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INTERNATIONAL 18

For Workers Power Self-Management Socialism

FUTURE STRA - TEGY

Two replies to Denis Freney

Victorian ALP: Right and Old Left versus Socialist Left

Stalinist 'Declaration': The Old CPA

Oil Dispute Decision: Opening an issue

INTERNATIONAL

FOR WORKERS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM

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INTRODUCTION

The publishers of INTERNATIONAL wish to draw our readers' attention to the conference of solidarity with the Czechoslovak Opposition to be held in Paris on November 26th.

This conference is being sponsored by the anti-stalinist oppositions in the main European Communist Parties, the French section of our Tendency, all French Trotskyist groups, French anarchists, and certain distinguished French intellectuals. It is being organised by exiled Czech communists. Letters and telegrams of support for an independent and truly socialist Czechoslovakia can be sent to: G. Marquis, 10 Cite Lesnier, 92-Clamart, France, and will be conveyed to the conference.

The bulk of this issue is taken up with rebutting Denis Freney's reply to Cde. N.'s critique of the CPA's new programme. Cde. N.'s critique appeared in our last issue and Cde. Freney's reply was published independently and simultaneously. Cde. Freney's polemic is marred by "misquotation, false imputation, contradiction, abuse, irrelevancy, confusion of issues, mis-reading and straw-man erection", but beyond that is his very different estimation of possibilities and how to build a revolutionary party.

Since the piece on the "new" left-wing in the Victorian branch of the A.L.P. was written, this group has held an impressive and defiant rally of its supporters. Here is a left-wing which is willing to fight the attempt to impose a right-wing "Lib-Lab" uniformity on the A.L.P., which is interested in socialism, and which is inclined to favour extra-parliamentary action. It is the most important development and differentiation to occur within the A.L.P. for a very long time. On current appearances this group intends to stay in the A.L.P. and fight. Accordingly, it merits the solidarity and support of other socialists in the A.L.P. and labor movement throughout Australia.

MORE ON THE
C.P. EASTER 1970 CONGRESS

I WOULD HOPE THAT DENIS FRENEY'S TEN-PAGE RUBBISHING (HIS PAMPHLET DATED OCTOBER, 1970) OF MY CRITICAL COMMENTS ON THE C.P. EASTER 1970 CONGRESS LINE (INTERNATIONAL, NO. 17) DOES NOT REPRESENT THE C.P.'S DEFINITIVE JUDGMENT, BUT TO CATER FOR THAT UNHAPPY POSSIBILITY I HAD BETTER SUBMIT SOME COMMENTS NOW.

And should his readers find merit in his attack and agree with him that my criticism was a dishonestly-motivated attack on his party, then at least I plead that he had a pre-publication copy of my article and thus the opportunity to produce a speedy reply to minimise the harm I may have caused.

Coincidentally, I also feel the need to hasten to say that in my view Denis is the most dedicated, self-sacrificing and optimistic revolutionary around.

So that it is more in sorrow than in anger that I have to specify how his penchant to spring to the defence of his party right or wrong leads him to impermissible polemical practices: mis-quotation, false imputation, contradiction, abuse, irrelevancy, confusion of issues, mis-reading and straw-man erection, to such an extent that the more charitable explanation should perhaps be found in his Stalinist indoctrination in his impressionable years.

Nevertheless, he should consider the deterring effect of such methods on less hardened potential critics, since his party continues to procalim the desirability of inducing a dialogue with other tendencies in the movement.

x x x

Denis starts with the discovery of a particular "shortcoming" in my criticism: my quotations from the "draft" rather than from the final documents (his page 1.) Nevertheless, he can find only one such in which the first draft is "significantly" altered. This is my quotation of the document's perspective that an elected national parliament would still be needed, which would make final decisions on national issues. Rather brashly, he points out that "national assembly" was substituted for "national parliament".

Is he not aware that this is a distinction without a difference?

As compared with soviets, "national assembly" is essentially equivalent to "national parliament". The historic assemblies were the National Assembly (originally the Third Estate of the Estates-General) in the French Revolution (1789-91), elected on a nation-wide suffrage; the Convention of 1792-95, elected on manhood suffrage; and the Russian Constituent Assembly of 1917-18, elected on universal suffrage.

(Incidentally, Quebec calls its legislature the National Assembly.)

My contention was and remains that the perspective of a national parliament (or assembly) together with its role as above, and the perspective of "all power to the soviets" are mutually exclusive and that a programmatic communist document may not avoid or be equivocal on this question.

But after all his fulminations, Denis exhibits his deplorable confusion by going for both (his page 5): "... some form of national assembly, which could be directly elected, or better, in my opinion, elected from the sum total of self-managed units in society..." Again, he says (his page 4): "I personally believe that this schema (i.e.: soviets - N.), drawn from the Great October Revolution, still remains valid, especially after the confirmation of May 1968..."

x x x

Let me point out that neither on the question of soviets vis-a-vis parliaments or assemblies, nor on the equally capital question of the leading role of the proletariat in the revolution do I use the word "neglect" as descriptive of the C.P. documents' weakness.

On the question of the leading role of the proletariat, it should be sufficient to reiterate that despite all the C.P. documents' references to

"... a great mass movement embracing all major social classes and groups..."

"... action by the majority of Australians..."

the mass movement "needs also to be sufficiently organised to mount the mass struggle and exert the social force needed",

"such revolutionary mass movements emerge to one degree or another spontaneously from various social groups and communities",

"the Communist Party bases itself on the working class... on whose desire for change and willingness to fight for it any revolution depends",

"... because industrial workers are decisive in the strength they can bring to bear for social change, and because of their key position in the functioning of the economy" and

"the modern working class is the decisive social force for revolutionary change",

NOWHERE DO THE DOCUMENTS AFFIRM THE LEADING ROLE OF THE PROLETARIAT.

x x x

I am quite happy to go along with Denis' addition of "hobblegook" to the language: I suppose he has as much right to additions as Time mag-

azine.

But I fear he is fibbing when he says (his page 2) that my reference to the leading and hegemonic role of the proletariat is properly described by his new word, or that he finds it difficult to work out what exactly I mean, since in his page 3 he claims that what I mean is that the working class of itself plays a "leading" and "hegemonic" role in the revolutionary struggle.

Obviously the C.P. documents were concerned with perspectives of the revolutionary transformation of society. Obviously my insistence was on facing up to the question of the leading role of the proletariat in this revolutionary transformation.

Denis will not succeed in shuffling away from this question by digressing to gratuitous instruction on quite other matters about which I was aware before he was born (appreciation of the nature of the proletariat in a non-revolutionary situation and how it emerges into a class in-and-for-itself (1), his unsupported imputations of determinism, his silly talk of my turning to the working class --- I've never been anywhere else --- and his little joke about my glorifying and abstracting the working class from real workers.)

On his page 3, Denis asserts: "There is confusion, first of all, of a program for workers control today, with the role of workers councils in a Workers State in the future. The link between workers control demands today, and self-management tomorrow is very clearly made in the documents."

Now the C.P. documents advocate: "Shop committees and/or workers' councils with rights to intervene, and ultimately to decide on all issues affecting the workers in the factories, consultation before dismissal, right to inspection of books, etc."

(1) On this question I found an adequate quotation from T.A. Jackson on "Dialectics": "Marx himself in his Year-book article, above-quoted, was likewise showing the "gill-arches" of his theoretical pedigree. He envisages the Revolution as produced by an alliance between philosophy and the proletariat. It is, however, philosophy with a difference --- which makes it no "philosophy". Likewise it is the proletariat, not in the abstract, not in its empirical, statistical aggregation. It is the proletariat in motion, and therefore in process of dialectical transmutation, the proletariat as embodied social potentiality, to which philosophy (i.e., theory) will supply awareness and understanding, converting it from the proletariat as such ("a large number of persons") and the proletariat for itself (a simple reflex-relation to the bourgeoisie) into the proletariat in-and-for-itself, a self-willed force negating the bourgeois negative status of the proletariat and all therein implied and thereby becoming the dynamic starting-point for a new development in which neither "philosophy" nor the proletariat existed in form --- while the positive content of both was carried over in synthetic union in the new departure: "Philosophy cannot be realised without the liquidation of the proletariat: the proletariat cannot liquidate itself without realising philosophy". Marx: Year Book. See, in this issue, "LENIN AND THE 'PARTY'"

Propaganda to this end is quite valid and some modest achievements here or there today in this regard calls for appreciation of its great importance. Secondly, these "shop committees and/or workers' councils are the form of the constituent elements of tomorrow's soviets."

Denis, failing to grasp the essential meaning of workers' control, nourishes the fantasy of its realisation in today's conditions, as quite distinct from the role of the soviets in the future.

In actuality, the achievement of a situation of workers' control implemented through its organisational vehicle, the factory committee, signifies that a situation of dual power in the factory has arrived. This fact confirms that a revolutionary situation has developed. Dual power cannot continue. Conflict is inevitable. The one or the other contending class must establish its power. For the proletariat, the urgent need is to link these organs of workers' control into soviets as the revolutionary leadership of the class. Revolutionary situations do not long endure. Hesitancy or trepidation are fatal. The opportunity must be grasped. Otherwise the bourgeoisie will re-establish its power through its fascist dictatorship. The point at which workers' control, bearing down in contradiction of the will of the boss in the factory (the situation of dual power), is transformed into workers' self-management, is only the insurrectionary moment in history of the soviet assumption of political power.

This is not the perspective of the C.P. documents which, I repeat, reserve any co-ordinating role to the unions.

x x x

Denis seeks to justify (his page 5) the documents' failure to confirm the leading role of the proletariat by equating "the big majority of the population" with "the huge mass of the working class" so as to render such confirmation superfluous. Australia is not peasant-dominated Russia of 1917 and white collar workers are not petty bourgeoisie, he instructs.

On the other hand, petty bourgeois ideology is the predominant ideology in the Australian working class (accepted as including all strata of wage and salary earners.) And, while appreciating the importance for the future of the working class of the leavening of its ranks by a stratum of more intellectually disciplined radical thinkers more conscious of their essential alienation, it would be quite wrong to visualise that at the time of the revolutionary transformation of the proletariat into a class in-and-for-itself, there will still not be large sectors constrained by the norms of petty bourgeois ideology.

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Denis has no warrant for the assertion that my criticism presented "entrism sui generis" as a cure-all or that it means "stress on the mechanical aspects of 'getting the numbers', of beating the right wing at their own game."

He agrees with my statement that "reformist ideology predominates in the working class because of the long-time political inadequacy of the 'left' including particularly times when conditions were propitious for its development", but he adds, "surely this is not the major factor", without letting us into the secret.

Of course, it is just not true that my article indicated that I accept that the Labor Party can be transformed to achieve revolution "for radical change and socialism". I pointed out (page 7) that the C.P. documents were saying this. My comment was that the future will determine between revolutionaries who believe this and those who do not, and without the issue involving disastrous consequences.

Denis then criticises the C.P. documents for leaving a concept of transformation of the ALP as a real possibility.

As to the "seven categories" included in the C.P. document, "Coalition of the Left", which Denis denies appear there --- he should look again.

x x x

Equally pernicious is his falsification of the meaning and motivation for the policy of "entrism sui generis", which he interprets as "simply posing as a good Labor man".

The motivation of "entrism sui generis" is precisely concern for the capital question, as to how the revolutionary party is to be built starting from the proletariat just as it is. It aims at the building of an independent Marxist formation of maximum possible strength as quickly as possible. It sees this as stemming essentially from the differentiation in the adherents of the mass reformist party, requiring integration and real work taking its point of departure from the existing political level --- rather than the chimera of "building a revolutionary party outside" in disregard of the reality of the roadblock --- the stubborn traditional allegiance of the masses to "their" party, and how in fact they will advance to a more appropriate political consciousness.

The basic cadres of the independent Marxist formation must be gathered now and day by day. The growing strength and particularly the political adequacy of this formation will induce a situation of growing respect for it among the masses and consequently, increasing acceptance of the propriety of the bulk of its cadres being active members of the mass party.

To equate this perspective of how the revolutionary party (as distinct from its basic cadres) will be built with "immersion in the ALP and rejection of a mass movement", shows the kind of deplorably low political level that has to be surmounted.

x x x

Despite Denis' blind faith in the scientific and technological revo-

lution minimising the need for strict theoretical elaboration, I see no justification for altering what I indicated as the condition qualifying optimism for the possibility of the C.P.'s further evolution to a revolutionary-Marxist position consonant with the times:

"... this happy outcome cannot be envisaged on the basis of a too-accommodating solidarity with its present position. Rather its possibility of meaningful advancement --- involving complete recognition that exaggerations about 'the new stage of capitalism' cannot serve to cover avoidance and repudiation of its past --- depends upon its capacity to front up honestly to criticism of its eclectic position." (page 1)

x x x

As to the C.P. documents' position on foreign and military policy, even the accommodating Denis could not goad himself to his usual solidarity with his leaders.

x x x

As to my understanding that loyalty to the whole of the C.P. Congress decisions is required as a condition of membership --- which Denis denies without elaboration --- I leave this to the judgment of C.P. members.

x x x

As to Denis' round of abuse and misconstruing of the meaning and motivation of my criticism of the C.P. documents (his pages 9 and 10), I depend upon the foregoing comments as answer.

If they are not seen as satisfactory by the serious student of revolutionary politics and not confirmed by events, I will stand corrected. In the meantime, I wish him well in constructing the revolutionary party in the coming months.

N. 20th October, 1970.

REFLECTIONS ON THE WORK OF LENIN

(AS THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION OF THE RECIPROCAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CLASS AND THE PARTY, THE SUBJECT OF SO MUCH DISPUTATION AMONGST MARXISTS SINCE LENIN'S EARLY POLEMICAL WORK ("WHAT IS TO BE DONE?"), IT IS TIMELY HERE TO REPRODUCE (FROM INTERNATIONAL NO. 12) AN EXTRACT FROM MICHEL PABLO'S "REFLECTIONS ON THE WORK OF LENIN", UNDER THE SUB-HEADING, LENIN AND THE "PARTY" --- WHICH SEEMS TO US A NECESSARY CORRECTIVE TO THE ONE-SIDED APPRECIATION OF THESE RECIPROCAL RELATIONS, STILL SO PREVALENT.)

LENIN AND THE "PARTY"

"What is to be Done?" sums up the experience Lenin draws from the ideological struggle led by ISKRA between 1901 and 1902 against the "economists" and preaches the necessity of a "democratic-centralist" organisation composed of "professional revolutionaries".

In his preface to his edition contained in the collection "Twelve Years" published in 1907, Lenin stated with precision that "What is to be Done?" "is a polemical work intended to correct the errors of 'economism', and it is incorrect to examine the contents of the brochure in isolation from this task."

According to him it was a question of "straightening the line" which the "economists" had "distorted in a way" by "twisting it in the opposite direction". But he denied having wanted in any way to "erect the formulae used in What is to be Done?" into something 'programmatic' constituting a body of principles'.

This does not alter the fact that the incriminating phrases which "What is to be Done?" contains have fostered an abundant polemical literature among Marxists, centred on the actual leading question of the reciprocal relations between the class and the Party.

The famous subject of the controversy is well-known:

Lenin writes in "What is to be Done?" that the history of all countries attests that, through its own forces, the working class can reach only trade union consciousness.

As for the socialist doctrine, it is born of the philosophic, historic, economic theories elaborated by the cultivated representatives of the possessing classes, by the intellectuals.

... The spontaneous development of the worker movement legitimately leads to its subordination to the bourgeois ideology, because the spontaneous worker movement is trade-unionism, and trade unionism is rightly the ideological subjection of the workers by the bourgeoisie.

That is why our task, that of the social-democracy, is to combat spontaneity, to divert the worker movement from this spontaneous tendency of trade unionism to seek refuge under the wing of the bourgeoisie, so as to draw it under the wing of social democracy.

According to the literal interpretation of "What is to be Done?", the workers who tend spontaneously towards the bourgeois ideology, the dominant, the prevalent ideology, nevertheless have the faculty of also easily assimilating socialism, which is a doctrine elaborated by intellectuals and a policy applied by a distinct organisation of the class, in a word, a "consciousness" brought from outside.

Plekhanov, Rosa Luxemburg and Trotsky intervened against this conception in 1904. They attempted to define the dialectical bond between "spontaneity" and "consciousness", between class and party.

According to Plekhanov the Marxist doctrine reflects the spontaneous growth of the worker movement, without which it could not have been able to elaborate and develop.

He calls in question, then, that the limits of the "consciousness" which the proletariat can attain may be those of "economism" and of "trade unionism" because "it is clear", according to him, "that at a certain stage of social development, the workers of the capitalist countries would have reached socialism even if they had been abandoned to their own forces."

The term socialism is used by Plekhanov in the sense of the social revolution which, in a way, synthesises spontaneity and consciousness with a view to a radical change of the social order.

With Rosa Luxemburg the polemic is both widened and raised higher, to superior levels.

For her, "socialist consciousness" and spontaneous movement of the class are not external elements the one to the other which must be connected, but grounded in a dialectical unity.

"Social-democracy is not joined to the organisation of the working class, it is the working class' very own movement."

The "Party" is nothing other than the most advanced ideological layer of the proletariat organically tied to the other surrounding layers of the proletariat involved in class struggle, through which their class consciousness unceasingly grows.

Setting out from this conception Rosa rejects "rigid", "mechanical" "super-centralism" delivering the workers to a "group of intellectuals" who corner the leadership of the Party, and through the intermediary of the "Central Committee" and its "absolute power" fetter, deform and limit the free development of the revolutionary movement of the class.

Trotsky developed his criticisms of "What is to be Done?" in this general direction speaking of the "political substitutionism" of Lenin, whose conception of the Party substitutes this latter for the class. In the extension of this logic the "Central Committee" would substitute itself "for the organisation of the party" and "finally a dictator" would substitute himself "for the Central Committee".

"The system of this political 'substitutionism'", Trotsky asserts, "just as the system of 'economist simplification', arise, consciously or unconsciously, from a false, adulterated understanding of the relation between the objective interests of the proletariat and its consciousness. Marxism teaches that the interests of the proletariat are determined by the objective conditions of its existence. These

interests are so powerful, and it is so vain to struggle against them, that they finally constrain the proletariat to transfer them into the domain of its own consciousness --- that is to say, to transform the success of its objective interests into its subjective interest."

Trotsky persisted to the end of his life (3) in considering that Lenin's theory according to which "the worker movement, left to itself, inevitably takes the road of opportunism" and that "revolutionary consciousness is brought to it from the outside by Marxist intellectuals" has a "one-sided and therefore erroneous character."

He conceded also, on the same occasion, that the "tendency of Bolshevism for centralisation revealed from the Third Congress (of the Russian Social-Democratic Party) its negative aspects" favouring the rise of the "bureaucracy" of the practically uncontrolled "comitards".

At nearly the same time Trotsky considered (4) that the banning of the tendencies in the Bolshevik Party, occurring at the Tenth Party Congress, "was one of the points of departure of the degeneration of the Party".

However, considered as a whole, Lenin's conception of the Party, such as was materialised in practice in his lifetime, makes other characteristics stand out which predominate by far over its "negative aspects".

For Lenin, the Party is an instrument of the struggle of the proletariat in a historic period dominated by the reality of the Revolution, with a view to assuring the victory of the latter.

Lenin, more than anyone else, gave primacy to the revolutionary activity of the masses which creates revolutionary situations and begins revolutions.

On several occasions Lenin had emphasised the slowness of the Party in relation to the masses' organically, instinctively launching out into revolutionary struggle, more audaciously and radically than the conservative "leaderships", caught unexpectedly by the Revolution, which never assumes "pure forms", never follows a calendar or a "foreseen" road.

Lenin conceived the Party in the function of its political role, of its capacity to interpret correctly political reality in permanent interaction with the movement of the class, to accelerate the movement and to orient it towards the objective: the seizure of power.

(3) See his "STALIN", written in 1939.

(4) Letter of Leon Trotsky to the French Workers and Peasants' Socialist Party (P.S.O.P.) of July 25, 1939 (see No.42 of "Sous le Drapeau du Socialisme").

The organisation of the Party is subordinated to its political function in a given context. For this reason it is elastic and evolves according to the exigencies of the struggle for the revolution and according to the acquisition of experience.

"A form of organisation that has been useful for precise objectives, in a particular case, plainly can become an obstacle in different conditions of struggle", Lukacs wrote with justice in his "LENIN" of 1924.

He added: "Because it is of the essence of history to always produce anew." This "anew" cannot be calculated in advance thanks to some infallible theory --- it must be identified in the struggle by its first sprouts and be made to progress towards clear consciousness.

The party does not have for its task to impose on the masses any type of comportment abstractly elaborated but, quite the contrary, to permanently study the struggles and methods of struggle of the masses.

The Party, that is to say the indispensable political organisation of the vanguard of the class, makes up for the fluctuations of the revolutionary movement of the class by maintaining a high level of consciousness enriched by the experience of all the struggles of the class.

"Revolutionary instinct" and "revolutionary spontaneity" characterise the permanent but irregular movement of the class, whilst lasting "revolutionary consciousness" is the attribute, on principle, of the organised vanguard.

However, the "proletarian" and "socialist" purity of this "consciousness" is not acquired once and for all by the "Party" making use of the name of Marxism, but this is the function of its truly proletarian composition, of its effective, democratic connection with the class, of its internal regime, of the theoretical and political quality of its leadership.

The "Party" can very well evolve into a spokesman of bureaucratic forces or groups, differentiating itself, through the creation of interests proper to such forces or groups, from the proletariat and from its historic interests as a class.

From this point of view, besides the composition of the Party, its internal regime and the quality of its leadership are determinant factors in its evolution.

Every political organisation cannot be otherwise than at the same time "democratic" and "centralist". Otherwise it would not be an "organisation", but a queer, loose association, a nebulous and ineffectual movement.

The term "democratic centralism" used by Lenin was aimed at expressing the changing dynamic of this dialectical unity, according to the circumstances of the struggle.

For example, in the case of prolonged and rigorous illegality the "centralist" element tends to restrict democracy in the Party.

On the other hand, in the case of wide and lasting "bourgeois-democratic" legality, the democratic life of the Party expands freely.

The "Leninist" practice of the Bolshevik Party demonstrates that under Lenin's personal impulsion, this Party always assured to all its elements and all its tendencies a very democratic internal life before, during and after the Revolution.

It is sufficient to remember the very large degree of liberty that existed at least up to the Tenth Congress of the Party in the multiple internal and public discussions that took place between the cadres of this Party and the equivalent of which is not to be found in any other Party since that time.

In its organisational functioning the Party corresponded to the political style of Lenin, of his thought, of his way of conceiving Marxism, of his morale also.

"Leninism could not be conceived without theoretical power, without a critical analysis of the material bases of the political process. It is necessary to unceasingly sharpen and apply the arm of 'Marxist investigation'" Trotsky will write in 1923 ("New Course")

He added:

"Leninism is in the first place realism, the best qualitative and quantitative appreciation of reality from the point of view of revolutionary action. It is also irreconcilable with the flight from reality, with passivity, with the arrogant justification of yesterday's faults on the pretext of saving the tradition of the Party.

"Leninism is orthodox, stubborn, irreducible, but it does not imply either formalism or dogma or bureaucratism.

"It does not allow of either fiction, or bragging, or pseudo-grandeur."

The experience of Bolshevism has also demonstrated how the best "design" of a political organisation indispensable to the vanguard, both democratic and efficacious as Lenin certainly wanted, could become the victim of adverse historical circumstances and could be bureaucratized beyond recognition --- the very opposite of its archetype.

But what we can be certain of is that this work of destruction could not have been achieved with Lenin but against Lenin.

For, as we shall see, it was Lenin who was the first among the Bolshevik leaders to react, to be sure empirically, against the new element of bureaucratization, destructive of workers' power, and to terminate his conscious life in pathetic efforts to contain this monstrous evil.

=====

THE STRUGGLE IN THE LABOR PARTY

"WE NEED A STRUCTURE THAT IS CONTINUALLY SELF-CRITICAL, THAT PREVENTS ELITISM AND IS ABLE TO KEEP UNDER SCRUTINY OF THE WHOLE MOVEMENT, ITS AGENTS SUCH AS PARLIAMENTARIANS, PAID OFFICIALS AND EXECUTIVES.

"WHAT IS PROPOSED IS THAT IN FUTURE WE INVOLVE OUR RANK-AND-FILE IN ACTION, BY IMPLEMENTING CONTINUALLY, AT ALL LEVELS POSSIBLE OUR POLICIES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AND BY SO DOING INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY ITSELF. THIS VERY ACTION, THIS INVOLVEMENT IN POWER AND ITS USE WILL ITSELF HELP TO FURTHER RADICALISE THE PARTY AND, AT THE SAME TIME, EARN RESPECT FROM THE COMMUNITY FOR ITS AIMS AND WILL THUS IMPROVE OUR CAUSE AT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS.

"THE ONE STRENGTH A LEFT-WING ORIENTED PARTY NEEDS IN THE LONG TERM IS MASS SUPPORT, WITH AN ACTIVE, INVOLVED RANK-AND-FILE MOVEMENT WHICH HAS A REAL SAY IN THE DETERMINING OF, DEVELOPMENT OF, AND PUTTING INTO EFFECT ITS AIMS AND OBJECTIVES AT ALL LEVELS, INCLUDING THE PARLIAMENTARY LEVEL.

"WE OPERATE IN A PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM. THIS DOES NOT MEAN WE SHOULD ACCEPT THAT IT IS AN IDEAL MEANS OF GOVERNMENT. THIS IS ONE ISSUE THAT NEEDS EXAMINATION AND ARGUMENT. IT IS NOT THE INTENTION OF THIS REPORT TO CANVASS SUCH AN ARGUMENT.

"DESPITE THAT IT IS DESIRABLE THAT THE NEW PARTY STRUCTURE ALLOWS FOR ACTION OUTSIDE PARLIAMENT TO PUSH ISSUES AND FORCE CHANGE BY CHANGING PUBLIC ATTITUDES AS WELL AS TRYING TO WIN GOVERNMENT. IT IS NECESSARY TO RAISE THE POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS BOTH OF ITS MEMBERSHIP AND THE PUBLIC AT LARGE."

(Extract from "Inside Labor", organ of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Labor Party Committee, No.3 of October 10, 1970.)

This extract from the publication of the Victorian Labor Party Branch left wing leadership --- embattled in a rearguard action to rally its support against the unrestrained right wing drive through the Federal Executive majority to establish national right wing uniformity and the liberal-labor alternative political formation required by the capitalist establishment --- shows how far in advance it is of the other Branch leaderships and the kind of official left wing leadership existing in New South Wales.

In their publications, the Victorians are scathing in their criticism of Victorian State Executive members who lined up with the Federal Executive majority and the New South Wales "left", as indicated by the following extracts:

@@ "Some members of the Executive (Victorian), Hawke (A.C.T.U. President), Holding (Victorian Parliamentary leader) and Brebner (union official) in particular, pushed for the famous Murphy (Party Senate Leader --- from N.S.W.) compromise (or perhaps infamous), which was no different in principle to the Cameron plan."

@@ "... what became apparent was that Senator Lionel Murphy from N.S.W. was playing a particularly peculiar role, castigating both the Victorian and N.S.W. delegations. The disturbing feature of these reports was that Senator Murphy is closely linked through Ray Gietzelt with Bob Hawke --- an indication to suspicious people that a section of the left was prepared to throw Victoria to the wolves, in order to gain advantages in N.S.W."

@@ "In the recent disastrous defeat represented by the dismissal of the Victorian Executive, a large part of the blame must be laid at the door of the official left opposition in N.S.W."

@@ "With the departure of the worst groupers (the 1955 split), the left leadership (in N.S.W.) passed by default to a steering committee of left wing union officials, with contacts in a great number of branches and electorate councils.

"The prime function of this left wing has been directed towards getting positions on the State Executive. In this, they have been partly successful. Over the years a number of left officials have been put on the 'officer's ticket' at the State Conference, and have served shorter or longer periods, depending upon the degree of servility to the right..."

@@ "The tragedy of the official left in N.S.W. was that, doomed to what appeared to be a permanent position of inferiority, they saw their future as being based on top level manoeuvres with their right wing counterparts."

@@ "Each state annual conference has seen a pathetic document, produced by the official left, signed by a number of parliamentarians, union officials and electorate council officers, calling for a balanced leadership. The word socialism was never mentioned in any of these publications..."

@@ "The State Parliamentary Party and most of the Federal Parliamentarians continued to be mostly a mixture of right opportunists and right fanatics, while the State Upper House, with its peculiar, undemocratic constitution continued to be a haven for superannuated groupers."

@@ "At the present time, Tom Burns, the Federal President is investigating the possibility of intervention in N.S.W. A large part of the left apparently believes that destroying the Victorian left will enhance the possibility of destroying the N.S.W. right.

"They have apparently learned nothing from the past 15 years of almost continual defeats."

An indication of the nature of the deposed Victorian leadership is given in the following excerpt from "INSIDE LABOR":

@@ "As the result of the major split in Victoria in 1954, the extreme right wing was removed. One of the basic factors in that split was sectarianism. The battle between the Masons and the Catholics played an important part. The right wing Catholic power group was removed, leaving a group in control within which the Masonic influence dominated. Policies such as No State Aid were formulated not so much on philosophical as on sectarian grounds.

"The Party structures that were then set up were designed to enable the essential control of the Labor Party to remain in the hands of a number of key trade unions, many of whose officials were not politically very active or skilled.

"For many, their once a year role was to meet and select the ticket for the executive.

"This was done by electing a 13 man ticket committee from within their ranks, who met and brought back recommendations to the broad meeting of 40 unions for their approval.

"The control of the ticketing committee was held ^{during} most of this period by a few prominent trade union officials, basically anti-socialist, anti-youth and anti-intellectual.

"They were not originators of ideas or action, but worked basically to maintain their control and power.

"It was, in the main, during this period and up to 18 months ago that the frustrations within the branches of the A.L.P. developed.

"At the ticketing meeting prior to the 1969 Conference, the control of this powerful group was broken.

"Immediately that group tried to alter the method of ticketing selection, it recognised it no longer held control. This move was defeated.

"A new force, comprising in the main more politically active and younger trade unionists with a socialist philosophy emerged.

"The executive it picked reflected that philosophy. This new force was obviously one which would be much less acceptable to the establishment, the parliamentary wing both Federal and State, and the Communist Party.

"There was in fact proof that socialists could work, be heard and felt within the Labor Party. What was to be tested was whether they could survive."

@@ "The communist controlled unions gave assurances that they would not support a split --- so much for solidarity, so much for the myth that they exerted an influence in Victoria.

"They exert an influence most certainly --- not on the socialists, but on the opportunists; their own desire for a broad front, their own capacity to embrace the right wing for tactical purposes assisted

the intervention.

"They have a vested interest against the valid, viable cohesive socialist force within the Labor Party. It would make their own position more irrelevant."

The unfortunate sectarian attitude of the Communist Party to the mass party is confirmed by the article in its central organ "Tribune", of 21st October, 1970, from its Victorian correspondent:

@@ "Its content ("Inside Labor") is a mixture. It contains detailed exposures of intrigue and back-stage deals in Victoria and N.S.W. But it also has some peculiar notions about the Labor Party based in illusions about its ability to become a genuine socialist party.

"Alongside this, some of the material is of such a character as to make one wonder why the writers persist in being members of a party which they criticise in such a fundamental way."

The political hopelessness of the official left leadership in N.S.W. is confirmed by its organ, "Socialist and Industrial Labor", of September 1970:

@@ "With its decision to dismiss the Victorian executive and replace it with a left-leaning committee of 12 to administer the branch, the Federal executive now has a solid basis for strong action in N.S.W.

"The Federal takeover of the Victorian branch was a regrettable step.

"But it should not be regarded as a defeat for the left."

The organisational proposals for the N.S.W. Branch by its right wing State Executive substitute a triennial convention for the present annual conference.

At this, the union (industrial) representation is to be 228 (a reduction from 73% to 60%) and the "political" representation 150 (increase from 27% to 40%).

The first figure is made up of 150 from all affiliated unions to be elected in one ballot of this block, 66 from unions with over 15,000 affiliated members (individual union representation of at least 6) and 12 from the Labor Council.

The second figure is made up of 78 from zones (6 elected by each of 13 zones in which the 47 Branches are to be divided), 12 from the Women's Committee, 12 from the Youth section, and 48 parliamentary members.

At present this would give the policy-making convention a figure roughly of 278 right wing to 100 "left".

As well, there is to be a State Council meeting quarterly (inter-pretative function) of 189 and a State Executive (administrative function) of 63, with representation on a similar basis.

All this represents a further step away from control by the union base of the party, the reactionary character of which the future will show.

The Victorian left wing struggle still continues. Supporters of the deposed State Executive have called a meeting for Sunday, November 1, to discuss developments of the A.L.P. within the State.

As a counter the Federal Secretary, Mr. M.J.Young, has called a meeting for November 22, the day after the Senate elections.

Undoubtedly the results of these elections will be assessed by both sides and such assessments will have an important bearing on their future tactics and perspectives.

THE OIL DISPUTE ----- AFTER THE JUDGMENT

"WHATEVER HIS (MR. HAWKE'S) MOTIVES AND THOSE OF THE A.C.T.U., HOWEVER, ONE THING IS CLEAR: THE CONCEPT OF PROFITABILITY, HOWEVER VAGUE, HAS ENTERED THE POPULAR CONSCIOUSNESS AND, PROBABLY MORE IMPORTANT, THE UNIONS' VOCABULARY."

--- The Canberra Times, 20th October, 1970.

"WE CONSIDER THAT THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW FACTOR, SUCH AS THE CAPACITY OF AN EMPLOYER OR AN INDUSTRY, WOULD NOT BE LIKELY TO BRING SUCH FLOW-ONS (... SOME DECISIONS OF THE COMMISSION IN ONE AREA FLOWING INTO OTHERS WHERE LOGICALLY THEY SHOULD NOT ...) TO AN END. THIS COULD MEAN THAT WAGES BASED IN PART ON THE CAPACITY OF ONE EMPLOYER OR INDUSTRY WOULD FLOW ON TO OTHER EMPLOYERS OR INDUSTRIES WHOSE CAPACITY COULD BE QUITE DIFFERENT."

--- from Conciliation and Arbitration Commission decision, The Canberra Times, 17th Oct, 1970

"WE CONSIDER THAT ANY CHANGE IN THE COMMISSION'S PRESENT APPROACH TO AWARD-MAKING COULD, AT LEAST IN THE SHORT TERM, CAUSE MORE INDUSTRIAL TROUBLE THAN IT COULD SOLVE."

--- from same decision, The Australian, 17/10/70

The judgment awarded fitters an increase of \$11.70 (\$8.50 a week retrospective to June 5 plus \$3.20 next year-. The back-dating does not apply to shift premiums, overtime and other extraneous payments.

The unions claimed a flat \$12.00 increase but the employers offered \$10.00 (\$7.00 and \$3.00 next year) for tradesmen.

For tradesmen's assistants, the award was \$9.70 (\$6.70 now and \$3.20 next year). The employers offered \$8.20 (\$5.20 now and \$3.00 next year.)

In addition, the decision included:

- 4 weeks annual leave to all workers;
- 5 weeks for seven-day shift workers;
- double time for overtime worked on an emergency shift.

On the unions' demand for a 25 per cent loading (five weeks' pay for four weeks' annual leave) the decision was to reserve the question to a later stage for consideration.

While rejecting the concept of profitability or capacity to pay as inapplicable to arbitration, the Commission acknowledged that it could be relevant in the less formal procedures of conciliation.

It amended its principle set in the G.M.-H. case of 1966 that the level of profits and productivity were not good reasons for awarding wage increases by indicating two exceptions:

1. When it was mutually agreed by the unions and the employers that "capacity to pay" was a factor which could be used, and
2. Where the profitability of an industry had been used in the past as a determining factor in wage negotiations.

It further added that "at some future time different sets of circumstances and different arguments may produce other exceptions."

"THE RESULT OF THE FIRST TWO CONSIDERATIONS IS ALMOST CERTAIN TO BE AN EVEN GREATER RESORT TO DIRECT BARGAINING BY THE UNIONS AND, PERHAPS, EVEN MORE INDUSTRIAL UNREST... THIS (ADMISSIBILITY OF CAPACITY TO PAY AS A CRITERION IN ARBITRATION WHEN IT HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED AS A CRITERION EITHER BY NEGOTIATION OR BY CONCILIATION) WILL BE READ IN SOME QUARTERS AS AN INVITATION TO THE UNIONS TO BRING PRESSURE ON THE EMPLOYERS TO CHANGE THEIR MINDS."

--- The Canberra Times, 20th October, 1970.

"IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS, THE CAPACITY OF INDUSTRY AND EMPLOYERS TO MEET WAGE DEMANDS WILL BECOME THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ISSUE IN WAGE NEGOTIATIONS."

--- The Australian, 17th October, 1970.

Kenneth Davidson, The Australian's economist, said on 17th October, 1970: "Of course, Mr. Hawke would probably opt for a system where rather than the employees in the less profitable industries get less, a modified system of comparative wage justice applies.

"This means the most profitable industries are hit first for a wage rise and then pressure is put on the less profitable to match the wage increases."

"The A.C.T.U. president, Mr. R.Hawke, said last night the decision of a full bench of the commission by no means ended the union campaign to have profitability taken into account.

"In the next few years, the capacity of industry and employers to meet wage demands will become the most significant issue in wage negotiations."

--- The Australian, 17th October, 1970.

Mr. J.E.Heffernan, Federal Secretary of the Metal Trades Federation of unions, and Secretary of the Sheet Metal Workers' union said the Commission's decision on the capacity-to-pay case --- was to a large extent predictable.

Attempts by unions to have wages fixed on the basis of profits hit at the very root of the system.

If workers and unions expect to get higher rates from companies with huge profits, they will have to by-pass the Industrial Commission and resort to direct negotiations, backed with their organised industrial strength," he said.

--- The Australian, 20th October, 1970.

x x x

Having regard to all the above, it is perhaps pertinent to recapitulate our bias to the positive features of the A.C.T.U. initiative in the oil case and pre-judgment expectations contained in "The Oil Dispute and Current Perspectives" (International, No.16.):

++ "The more positive implication of Comrade Hawke's initiative, and the one of real concern to the boss, is the prospect of opening the books, of abolition of 'business secrets', of determining the actual share of the national income wolfed by the individual capitalist firm, Real achievement of this objective, with its revelation to the masses of the actual set-up in capitalist society would be the first big step towards workers' control of industry.

"Here a warning is pertinent. No office-holder of the capitalist state is in a position to carry out this work against the opposition and sabotage of big business. To break the resistance of the exploiters, the mass pressure of the working class is necessary. Essentially, this will be expressed through factory committees, calling in (as consultants but not as 'technocrats') specialists sincerely devoted to the people: accountants, statisticians, engineers, scientists, etc. And so, if the Commission adopts the new criterion, we may be sure it will seriously modify the exhaustive investigation of company books required (without this necessarily excluding substantial wage increases in the given case.)"

++ "As we have said, the positive factor in Comrade Hawke's initiative is that he has authoritatively enunciated as eminently valid the need to open the books of Big Business. Now having

been launched, the force of this idea will not be eliminated should the Commission reject it. Henceforth it will be an essential objective in the workers' struggle except that the vehicle for its implementation (and the essential one) will be the shop committee uniting all the workers. Such will be the case also should the Commission favour the alternative --- adoption of the principle, but emasculated or restricted in its scope.

"On the other hand, the deleterious aspect of his initiative, to the extent it is successful, should be appreciated by the left wing. There would be no justification for accepting as valid a low wage level for workers in not-so-profitable industries.

"The workers are not interested in the bookkeeping of individual bankrupts or semi-bankrupts, but in the account ledgers of all exploiters as a whole. The workers cannot and do not wish to accommodate the level of their living conditions to the exigencies of individual capitalists, themselves victims of their own regime. The task is one of reorganising the whole system of production and distribution on a more dignified and workable basis."

++ "It seems clear the last thing the Commission wants is to have to make a decision on profitability and productivity as a valid yardstick in wage fixation."

++ "If the oil bosses remain uncooperative, in a possible further conference or without one, it is on the cards that the Commission will seek to resolve the dispute by a fairly substantial wage rise, which, given the present level of the workers' political consciousness, would likely be accepted in preference to strike action for a real opening of the books for an inspection by workers' representatives.

"Opening the books has been put on the agenda. The workers will not achieve this most important, yet eminently reasonable and logical demand in its true sense from the Commission.

"Rather this achievement waits upon a higher political awareness bringing the class struggle to a higher level."

There is no doubt the labor movement will be advantaged in its search for the transitional road forward to socialism by a careful study of the oil strike and the considerations it has opened up.

21st October, 1970

THE STALINISTS ARE MORE THAN MERE REFORMISTS

By D.G.

THE STALINISTS' published "Declaration" gives little clue to their real policy, or to the real basis of the split in the C.P.A.

Readers are presented with a specious call for unity of everyone with everyone except the "ultra-radical" "Trotskyist" left movement, and with an immediate programme which is thoroughly reformist in every detail.

The Stalinists are, however, a distinct political trend, and their brand of reformism can never fully merge with the Australian reformist currents which the Stalinists seek to turn to their own advantage.

This is because the mainstream of Australian reformism is a reflection of bourgeois interests, but Stalinist reformism is a feint to conceal a total policy based on quite different class interests. The immediate Stalinist programme is reformism, the long-term programme is a police state dominated by a central political bureaucracy.

The central political bureaucracy is a social grouping which developed first in the Soviet Union and is now international, and to a degree fragmented into rival bureaucratic blocs.

The central political bureaucracy is quite distinct from the technological and administrative bureaucracy, a component of whose labour is a socially-necessary part of the production process and which, at least in the bureaucratic states, is best described as a caste of the working class, with some anti-worker character.

The central political bureaucracy performs no function other than to seek, and consolidate and defend, its own absolute control over the productive forces and over the disposal of the products of production. It is not a caste of the working class; it has been described (correctly in the writer's opinion) as a class, completely hostile to the workers' interests. (For a fuller examination of the role of the central political bureaucracy, see the pamphlet "Revolutionary Marxist Students in Poland Speak Out", \$1.25 from Third World Bookshop, 20 A Goulburn Street, Sydney, 2000).

The Stalinists represent the interests of this class — in particular that section of it gathered in a bloc around the central political bureaucracy of the Soviet Union.

Thus, despite the appearances of their "Declaration", to see the Stalinists as mere reformists (and no more) overlooks the class nature of Stalinism, and also overlooks the Stalinists' belief that the workers are mugs who need not be given a frank statement of aims.

If the Stalinists published their full programme, it would have to include all of the following points (which they have committed themselves to in inner-party debates, and to which they committed the party when they ran it):

- .Sweeping political police powers; rigid censorship of opposing views.
- .Right to demonstrate strictly confined to the Government and its supporters. Likewise right to speak, publish or broadcast.
- .Complete immunity from the law for police who assault or murder workers to protect the bureaucracy.
- .Lunatic asylums and labour camps for dissenters.
- .Tame-cat unions beside which the worst scab outfits in Australian history are models of rugged independence.
- .Deals with the most vicious enemies of the workers — the Hitlers, the Lon Nols, the Suhartos, Papadopouloses, Francos — to further the interests of the Soviet central political bureaucracy.
- .No Soviets — not at any price!

Publication by the Stalinists of their full programme would attract no workers — even the most backward.

Inner-Party Struggle

It is on a class basis, and only on such a basis, that the C.P.A. can defeat Stalinism and avoid eventual political extinction.

The Stalinists, despite their small numbers, have certain tactical advantages over their adversaries in the C.P.A.

- .They represent a more closely-defined political trend.
 - .Their reformist feint, and the absence of revolutionary content in their policies, wins them temporary allies among the bourgeoisie (e.g. the S.M.H.) and among powerful backward sectors of the labour movement.
 - .Political movements can benefit from money. The Stalinists' role is one which customarily attracts Soviet subsidies in various forms. The Stalinist wing is spending a lot of money.
 - .The Stalinists can act as brokers for Soviet junketings for potential allies ("...Australian delegations from various walks of life are visiting the Soviet Union and returning to support still better Australian-Soviet relations." — "Declaration", p.5).
 - .The Stalinists are continuing in the traditions in which thousands of Communists have been trained, and thus have at their disposal an enormous ideological Trojan Horse within the majority section of the C.P.A. (In the writer's estimation, the biggest single trend in the C.P.A. consists of "Fraternal Brothers" — "...after all, Comrade, the CPSU may be making terrible mistakes, but it is a brother Party...").
- The struggle against Stalinism is being conducted on two fronts — the organisational and the political.

Most attention is being paid to the organisational front. The Stalinists have carried their factional activities to the extent of organised public opposition to the party's aims and programme, sabotage of the party's efforts to press its own policies in public, and public presentation of the Stalinist faction's policy as Communist policy. No party can tolerate this.

However, the struggle against it, in Sydney, is being waged primarily from the standpoint of opposition to factional struggle as such, rather than opposition to activities counter to Leninist concepts of party organisation with carefully defined factional rights. In addition, there are administrative measures to ensure that the Stalinists are not represented on leading bodies in proportion to their numerical strength. Such a strategy strengthens Stalinism, by accepting Stalinist concepts of party organisation, and by excluding from the anti-Stalinist struggle those who have not yet accepted the political necessity of a complete break with the Stalinist wing and who are at the same time repelled by attacks on any minority rights or factional rights. (1)

To avoid eventual defeat, it is essential that the organisational struggle against Stalinism be geared to, and subordinate to, the political struggle.

The political struggle must be on class lines — it must uphold the interests and rights of the working class here and internationally against class enemies, of which the central political bureaucracy is one. The Stalinist wing must be seen and treated as an enemy, representing a hostile class. (Who but an enemy would support a bureaucracy which would use military power to silence a working class and dismantle its unions, and would slaughter the workers if they resisted?) The right of factions inside a workers' party is never extended to those the party sees as enemies of the working class. The enemy is simply expelled. These considerations underly some of the moves at branch level to demand the expulsion of all signatories to the Stalinist "Declaration". Such a breach with the Stalinists is absolutely essential.

(The question of the Fraternal Brothers is more complex. These individuals don't press for the adoption of Soviet policy in the C.P.A., and they reject the Stalinist wing because they reject all factionalism. Sections of this heterogeneous group may be open to conviction, although it seems at this stage that anyone with a fraternal attitude to the murderers of the Bolsheviks and the oppressors of the workers must have at best a patronising view of the workers, dangerous in a party which seeks to be revolutionary. They will differentiate themselves further as the struggle develops — the essential thing is not to pander to them as was done at the 1970 National Congress when the leadership would not go beyond fraternal criticism of some actions of the Soviet bureaucracy.)