

CPA-SPA SPLIT.

ANTI-CHINESE?
MARXIST-LENINIST?
ANTI-SOVIET?

MARXIST?
STALINIST?
ZIONIST?

LENINIST?
ANTI-IMPERIALIST?
REVISIONIST?

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE C.P.A.?

will the communist party split?

CONSERVATIVE?
TROTSKYIST?
REFORMIST?

ULTRA-LEFT
MILITANT?
OPPORTUNIST?
ADVENTURIST?

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*CPA
Collection*

INTRODUCTION

Currently the policies, activities and the future prospects of the Communist Party of Australia are all receiving considerable attention. Naturally these are keenly discussed within the Party, and in the left and radical movement generally. Nor is interest confined to Australia or the Australian left. Several articles on the CPA have appeared in overseas journals while the Australian mass media has shown more than a passing interest in it, particularly since the 22nd Congress of the Party, held last Easter.

For the moment interest centres on what attitude the Party will take to that substantial minority who retain membership but actively oppose the decisions of the 22nd Congress. Naturally this minority does not act as one united group. Attention is specifically directed to that section of the minority which publicly attacks the Party's policies and its elected leaders. (Sometimes these attacks are serious political arguments, in other cases the attacks are personal and extreme - like "the leadership is in the hands of the Jews", or, more politely, "is Zionist". It has even been suggested that some leaders are CIA agents!)

Much of the speculation is motivated by genuine interest, but much is hostile. Even on the left, there are some who would welcome the CPA's demise, precisely because it is seeking revolutionary renewal. In such circumstances it is challenging every tendency on the left, as well as itself, to debate the issues involved in developing a socialist strategy for Australia and to implement such a strategy. Naturally the bourgeois-controlled mass media is vitally interested in discrediting anything that looks like a serious challenge to the power structures of Australian capitalism. In this context some of the mass media have apparently decided on a sympathetic treatment of the CPA minority.(1)

The precise reasons for these attitudes would only be known to the policy-makers of such newspapers. Perhaps farsighted upholders of the capitalist status quo would prefer a Communist Party whose major concern is the uncritical justification of Soviet policies, rather than a party which gives first priority to the development of a revolutionary socialist consciousness by developing a mass challenge to authoritarian policies and mass confrontations of the system and its values.

This pamphlet discusses some of the main issues which underlie the present division in the CPA, which cannot be reduced to "for or against Moscow". It will further discuss different attitudes in the CPA on how to respond to this deep division. It will be argued that the real issue is the appropriate organisational character of a revolutionary formation in Australia in the 1970's. These controversial issues interest and concern all left wing and radical groups, not just the members of the CPA.

(1) Examples of this sympathetic attitude can be seen in articles by F. Wells in the Sydney Morning Herald, Alan Reid in the Bulletin and a long article in the Employers Federation journal which attacked the CPA industrial policy adopted by Congress.

Obviously this pamphlet presents a viewpoint supporting the decisions of the 22nd Congress of the CPA. However, interested readers are recommended to study the arguments further. Ample reading matter is available. The CPA Congress adopted two main documents: "Statement of Aims, Methods and Organisation", a strategic concept for socialist revolution in Australia and "Modern Unionism and the Workers' Movement", a policy statement on industrial issues. "Tribune" is an important source of material too for it not only reports political and industrial action and struggle but also explains the practical application of CPA strategy. "Australian Left Review" has drawn particular comment from the mass media following the publication of an interview with Jack Munday on industrial strategy. All of these publications are available from the national office of the CPA, 168 Day Street Sydney or at CPA offices and bookshops in all States. A list of these appear at the end of this pamphlet.

The platform and policy of the minority opposition may best be studied in the "Alternative Statement of Aims" submitted by Edgar Ross to the Congress, which rejected it. This was published in the journal "Discussion" No. 1, 1970 (also available from 168 Day Street). A new paper "Australian Socialist" published by a section of the minority opposition interprets opposition policy. A pamphlet entitled "Declaration" sets out a policy, signed by over 300 CPA members who do not support the Congress decisions, for "Building Unity of Action for Peace, Democracy and Socialism". These are available from Socialist Publications, 127 Redfern Street, Redfern.

Viewpoints of other left organisations and groups may be followed in "Vanguard" and "Australian Communist" (publications of the CPA/ML); "International", "Socialist Review", "Direct Action" and "Socialist Action" (produced by differing Fourth International trends) and in such journals as "Arena" and "Outlook".

SOME MAJOR ISSUES WITHIN THE CPA

Differences in the CPA came to a head following the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Army and the troops of four other Warsaw Pact countries, and subsequent developments up till now. Events in Czechoslovakia in 1968 raised issues of great moral and political principle upon which the CPA adopted a clear-cut stand. Why did these events bring the differences to a head?

They raised anew and in a sharper way an old issue: is it a cardinal principle for communist parties everywhere to unreservedly support every policy and action initiated in the USSR? This notion had apparently been rejected with the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943, with statements underlining the equality and independence of all communist parties adopted in 1958 and 1960 by international meetings. It became a real issue as the differences between China and the Soviet Union developed. In a different way Khrushchov's revelations about Stalin at the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956 had surely shown that many of the policies and actions of the USSR were indefensible morally, had harmed the Soviet Union itself and had hindered the world revolutionary process.

The CPA, even if belatedly, had begun to accept the responsibility of working out its own strategy and policy, independently and to critically review the experiences and policies of ruling communist parties.

The second reason is that the CPA had welcomed the sweeping changes in Czechoslovakia, which began in February 1968. It saw these changes as an attempt to develop a vital and advanced socialist democracy. In particular it welcomed these changes as relevant to the struggle for socialism in Australia.

This does not mean that Australian communists endorsed every facet of the shortlived Czechoslovakian democratic renovation but it demonstrated, in practice, that socialism need not be authoritarian, need not fear open debate and did not depend upon a single-party monopoly of power. These were concepts which we had in fact adopted at our 1967 Congress, before the Czechoslovakian change, and which we consider relevant to a strategy for socialist revolution in a country like Australia.

Conversely, the military intervention in Czechoslovakia was contrary to the model of socialism we seek to develop. The CPA would not advocate and fight for national independence from US imperialist domination only to accept the right of any great socialist power to intervene if it did not like the type of socialism established by a people's revolution. There were different reactions to the Czechoslovakian events, from those now opposing CPA policy. Some members like Jim Mitchell and Edgar Ross (then National Committee members) opposed our stand from the beginning. Others, like Pat Clancy and Bill Brown (then National Executive members) joined in condemning the occupation, with reservations. They, and others, have since changed their minds, either in the light of "new evidence" supplied by the CPSU or by the present leaders of the CP of Czechoslovakia who were placed in office after the invasion. Some may maintain a reservation about the actual invasion but argue that "normalisation" should be supported, that is that the invasion is to be regretted but that what follows the invasion and derives from it should be accepted.

Others believe that "least said, the soonest mended".(1)

It is important to establish the facts that the CPA stand proceeded from a principle, from the socialism it fights for and its concepts of what are genuine socialist principles of relations between nations.

It is also true that differences already existed on other issues before the Czechoslovakian events, though their extent was not fully understood.

SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY, SELF-MANAGEMENT, THE STATE UNDER SOCIALISM, THE "LEADING ROLE OF THE PARTY"

These issues began to be seriously debated inside the CPA in the 21st Congress of 1967 when the Party adopted the concept of a coalition of the left contributing to and leading the movement for socialism as opposed to the concept of the communist party as the sole leader; the corollary of this concept, a multi-party socialist state, as opposed to one where political power resided with the communist party. At the same time the principles of socialist democracy - freedom of expression, self-management and workers' control - began to be elaborated. The role of the communist party in a socialist society inevitably enters into such a discussion. The last two CPA Congresses declared that the concept of the Communist Party having a (or the) "leading role" in the struggle for socialism and in the future socialist society, could not be self-bestowed, nor could it automatically be retained. This was not an attempt to deny that the revolution requires "leading" or "vanguard" organisation based, in our view, on the working class, but it clearly implied that such an organisation had to be built and its place won in action and in creative development of ideas and aims. Once won it must be constantly re-affirmed by the working class and cannot be imposed by force. Nor could the supremacy of any theory (no matter how strongly or emotionally it is labelled) be guaranteed by suppression of opposing views. To the contrary, any ideology, or interpretation of an ideology, can only stagnate, unless it develops and is open to challenges.

Proceeding from the social changes in advanced industrial society under the impact of the scientific and technological revolution, the CPA advanced the idea of coalition of left forces. This is based upon the narrowing of social classes and groups whose interests lie in capitalist ownership and control and the numerical growth of those working under this control and manipulation.

(1) Pat Clancy spoke at the CPA public meeting in the Sydney Town Hall on Aug. 25th, 1968, criticising the invasion. Within the CPA he now expresses quite different opinions and has associated himself with the "Australian Socialist" group and their Declaration. But as recently as September 1970 the NSW Conference of the Building Workers' Industrial Union, which he attended in his capacity as State Secretary, adopted the following resolution unanimously:
"State Conference declares its support for the objective of the winning of socialism in Australia and declares that the only form of socialism acceptable must guarantee full freedom of expression, equality of all States, non-interference in the affairs of other States and the rejection of the principle of any State, or group of States, whether capitalist or socialist, having the right to interfere in or occupy the territory of another State."

In addition to the industrial working class, whose objective interests are diametrically opposed to capitalism, these include intellectuals, scientists, technologists, professional workers and students being schooled to provide capitalism with new layers of intellectually trained workers.

From this develops the idea of a coalition of parties and groups in a movement expressing the diverse but common interests of social forces in socialist revolution. This revolution will establish a truly free and self-managed society. All parties, groups and movements which contribute to socialist revolution will be free to exist and advocate their policies in the new society. No single party, group or movement can demand a monopoly of power, nor can the "leading role of the party" replace self-management and workers' control as the basic form of democracy in the new society.

Sections of the minority in the CPA claim that these concepts imply criticisms of existing socialist-based societies. They do, of course but such criticism of existing forms of socialism are valid since it is obvious that the abolition of private, monopoly ownership of the means of production does not necessarily abolish authoritarianism, control from on top or social inequality. Nor does it guarantee the right of free expression and contention of ideas.

Ending monopoly ownership is only the essential beginning of the transition to a free self-managed society.

To the extent that the CPA minority maintains old positions, and especially the primacy of defence or justification for every policy and action emanating from the leadership of the CPSU they refuse to face the facts of Stalinism,(1) the real problems confronting all existing socialist countries and the real issues that impede the development of a viable socialist strategy in Australia.

They reject, for example, the demand for the right to the free access to information and ideas, asserting that the party must control and decide which ideas and theories may be discussed, a position which should not, and would not, be tolerated in Australia.(2)

(1) For example, statement in "Australian Socialist" (issue No. 2, page 4: "Trotskyism provided the starting point and the pretext for the security organs (of the USSR) to . . . carry through the most indiscriminate and indefensible arrests and sentences of thousands of innocent people . . . who were wrongfully treated as enemies of the people. . . "

The added emphasis reveals this refusal to face even those facts on the extent of the repression contained in official CPSU documents (e.g. reports and speeches at the CPSU 21st Congress, published as "The Road to Communism").

(2) A good example of this attitude is expressed in the pamphlet "Socialism and the Mass Media" by W.J. Brown.

Argument about the character of a future socialist society in Australia may seem academic. After all, socialist revolution is not an immediate issue. After all, there are many vital struggles in Australia right now. There is the movement against the Vietnam war and against conscription. There is the defence of civil liberties and democracy, against capitalist authoritarianism and "law and order". There is the workers' struggle against monopoly capitalism for higher living standards, workers' rights and a new quality of life, a struggle which is challenging the anti-union and anti-strike laws. This struggle also questions the Arbitration System itself, and the authoritarian power of the employers over the workers in factories, offices and institutions. There is the growing radical movement among young people, in universities, high schools and among young workers. These movements and struggles impact all areas of political life, including the established forces of parliamentary elections and political action, with a widespread feeling for ending the political control of the Liberal-Country coalition which has now been in office for 21 years.

Why then, with all these practical tasks and possibilities of the moment, should we bother to discuss the future socialist society, debate its political structure and how to establish workers' control, self management of all institutions and the liberty of free expression in political, social, scientific and artistic activity?

In fact all those who work for socialism must be concerned with developing socialist consciousness within the movements and struggles which oppose capitalism, whether these be industrial action, the anti-war movement, radical student action or general social problems (education, social services, environment, housing). Even more concretely, socialists must answer the questions and doubts felt and voiced by the increasing number of people who reject or question monopoly capitalist society, with its injustices, immoralities and false values.

These people, especially the young, are searching for a new society, which will liberate humanity in all areas of social life.

As one practical example, we examine the development of united action by the working class, which still gives majority support to the Australian Labor Party, electorally and in the industrial movement.

Those who oppose the CPA Congress policy decisions base one of their main arguments on alleged failure to develop united action, and complain that the Party is too critical of "certain ALP figures in Parliamentary and trade union circles." (See "Declaration", page 4).

We believe that those sponsoring the "Declaration" really advocate surrendering the movement to reformist ideology, both industrially and politically. This will be analysed later, but there is an important question requiring an answer by the author of the "Declaration." If "unity between Communist and ALP forces" is the basic question, and you see this as the way to socialism, do you guarantee that these "ALP forces" will have full rights to free expression and political organisation in the socialist society? Or is their role to be confined to the pre-revolutionary struggle, under the principle of the "Party's leading role" and its control of ideology and the mass media?

CPA POLICY FOR UNITED ACTION

The Congress policy statements project a different concept of united action. United action is not primarily a question of organisations or individual leaders - "A.L.P. figures in Parliamentary and trade union circles." United action is the activity of people, who come together in pursuit of common objectives - to put pressure upon governments, or employers, or the Arbitration Court, or the controllers of institutions. This idea of united action is a question of classes, of social forces, of action from outside the existing capitalist institutions, which are potential confrontations of the system.

This is united action as revolutionaries have always understood it, from Marx onwards. This idea is poles apart from the following statement in the issue of "Australian Socialist" already quoted (No. 2, page 2):

"The ALP is pledged to the two demands of the Moratorium, and it is certain the decisions to withdraw the troops and end conscription must be made, in the final wash-up, by a government and not by some queer form of workers' control."

What a contrast with Lenin's unequivocal statement:

". . . the action of the masses - a big strike, for instance - is more important than parliamentary activity at all times . . ."

- (Left wing Communism)

And what a lack of political insight, completely ignoring the lesson that the ALP position has been greatly influenced precisely by the mass movement against the Vietnam war and conscription! It also ignores the further reality that the mass movement will have to continue even after a Labor Government is elected, to ensure withdrawal and abolition of conscription, let alone the fundamental change in Australian foreign policy which must be made. It is as though previous experiences of Labor governments had been forgotten, that the Wilson government had implemented its policies, and that the ALP leadership's recent shift to the right had not happened.

The CPA supports election of a Labor government. Nor does it reject parliamentary elections, and argues out its views with some other left tendencies which do so. However, the CPA view is a long way from the concept that election of a Labor government is more important than the mass movement, or that contention against theories of reformism must accompany united action.

CPA strategy sees election of Labor governments as one practical test of reformism as the way to social change. This is not seen crudely as "all ALP leaders are traitors", nor as a campaign for destruction of the ALP. Again, this is a social question of the ideas prevalent in social classes and groups, which require mass political experience, as well as debate, before they can change.

Reformism as a theory is widely accepted by workers and other people who reject capitalism's wars, social injustices and values. Unless and until revolutionaries can prove that it cannot change society, in the experience of those who accept reformism, socialist revolution is impossible.

This was the fate of the followers of Leon Trotsky whose movement began as a split away from the communist parties. This movement opposed specific policies and practices of the USSR but, rather than debate these issues (and the leadership of the Soviet Communist Party refuses to debate them until this day), those concerned were treated as "anti-party" elements. In countries like Australia they were expelled, while in the Soviet Union they were imprisoned or shot. The fact that some important Trotskyist views on those policies, which derived from an uncritical support of the leadership of the Soviet Union, have since been proved by history, and even accepted by sections of the Soviet leadership, has only made it harder for some communists to accept the legitimacy of Trotskyist views in debate. Currently the opposition in the CPA attacks the elected leadership of the party by calling it "Trotskyist", as though such a label means anything unless it is the ideas themselves that are debated.(1)

Such attitudes carried over into the dispute that led to the break between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of China in the early 1960's. But this split had new characteristics. If communists felt that they had to have a foreign model and mentor they now had a choice. Splits developed in most communist parties which at least gave the appearance of being either for Moscow or for Peking. Those who supported China had a country to rely on too, one that had carried out an heroic revolution, was full of enthusiasm and revolutionary ardour and providing its own ideological foundation.

Although the issues in dispute were much more complex than a preference choice between Moscow and Peking, many communists resolved their positions by choosing one or the other. Actually the issues were debated to an extent and the foundations were laid for the continuing debate in countries like Australia around such vital issues as: "What sort of socialist strategy is applicable for Australia" and "What type of socialism will be built in Australia."

HOW SHOULD A COMMUNIST PARTY DECIDE POLICY DIFFERENCES?

It is clear that there is a deep and apparently irreconcilable division in the CPA on revolutionary strategy and policy. This poses a vital issue: How can this be resolved?

There are different views here, too. Most CPA members believed that the Party Congress would decide, because the issues were widely debated and decided at branch meetings, at specially organised debates, and by district and state conferences. Congress voted 118 to 12 to adopt the Statement of Aims, and other decisions were adopted by about the same margin.

A few members, including Alf Watt, had already foreshadowed that they would not accept the decisions. It has become quite clear that these few had stated openly what others were going to do.

- (1) Because some supporters of the Fourth International work in the Labor Party, sometimes in positions of influence, a further dilemma is created for those in opposition who oppose anything "Trotskyist". Are such people to be treated as members of the ALP (with all that implies for the opposition) or as "enemies"?

In July, Pat Clancy submitted his resignation from the National Committee on the grounds that he did not agree with Party policy. When accepting nomination and contesting the ballot in March, he already knew the main lines of Party policy, since Congress had already adopted key decisions. The letter stated his disagreement with the Party's industrial policy, although he voted for its adoption at Congress.

Some have excused refusal to accept Congress decisions on the grounds that the majority was "mechanical" or "manipulated". This is a judgment made after the event, not raised at Congress or before it. In view of the widespread debate and unrestricted right of publication and discussion of views, this allegation is hard to sustain. Edgar Ross asserts that the Congress decisions were adopted only through skilful manipulation by the Party leadership, since most Party members, and the delegates they elected to conferences and Congress, did not understand the real meaning of the policy they voted for.

This argument can be justified only by an elitist contempt for the majority of Party activists, and an even more elitist conviction of a self-appointed role as custodian of ideological purity, possessed of superior insight and special integrity.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NOW?

When there is such a deep division in the CPA on strategy, principles and policy, it is natural that there would be differences about how to deal with such a situation.

Within the CPA there are at least five distinct views about the opposition, three held by the Party majority and two by the minority. Briefly, these are:

1. The minority should be allowed to stay on within the CPA. Various and quite different reasons are advanced in support of this position. There is the view that most of the minority are rather elderly people, that their views are largely irrelevant in Australia today, that no one who is really going to contribute to revolutionary solutions in Australia will take seriously people who propagate theories of labor movement unity which restrict action to the lowest common denominator; that a party should contain everyone on the left, that the majority can afford to ignore them and should therefore just let them go their own way neither answering them or taking them into account, that if such people were disciplined this would provoke an unfavourable reaction amongst others on the left.

This last view is both a direct inheritance from the past and a consideration about democracy. So many of the present majority in the CPA reject the heavy handed and punitive actions of other communist parties, especially some ruling parties, and are concerned with the past history of the CPA where anyone with a contrary opinion ran the risk of expulsion, that they do not wish to expel anyone. Concern for the right to express dissenting views both within the Party and in society generally leads to a conclusion that all debate is permissible within an organisation.

While these views must receive every attention, one cannot equate a party, which is a voluntary organisation, with society at large, and clearly no one should be expelled merely for contrary opinions. The real issue within a party is whether actions contrary to those of the majority, which actually curtail the rights of the majority and the effectiveness of the Party, should be tolerated, and whether every avenue is made available for all points of view to be heard before decisions are taken.

2. The minority should be forced to resign or, if they refuse, be expelled. The basic reasoning for this view is that those who hold it believe it is impossible for two parties to exist within one party, that the minority identifies with policies quite contrary to those of the Party and thus embarrasses it and leads to confusion, that it disrupts action and wastes time.

3. The minority should not be treated as one united whole, so each member of the minority should be treated according to how he or she acts. This view suggests that no one should be punished for views held, but that the Party has the right to determine which actions, if any, are contrary to the Party's interests and act accordingly. (1)

This viewpoint, like the first, considers the effects of actions on the rest of the left, but considers that many on the left would regard the Communist Party as less than serious if it allowed people to continue in its ranks who consciously acted to prevent the application of democratically decided policy. It is in this context that a small number of members have been suspended from the CPA while charges against them are heard. The charges arise not from their opinions but from their activities. This view holds that no objection could be taken to a publication like "Australian Socialist" in itself, but that the establishment of a separate organisation with its own platform, loyalty and discipline requires to be taken to its logical conclusion, that is, an organisation separate from and independent of the Communist Party.

4. Within the minority there is one view to stay in the CPA, and another to move outside it as an independent force. Obviously those who seek to stay in wish to retain membership in the CPA for a variety of reasons. The group that places so much importance on recognition from the CPSU knows that in the formal international movement of communist parties no one party has been conceded right to withdraw recognition of another party and give official recognition to a breakaway group. Thus, no party can be "excommunicated" and denied representation at official international gatherings no matter what de facto relationships exist on the side. They know, for example, that when the Communist Party of Japan took an independent line from the CPSU the latter preferred to back a publication apparatus rather than a political party and to work with the Socialist Party rather than the Communist Party. In New Zealand when the Communist Party supported the Chinese Communist Party, a new party was formed, the Socialist Unity Party, but to date it has never been invited to official international communist meetings, although its members regularly visit the Soviet Union.

(1) It is also a recognition of an important group in the CPA who did not support the policy of the Party on Czechoslovakia but who do support the main lines of policy and activity within Australia.

And there is evidence that a section of the opposition, no matter how loyal they are to the CPSU, recognise that politically there are real difficulties in being labelled a "Moscow" Party in Australia today.

They believe there is more mileage to be gained from operating in the CPA but without any responsibility to it or for it, while maintaining a separate organisation, publications and apparatus.

The mileage derives in part from an ability to disrupt, or be a nuisance, and to frustrate the application of the Party's policy. Presumably they hope that if they can continue in this way long enough the majority will, for the sake of peace, accept their solutions, in whole or in part.

Then there are some CPA members who hold different views to the majority but reserve their opinions, accept the Party's constitution and confine themselves to debate within the Party while carrying out majority decisions. Rather than seeking to leave the Party they hope to reverse its policies at a future Congress. This right is guaranteed by the CPA constitution, including the right to publication of their views.

Those who wish to form a new organisation assume that the policy decisions of the CPA are unlikely to be reversed. They therefore seek the freedom to put into public operation the policies which they consider to be most appropriate for the socialist movement. In this view they come closest, although from an opposite point of view, to the characterisation given to the Communist Party at its 22nd Congress - that a voluntary organisation is built on the basis of a common revolutionary program and revolutionary activism in support of that program.

In the coming months the Communist Party will decide its course of action based on its Congress decisions. It will not indulge in opportunism, seeking to create some false unity, merely to preserve in its ranks certain well known identities of the mass movement. In general, it will be up to the opposition to determine what will happen. Those who confine themselves to holding a different view while participating in the Party's activity will certainly be free to remain in the Party. Those who place their policy differences first, acting in opposition to the Party, will find that both within the Party and outside in the mass movement they will be called upon to justify their actions.

The Party will continue to seek united actions of all left forces around commonly agreed programs (including the present opposition) but it will continue to insist that all those who retain, or seek, membership in the Party should publicly support and act for Party policies. Where members do not fulfil this obligation the Party, in the interests of clarifying its position in the mass movement, will make known, as widely as possible, that certain public viewpoints and actions are not those of the CPA but those of people who will not accept the majority decisions of the CPA.

A decision on this problem must be made on principles. The decisive principle is the character of a revolutionary party, that it is a voluntary union of people with common aims, an agreed strategy and policy and a constitution which establishes members' rights and duties.

Within such a party, full freedom of debate and publication is guaranteed to all who accept its aims, strategy and rules.

This is very different from the Stalin-inspired "monolith" which suppressed rights of free discussion inside and outside the communist party or confined it within strict limits inside the party.

In rejecting the monolithic concept, the CPA not only encourages debate and contention of ideas within its ranks. It welcomes open debate and, where possible, united actions between different sections of the organised left and with other political viewpoints.

It believes that such united actions and the free-est debate will develop within coalitions of different movements, parties and groups where as issues are debated out agreement on action can be reached. This means that those of the left preserve their own identity and opinions but combine in coalition to act together on matters of mutual concern and agreement. Thus it should be possible then to give primary consideration to actions designed to strengthen revolutionary action while debating issues in dispute. But here it is important to note that in a coalition, debate on issues in dispute does not necessarily require a conclusion.

While an organisation spreads confusion if it speaks with more than one voice, a coalition by its very nature has many voices. If one group in a coalition decides to withdraw temporarily, those left are free to continue with joint actions and it may be presumed that those withdrawing would also want to pursue separate activity based on their analysis. At least they would have no excuse that they were being hampered in their activity by a majority acting on different lines, and if they chose to be inactive they would not be impeding others.

The possibility for debate exists most favourably when each group has an identifiable program and a means to make it known. In such circumstances the problem of sniping on the left might be diminished. As of now opponents within an organisation can criticise what others do even as they seek to prevent it from being done. They can do this without any real responsibility to say what they would do as an alternative (let alone do it).

Fruitful debates do not come from loud voiced shouting or for demands to receive favourable publication rights in journals or newspapers that one neither supports, even denigrates, financially or politically. Such debates develop when the various left forces produce their own material and propose their own actions in their own way, and the way is opened to test the actual ideas and actions in the mass movement.

This is the CPA view, which it applies to all left organisations and tendencies, including the minority of CPA members who can no longer accept the agreed aims and strategy of the Party, and are no longer prepared to accept its organisational principles and rules.

The present Communist Party seeks to make its contribution as best it can as a section, certainly with a defined viewpoint, to the development of a revolutionary movement in Australia. It considers that the development of the movement is more important than the promotion of itself.