by obstruction, the bill was passed by parliament in a truncated form. However, in a surprise move, Fabius announced that the law would enter into force only after the next parliamentary elections, that is, no earlier than 1986. The decision was seen in Paris as another "gift" to the right.

How has the opposition reacted to the calls for dialogue and truce? The supporters of the leader of the Alliance for the Republic, Paris Mayor Jacques Chirac, said they regarded them as a political manoeuvre and stand for a tough attitude towards the cabinet. The chairman of the Alliance for the Republic group in the National Assembly, Claude Labbe, said it would be a mistake to come to the aid of the government. The followers of former President Giscard d'Estaing in the Union for French Democracy adopted a wait-and-see stance, counting on the Socialist Party making further gestures. Former Prime Minister Raymond Barre voiced satisfaction with the fact that the Socialist Party was retreating in ideological matters in favour of efficiency and pragmatism. As regards the Centrists, to which the Socialist Party is primarily trying to build bridges, one of their leaders, Bernard Stasi, has welcomed the Prime Minister's moves, considering them timely. Here one cannot but recall some lessons of history. As far back as the time of Guy Mollet, who headed the predecessor of the present Socialist Party, the Socialists tried to pursue a "third force" policy, i.e., a bloc with the centre. But this brought them to total political bankruptcy.

Progressive quarters hold, and with good reason, that the Socialists have embarked on this dubious political game in order to divert attention from the real problems facing France.

The French public is disquieted by today's pressing economic and social problems. The latest statistical data show that the "strict economy" policy propounded by the government is worsening the situation. The economic growth rate is close to zero. Official quarters now openly speak



of the "rigid austerity" regime continuing for the next year-and-a-half or two. This circumstance finds reflection also in the draft budget for 1985. The budget further aggravates social inequality. It provides for higher petrol prices and telephone and postal charges. The purchasing power of the population is to be cut. At the same time private employers are to be given huge government handouts for "modernisation," and taxation of profits is to be reduced.

Unemployment remains an acute problem. At present France has 2.3 million jobless, which is 10 per cent of the labour force. In the coming months mass layoffs are planned in the automobile, construction and metallurgical industries. All French working people are following with anxiety what is happening at the plants of the Creusot-Loire firm, which belongs to the Schneider monopoly group. To extract substantial subsidies from the government, the owners of these works declared themselves bankrupt. The government has now given the green light to the sacking of 2,500 Creusot-Loire workers. This is the price the workers have to pay for modernisation.

The employers of course welcome this policy. The President of the French Employers' Federation, Yvon Gattaz, has said that the government should remove all restrictions on prices, lift foreign exchange controls and extend the employers' tax privileges. In other words, give them a completely free hand. The profits of private firms went up by 17 per cent last year, besides which the government gave them \$120 billion francs in subsidies. A substantial part of the profits was used not for reinvestment, but for currency speculation and investment abroad, primarily in the United States, whose high interest rates act as a magnet on French capital.

The growing unemployment, closure of enterprises, and reduction of the purchasing power of the population are giving rise to mounting discontent among the working people. The "social peace" on which the Socialist Party leaders counted is coming to an end. The leading trade union centres propose to stiffen their demands to the government. Edmond Maire, General Secretary of the Democratic Confederation of Labour, which is close to the Socialist Party, is now critical of the government, although he only recently supported its policy. In an interview to *Le Monde* he made it plain that the present policy of "economic liberalism" could have serious consequences and lead to a further growth of unemployment as well as a number of social problems.

The country's biggest trade union centre, the General Confederation of Labour, has mounted a broad campaign against the plans of the private and the state-owned industrial concerns as well as the measures envisaged in the draft budget for 1985 which could result in social spending cuts.

The leaders of the right-wing reformist trade union federation Force Ouvriere make no secret of their displeasure at the cabinet's policy, especially its moves to limit wage increases. The federation's Secretary-General Andre Bergeron not long ago pressed on the government to revise its course without delay.

# The dangers of 'legal Marxism' in South Africa

This article by Ruth Nhere has been slightly abridged from the October, 1984 issue of the *African Communist*, the publication of the South African Communist Party. We publish it not only because of its general theoretical interest but also because of the parallels that can be drawn between what is being advocated by 'legal Marxists' in South Africa and what is being advocated by revisionists in Australia.

The current phase of the South African revolution is characterised by a rich variety of methods of struggle. The volume of 'legal' political work has increased dramatically. The new conditions have galvanised the radical intelligentsia into action, and there is literally a flood of publications being produced all over the country. While some of these writings are so 'academic' as to appear irrelevant to political reality, many are influencing sections of the mass movement, raising a number of theoretical issues. Some 'down to earth activists' shy away from entering into these debates, pointing to the broad sweep of mass actions as more deserving of their attention. However, it is important that the ideological battlefield should not be surrendered by default.

The great strides made by the independent trade union movement in South Africa since 1973 are correctly heralded as of major significance to the revolutionary struggle. There are, however, important differences of view as to the role and potential of these trade unions. The question of the role of the trade union movement and its alliances with the democratic movement as a whole is still hotly debated.

The worshipping of the 'spontaneity' of the working class movement and defence of its 'purity' are characteristic of the thinking of some of the intellectuals working in the independent trade union movement. Arguing against alliances with other classes and strata in the broad political struggle, they proclaim that "the workers themselves must decide when the time is ripe to join such a alliance, and under what conditions."<sup>1</sup>

Committing the same fundamental errors as those whom Lenin struggle against, our own worshippers of spontaneity argue that "it is necessary for clear socialist understanding to develop within the working class, so that workers themselves are the source for socialist

ideas".<sup>2</sup> The author of these words would probably call himself a Marxist or even a Leninist. He refers obliquely to Lenin in his article, arguing that Lenin's ideas on economism, written in 1903, were later revised by him. In fact, the successful course of the revolution in Russia depended to a large extent on the correct application of Lenin's theoretical work on the need to form 'the party of a new type' as expounded in this very same text.

Let us then remind ourselves that Lenin underlined that socialist consciousness cannot be built in the sphere restricted to the relations between employer and employee. In *What is to be Done* he demonstrated that "the sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships of all classes and strata to the state and government, the sphere of relations between all classes..."<sup>3</sup> Thus the necessity of a proletarian class political party.

Another factor which Lenin stressed should be carefully considered by those inclined to the workerist approach is that economism can serve the interests of the bourgeoisie. The ruling class is highly skilled in remaining unruffled by revolutionary rhetoric if it sees that its own interests are ultimately being promoted. The separation of the trade union movement from the broad political struggle in South Africa would achieve just such a result. One would have thought these intellectuals had themselves done sufficient research on capital's strategy of reform and co-option to realise the dangers of this line of thinking.

## **When to form a Party**

Advocates of the 'workerist' line hotly deny that their arguments negate the role of a class political party. However they argue that "as yet there are no specifically political organisations (at least in developed form) of the working class in South Africa."<sup>4</sup> These sentiments have been echoed by some of the leadership of the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU).

If this grouping are to be taken at their word, then it would appear that they are waiting for a working class political organisation to emerge when, through their collective trade union work, the workers 'strengthen' their socialist consciousness and spontaneously come up with the idea. If this were what our intellectuals are waiting for then perhaps we could just chastise them for political naivete. But it is not. Reading their publications it is possible to discern a different strategy.

Some of them have become fascinated with the example of Brazil. A recent article on this country in the *South African Labour Bulletin* attempts to draw parallels with developments in South Africa. In Brazil, they record, mass militant trade unionism has led to the birth of a political party which "rapidly developed amongst workers, the unemployed, grassroots sections of the church, progressive youth and left intellectuals..." The author mentions almost as an aside that this party "has drawn much hostility from the supporters of the illegal Brazilian Communist Party ... which *claims* (my emphasis — RN) that, historically, they form the party of the workers."<sup>5</sup>

Brazil also features in the study program drawn up by the academics involved in FOSATU's educational work, and is discussed in the FOSATU journal. Here the issues are even more simplified and in case the worker readership should get the wrong idea, the Brazilian Communist Party is not mentioned by name:

"It was the workers in metal and textiles in Sao Paulo who started to reorganise the unofficial unions. Every year since 1977 workers have struck in support of recognition and better wages ... Out of this the Workers' Party was started in order to represent workers in the planned elections. This was met with great opposition from the state, other political parties and the official trade union leaders..."<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps the authors of this type of material are aware that resort to open anti-communism will not win them support amongst the organised working class. However, their attempt to ignore the programs and even existence of the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) amount to the same thing. This isolationism or political non-alignment will in the long run prove their greatest weakness in their attempts to use the trade union movement as a vehicle for the creation of a 'workers' party'. In the meantime, our class enemies, the bourgeoisie, must be watching these stirrings of ultra-leftism and petty-bourgeois ideology with some relish.

These attempts to conceal the history, strategy and tactics of the existing organs of the liberation movement, the ANC and SACP, must be countered both in the unions and at the level of theoretical debate in both legal and illegal propaganda. Some of the writing associated with this grouping is highly divisive and detrimental to the mass movement. An article in the Wits student publication *Work in Progress*, for example, characterises the United Democratic Front as 'radical liberal' with a class base lying "in the black — and especially Indian petty bourgeoisie. This, at any rate, is the stratum whose demands and interests the radical liberals most forcefully articulate."<sup>7</sup>

It is this type of analysis which most clearly reveals the theoretical deficiencies of these 'legal Marxists'. They have not confronted the fundamental questions posed by our revolutionary process. They do not understand the significance of the national democratic revolution nor the leading role played by the working class within it. They have not perceived the interaction between national and class oppression which gives South African revolutionaries the specific strategic tasks laid out in the programs of the ANC and the SACP.

Of course the incorrect theories we have cited do not go unanswered in the legal publications in South Africa. However, in the conditions of South Africa, the full defence of the programs and policies of the liberation movements is possible only in publications which are illegal.

It is to the classics of Marx, Engels and Lenin that we must turn to find our guide to action. And it is crucial that in the South African context we concentrate more on the national question and particularly on Lenin's theoretical elaboration of it. We do not become an ounce less 'socialistic' by paying attention to this fundamental work.

Lenin showed just how vital it is to formulate the correct elaboration of the 'present stage' of any revolutionary process, and thus to make the right strategic and tactical decisions. To fail to come to grips with the national question in South Africa means to lose touch with the real world. It is essential that we recognise the indissoluble link between theory and practice; that we understand that theory is a generalisation of practice and must correctly reflect what takes place in real life. Only on this basis can we understand the necessity for the broadest alliance of democratic forces to overthrow the racist regime.

As has been indicated, it is those forces amongst the intelligentsia who have lost touch with the reality of the struggle for state power who are most active in trying to build a new 'workers' party'. Inevitably, their activities and arguments are bringing to light their basic anti-communism. The people recognise anti-communism when it emanates from the racist regime, and they will come to recognise it in any new garb. Conversely, it is largely because of the efforts of the SACP throughout its more than 60 years of struggle that the proletariat is today able to recognise who serves its interests, defends its gains and advances its cause.

The tasks facing the progressive and democratic forces of our country are onerous. We are called upon to be battle-ready in every arena of struggle. The sphere of revolutionary theory is a vital one. Frederick Engels spoke of the struggle of the workers' movement being waged according to its three aspects:

"the theoretical, the political, and the practical-economic (resistance to the capitalists) in harmony and in its interconnections, and in a systematic way."<sup>8</sup>

At this stage in our revolutionary struggle it is more vital than ever that we heed and act upon his words.

## Notes

1. Cape Town *Social Review* December 1983. p.6
2. Ibid. p.13
3. V I Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol 5, p.422
4. *Social Review*, op cit p.6
5. *South African Labour Bulletin*, May 1984. p 58
6. *Fosatu Worker News*, September 1983. No 24. p.5
7. *Work in Progress*, No 30, 1984. p 18
8. F Engels. *The Peasant War in Germany*, Progress edition. p.23

# The implications for the labour movement of part-time work

by Tom Gill and Anna Pha

**One of the more recent, and possibly less obvious, attacks on working conditions and the right to work is the campaign for the introduction of part-time work on a virtually permanent basis. It is being used as a means of reducing unemployment at the expense of full-time jobs and reducing the living standards of the working class.**

Part-time employment is already well established as a mode of employment for women. In August 1983, 36.4 per cent of working women compared with 6.2 per cent of working men were employed part time.<sup>1</sup> This does not include the many women who work varying hours on outwork such as in the clothing industry. For the majority of these women part-time work is not a choice but the only option open. This is mainly due to lack of full-time employment opportunities and the scarcity of low cost high quality child care services.

## **The unemployment cover-up**

Part-time employment is now playing a considerable role in spreading and hiding the degree of unemployment.

The Labor Government Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Ralph Willis, said: "The present army of unemployed will not be quickly disbanded by a cyclical upturn."<sup>2</sup> Instead, according to Willis, the government is seeking ways "to cut the demand for work" by such methods as job-sharing and permanent part-time work.<sup>3</sup>

Such a strategy diverts attention from and ignores the real issues, those of tackling the causes of the economic crisis and creating real job opportunities. Job-sharing and permanent part-time work are just two of a whole range of cheap ways of "reducing" unemployment, but which in fact only cover it up and share the poverty around a bit further.

## **Dangers associated with part-time work**

If trade unions accept the introduction of permanent part-time work the whole concept of a full-time, day-time, Monday to Friday job with

a living wage as the norm, is opened up for question. If awards are so varied as to allow for part-time work, then it will be very difficult to prevent the "flexibility of work hours" concept being extended to conditions such as penalty rates, tea breaks, travelling times, etc.

The likelihood of such changes being favourable to employees is not great given the present level of unemployment, and the conciliatory climate that the Accord attempts to create. The concept of a weekend could disappear, and the present attack on penalty rates be strengthened and shopping hours lengthened. The attack on penalty rates is very real, and was even given support by Senator Button in his kite-flying exercise.

The organisation of workers on the job will almost certainly be weakened if the workforce is diluted by large numbers of part-time workers. The rate of unionisation of part-time employees is much lower than for full-timers. For example, 32% of part-time females compared with 48% of full-time females are members of a trade union.<sup>4</sup> For males the rates are 36% of part-time and 54% of full-time employees.<sup>5</sup> An employee who works part-time often has less of a commitment to the workplace, and may be harder to involve in industrial action. If a person has two different part-time jobs, it could become even more difficult to gain his or her support for the trade union.

While working shorter hours might be an attractive proposition to many workers, there is no consolation in half a wage. The ACTU shorter working week policy states that reduced hours should be on full pay. Part-time work, which is in effect short hours on short pay, is not the way to "create" more employment or reduce hours because of technological change.

The introduction of new technology will continue to reduce the number of employees needed in industries such as manufacturing as well as in office work, communications, etc. If the precedent of part-time work were established then it would be a very attractive proposition to replace full-time positions with part-time ones, avoiding the need for excessive redundancies. Also during different phases of the economic cycle it would be very easy to reduce or increase the hours worked according to demand. It would also make it possible to increase production without overtime rates being paid or more staff employed.

Once provisions for part-time work were built into awards it would be almost impossible, particularly with present levels of unemployment, to provide guarantees that changes in hours would only be at the request of the employee. After all, an employee offered the choice of reduced hours or no hours and little likelihood of alternative employment will have little choice.

The right to secure paid employment on a living wage was, in some areas such as the waterfront, won after many battles. Casual labour, employed as and when required, at the whim of an employer, not only means insecurity and an unstable income: it also pits worker against

worker, facilitates intimidation, weakens trade union organisation, and permits the erosion of other conditions such as safety, allowances, etc. It makes for a poorer, weaker, more compliant workforce.

Thus the inclusion of provision for part-time work in awards would open up a Pandora's box, and could very well mean a return to casual labour, loss of penalty rates and allowances, greater insecurity, impoverishment, and erosion of so many hard-won conditions.

## Permanent unemployment

The promotion of part-time employment is part of a general policy of making the labour movement accustomed to the idea that large scale unemployment is here to stay and that there is nothing that can be done. It is also part of the background to a very popular myth that reducing real wages will not only reduce unemployment, but will benefit the nation "together", Hawke has called on workers to make sacrifices, and even suggested that those who are concerned about becoming unemployed are moved by "their own immediate self-interest".<sup>6</sup> So part-time work, job sharing, reduced hours and wage restraint are all part of the sacrifice that workers are expected to make, for the good of the profitability of the private sector. The employers, not surprisingly, have not been asked to make any sacrifices.

This is all part of the class collaborationist policy of the Prices and Incomes Accord between the ALP Government and the ACTU leaders.

## Variations on the main theme

Another proposal has come forward from a Dr Jack Wood, who was funded by the Federal Government to carry out research to "explore employee attitudes to what is called the time-income trade off."<sup>7</sup> Rather than taking a reduction in wages and working shorter hours as a form of part-time work, Woods has come up with the proposal of trading off a wage increase for extra time off. The question he put to employees was: "Would you give up a 10% pay rise and, instead, take an extra five weeks for your holidays each year or an extra couple of days off each month?"<sup>8</sup>

It is suggested in the *Age* newspaper article on this proposition that " 'same money-more leisure' might be a formula to compete with the traditional approach of 'same work, more money'."<sup>9</sup> This is a dishonest and deceptive way of trying to introduce part-time work. Apart from the fact that in the present era of the Accord, there are no 10% wage increases, suppose, for argument's sake, there was a 10% wage increase being offered to cover price movements. We shall compare two employees on \$250 per week:

Employee A, who took the 10% increase and continued to work normal hours would then receive \$275 per week, or a total of \$14,300 in a year.

Employee B, would now work 5 weeks a year less, weekly income would be \$250, and total earnings for the year would be \$13,000. B's loss of



income would be \$1,300 for working 5 weeks less. Thus for each week's extra leave B would lose \$260.

The real effect of "same money, more leisure", as illustrated by employee B, is not the same money but a reduction in real wages of almost 10% (when comparing wages to price movements) and a reduction of around 10% in hours worked. What is being proposed is no different to working part-time on part-time money.

The "same work, more money" concept, as illustrated by employee A, means the same work, but wage maintenance at current levels in relation to purchasing power. Even if the 10% were well above price movements, and really meant more money, the "same money-shorter hours" would still involve a "wage reduction" when the rate is compared with the going rate for full-time employment. B would, relative to A, be a part-time employee working for less than a full living wage.

If workers accept such proposals they are in effect saying that wages are too high, that lower incomes are acceptable. This could make it extremely difficult to argue a national wage case when employers are claiming wages are too high.

Such proposals as that being promoted by Woods constitute a deceptive and back door method of enticing workers to accept part-time work or shorter hours on less than a full wage. They must be opposed in the same way as any other forms of short weeks on short pay should be.

### **Benefits of part-time work**

There are sections of the community who for quite legitimate reasons require part-time work. There are many women who for family reasons or because of lack of low cost and suitable child care provisions seek part-time employment. This is also the case for some men. There are relatively highly paid professional workers, with mortgages paid off and no children at home, who could afford to live quite comfortably on say, half or three-quarters of their current salary. They not only seek extra leisure time, but also, in some instances, believe that if they were to work part-time then it would create additional employment opportunities for younger people. Those nearing retirement might also like to ease themselves out of the workforce by decreasing hours of work in the last few years. These are all legitimate reasons, and these practices are already occurring in some areas. There are also jobs which are, by their nature, genuinely part-time, and these should not be confused with full-time jobs that are split into part-time ones.

The Socialist Party of Australia has spelled out its policy on this question in the resolution adopted at its 4th Congress in 1981. The resolution says that the introduction of part-time work without proper award protection reduces the living standards of both men and women workers and is used as a means to break down trade union organisation. "Part time work and job-sharing," the resolution continues, "is in danger of being introduced as the norm, with the aim of sharing the poverty between workers and placing women in a low-wage 'ghetto' The

labour movement should strenuously resist the use of part-time work as a replacement for full-time jobs," the SPA policy document says. "It should be introduced voluntarily to meet the demands by some workers for a more flexible working life and where proper award conditions are maintained and trade union organisation is not weakened."

## Shorter hours

With the advances in new technology there is no doubt that fewer labour hours will be required in the future to produce the goods needed by society. This is an exciting prospect, and should lead to greater wealth, shorter working hours, and increased leisure time. But if this increased wealth is not shared, if it is produced by a few workers only on traditional hours, or by more workers on shorter hours and reduced incomes, then we shall witness the absolute and relative impoverishment of the working class.

It is imperative that if working hours are reduced, workers still receive a full wage. A shorter working week on full pay is a highly desirable method of creating more jobs.

The ACTU states in its Working Conditions Policy:

"Part-time work should not be created at the expense of full-time jobs. The first priority of the trade unions must be the protection and preservation of full-time employment opportunities.

"Part-time work is not and must not be used as a means of reducing unemployment. Its introduction is not a substitute for effective economic policies.

"Part-time work should not substitute for a genuine reduction in standard working time."<sup>10</sup>

It is important that trade unions stand behind that policy, and in the present economic climate consider very carefully attempts to introduce part-time work into awards.

## References

- 1 ABS Catalogue No 6203.0
- 2 *The Australian Financial Review*, 16/11/83
- 3 *ibid*
- 4 ABS Catalogue No 6325.0
- 5 *ibid*
- 6 *The Age*, 4/2/84
- 7 *The Age*, 24/3/84
- 8 *ibid*
- 9 *ibid*
- 10 ACTU, *Consolidation of ACTU Policy Decisions 1981-1983*, p.98

# The anti-fascist struggle and Chilean Catholics

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**The Catholic Church in Chile, as in other Latin American countries, has been in turmoil for some twenty years, shaken by the broad movement for reform.**

When we speak of the Catholic Church we should bear in mind that we are speaking not only of religion and its impact on people but also of the hierarchy that has its own interests, organisational structure, and special links to the state authority.

In Chile the long-standing traditionalist position of the hierarchy led the Church into an impasse. It was becoming more and more difficult to reconcile the various currents. At one pole were concentrated the ultra-reactionary bishops and believers, and at the other there was the advanced *Christians for Socialism* movement, which evoked a response from many clergymen.

The Church comes under continuous and contradictory pressure; both from the social base, consisting of workers, peasants, housewives and particularly the middle strata, and sober-thinking intellectuals, and from reaction and imperialism which exercise considerable influence at all levels of the Catholic hierarchy.

Pope John Paul II dismissed Cardinal Henriquez, the Archbishop of the Chilean capital who fearlessly took an anti-fascist stand, and replaced him with Monsignor Fresno, a prelate of the traditional or, one may rather say, conservative school. Although the new Archbishop is more deferential to Pinochet, he finds he has to support some actions of those quarters in the Church which continue to criticise the basic orientation of the tyranny's policy.

It is now obvious that the change in the thinking of most Catholics in Chile and other Latin American countries, as well as in a large part of the lower clergy, has in the past few decades induced them to act against the Church's alliance with reaction and imperialism. Although this process

is not yet completed it is exceedingly important and to some extent irreversible.

## **Liberation theology**

There is now in Latin America a ramified current known as "liberation theology," which vindicates the struggle for social emancipation and national liberation from the standpoint of Christianity. It covers a wide spectrum of views, whose essence is that the Church should undertake greater obligations towards those whom it calls "poor." Members of this current (and this is one of its principal merits) drew up the documents that were approved by the bishops at Medellin.<sup>1</sup> "Liberation theology" came round to recognising the autonomy of politics, culture and science from religion and the Church; to supporting the ideals of civil tolerance; and to approving collaboration with non-Catholics in different spheres of society's life.

Some exponents of "Liberation theology" have gone even further, extending it openly to the struggle against capitalism and giving a Christian substantiation to the economic and political grievances of the working class and also to socialism. Theologians interpret this theory differently. Some speak of a new utopian socialism of a pre-Marxian kind and are concerned only with love and the saving of souls. Others, without confusing their concepts with the viewpoint of the Communists, use some aspects of Marxist methodology to analyse society. There are some who, instead of bringing the Christian philosophy up to date, are engaged in a sort of revisionism of Marxism, rejecting many postulates of scientific communism, such as that of the role of violence in the social struggle.

The Communist Party of Chile sees in these quests a striving on the part of some Christian circles to turn the participation of Catholics in the liberation struggle into a political and ideological alternative. We believe that as it matures this tendency will evolve into new forms of dialogue and co-operation and into joint actions.

The CPC has taken care to make some of the ideals inspiring the working class and popular movements close and comprehensible to the Catholic masses and a section of the priesthood. These include the defence of human dignity, opposition to oppression, class solidarity of the working people, cohesion of the people, fusion of the struggles for democracy and for social progress, the striving to restructure society, the preservation of peace, and the condemnation of fascism.

Engels made a study of early Christianity and of the role played by religious ideologies in the various revolutionary processes, including the biggest anti-feudal movements. It should not surprise us that today's powerful social eruptions particularly influence millions of believers. This has produced a new situation which has to be accepted. The CPC understands that this is where its duty lies. We see believers not as an abstraction, given once and for all. We hold that religious feeling is a social product." In keeping with the scientific materialist world view, the Chilean Communists are following Lenin's wise precept: "No number

of pamphlets and no amount of preaching can enlighten the proletariat if it is not enlightened by its own struggle against the dark forces of capitalism. Unity in this really revolutionary struggle of the oppressed class for the creation of a paradise on earth is more important to us than unity of proletarian opinion on paradise in heaven."<sup>3</sup>

Chilean Communists are pursuing a policy of dialogue and joint action with Catholics, aimed at unity between believers and atheists in the ranks of the working class and in the democratic and revolutionary struggle of the Chilean people.

The "communist threat" myths spread by imperialism are coming into conflict with the conclusions being drawn by the believers themselves. They have daily contact with Communists at the place of work, in educational institutions and in residential neighbourhoods. They have seen Communists at work in trade unions, residents' associations, municipal councils, universities and in parliament, and most significantly they have seen the exemplary way in which the Communists took part in the country's administration. The mutual respect that existed between the Salvador Allende Government, in which there were Communist ministers, and the Catholic Church is in sharp contrast to the despotic methods employed by the fascist administration.

Joint actions are stimulated by the communist cells existing in this or that industry or community. Everywhere their aim is to rally the people, to unite and mobilise different strata of the population for struggle. With this in view, exchanges of opinion are taking place with the political, social, cultural and religious organisations in the various localities. In this way contact is being established with parishes and various Catholic institutions, especially with communities at the grass-roots level and with people of other beliefs.

## **Anti-fascist struggle**

The unceasing resistance to the Pinochet fascist tyranny will, we believe, be a landmark in the history of the Chilean Catholic Church.

Initially, some Catholic politicians, notably of the Christian-Democrat Party, supported the fascist putsch and in fact condoned the assassination of President Allende and fascism's declaration of war and bloodbath against the Chilean people. We recall this not in order to reproach them, especially as subsequently they began to reconsider their attitude to the regime and are now actively participating in the struggle to put an end to the dictatorship and establish a democratic system. The point is that the situation in which we found ourselves during the crucial closing months of 1973<sup>4</sup> require of us a high appraisal of the determined anti-fascist actions of Cardinal Henriquez from the very first days following the coup.

On September 13, 1973, when it seemed that everything was collapsing (the oligarchy and imperialism were taking revenge by unleashing a brutal reign of terror throughout the country), the Standing Committee of the Chilean Episcopate issued a well known declaration expressing sorrow

and regret over the "blood that has been spilled in our streets, our communities, and our factories" and called for "respect for the memory of those who fell in struggle, above all, of him who until September 11 was the President of the Republic."<sup>5</sup> On September 14 the National Aid Committee was formed. On September 16 at a press conference for foreign journalists the Cardinal spoke sharply against the wave of hatred that swept the country after the coup and, as he put it, "may kill the soul of Chile." The steps taken by the Catholic Church to contact representatives of other denominations produced results as early as October 6. This led to the formation of a Peace Committee. It conducted courageous and very useful work to achieve solidarity. When in November 1975 as a result of pressure by the tyranny, this committee ceased to exist, its noble functions were taken over by the Solidarity Vicariate of the Archbishop of Santiago.

Things have reached a stage when fascism is harassing the Church. Every step it makes is countered with a violent campaign of intimidation. Nevertheless, in the face of the intensifying fascist repressions carried out with savage cruelty, the Catholic priests of the parishes in working class districts are continuing their courageous actions in support of the masses harassed by the police. Communities of believers are not ceasing their struggle for freedom, acting in close unity with all the forces opposed to the reactionary dictatorship.

Fascism is now no longer in a position to form large parties that it can rely on for support. One of the many reasons for this new situation is that today the Catholic Church is not facilitating the regime's manoeuvres and is uniting with the anti-fascists.

## Notes

1. The resolutions of the Second Conference of the Latin American Episcopal Council in Medellín (Columbia, 1968) declared: "If the Christian believes that there must be peace in order to arrive at justice, he also believes that justice is an indispensable condition for peace. Of course, he sees that injustice reigns in many parts of Latin America. This situation may be called institutionalised violence, because the existing structures violate basic human rights. This calls for a universal, bold, urgent, and profound renewal of these structures."

The next conference of the Latin American Episcopal Council, held in Pueblo (Mexico, 1979), took place when reaction was on the offensive in a large portion of the continent. However, despite the changed situation, even Pope John Paul II was unable to compel a revision of the basic resolutions passed at Medellín.

In this context it must be emphasised that the Sandinist revolution in Nicaragua was also accomplished with the direct participation of large numbers of Catholics and such prominent ecclesiastics as Miguel d'Escoto and Ernesto Cardenal. In many Latin American countries the Church often adheres to democratic positions in difficult situations, and the majority of believers regard their faith not as an obstacle but as a stimulus to their struggle for social progress. This is affirmed by the Chilean experience.

2. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol One, p 14

3. V I Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol 10, pp 86-87

4. The fascist coup took place in Chile on September 11, 1973. *Ed*

5. *Partido Comunista de Chile, Boletín del Exterior*, No 47 1981, p 18