

TOWARDS SOCIALISM IN AUSTRALIA

Program of the Communist Party of Australia



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This program of the Communist Party of Australia was adopted at the CPA's 26th National Congress, held in Sydney, June 15-18, 1979.

It is the party's first new program since 1964 and is the culmination of a long process of debate and discussion in the party since the mid-1960s. This discussion covered many issues, but especially the new features of modern capitalist society, the type of socialism we stand for and the best strategy for socialism in a country like Australia.

*The program draws on various party documents on this period, especially the 1970 **Statement of Aims** and documents on specific issues, such as **Women and Social Liberation** (1976).*

The 25th congress in 1976 adopted an Outline for a Draft Program and instructed the National Committee to prepare a full draft program for discussion prior to, and at, the 26th congress.

The National Committee set up a program commission which, in consultation with the Committee itself and taking account of submissions from party members, produced a draft. This draft was published in November 1978, opening up seven months of party discussion. Many non-members of the CPA were also sent copies and asked for their comments and suggestions.

During the discussion, nearly 500 written amendments and suggestions were forwarded. Many of these were accepted; others led to additions to the program on topics omitted from the draft; a few led to substantial rewriting of sections of the program.

This program provides general guidelines for the CPA's policies and activities but it does not provide detailed statements of policy on specific issues and events.

*These are covered in other party documents and statements. For example, the 26th congress adopted the following specific documents: **Women and Social Liberation, An Approach to the Economy, Migrant Workers and Ethnic Communities, A Draft Bill of Rights**. Work is still proceeding on the production of a document on the **Workers' Movement**. Party members are also working on programs for specific industries and for major social issues such as energy. Suggestions and assistance for these are welcome.*

People wishing to discuss or clarify issues in this program or in other CPA policy documents are welcome to call at their local CPA offices (see addresses at end of program — on final page).

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* Recommended and maximum price only.

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I. Introduction

Australia, with its great natural wealth, its developed economy and its skilled workforce, could provide a full life for all its people and help to end suffering everywhere. It could do this while conserving the earth's resources for future generations.

But the capitalist system stands in the way. It is a system run for the private profit of a small owning class and is also male-dominated and racist.

Moreover, this system is in the midst of a chronic crisis which the ruling class cannot solve and which their policies only make more destructive.

Glaring social inequalities confront us. Australia's Gross Domestic Product is \$6,000 per head of population, but two million are officially classed as poor and existing standards are being forced down. Improvements in the lot of ordinary people are usually opposed by establishment forces and won only through hard struggle.

The deep-rooted problems we face cannot be overcome by small reforms. Their solution requires radical changes in the existing structures, social ideas and practices.

More and more people are beginning to ask: Can our present social order cope with technological change and the "computer holocaust"? Can it provide work for young people now facing a jobless and empty future? Can it liberate women? Can it end racial and sexual discrimination? Has it any answers for the looming energy and environmental crises? Will it outlaw nuclear weapons and war? Can it plan for the future to meet these social needs? Can it grasp the opportunity for advancing to a new society where the aim will be the development of all-round human abilities and self-expression? Can it expand democracy so that people can control their own lives, or will it go on its authoritarian way with control from the top by the wealthy, the powerful, bureaucrats, the owners and controllers of society?

The Communist Party of Australia believes that these great problems require the establishment of a new socialist society based on social need instead of private profit, a socialism which is democratic and self-managed, where power is exercised by working people in workplaces and communities. This new society will combat and finally remove oppression of all kinds.

Such a society can come about, we believe, through struggles for democratic transformation of all spheres of life — workplace, community, family, political.

For generations, socialism has provided the hope of ordinary working people for such a society. But the unexpected development, strength and flexibility of capitalism, the strength and influence of reformism in the Australian labor movement, and the mistakes and disunity of the socialist movement which were compounded by negative features in various countries that took the socialist road, have so far frustrated those hopes.

This program sets out to analyse the present situation and show how it can be changed. We are convinced that the program is practical. But its success depends on your support.

II. Capitalism today

After the Second World War capitalism experienced a long period of expanding production and boom conditions. Reconstruction following the wartime devastation took place at a much higher technical level. A scientific and technological revolution got under way.

The working class, stimulated by victory in the anti-fascist struggle, won gains in living standards. These, together with expanded consumer credit, led to a great increase in the production of consumer durables, new housing, etc. Unemployment in many countries declined to very low levels compared with pre-war.

As the defeated countries, especially West Germany and Japan, also renewed their industries, this stimulated the boom.

Recessions occurred, but were relatively mild and generally did not come at the same time in different countries.

World trade was relatively stable. This followed from the great weight of the US economy within the capitalist world, the acceptance of the US dollar as a world currency and the trading agreements it enforced in the interests of its own freedom of trade (the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, etc.)

Most former colonies gained constitutional independence during this period but capitalism still found the means to exploit and dominate them, especially enforcing low prices for raw and energy materials.

The fact that more countries left the capitalist orbit posed a challenge to capitalist hegemony politically and economically (especially the Soviet "first" in space). In response, imperialism accelerated the arms race, in some ways assisting the boom further.

These changes, taken together, characterise the present stage of capitalist development:

- * Great expansion of production, relying especially on the increasing integration into the production process of science, technology, education and organisation/management theory, and radical transformation of many labor processes.
- * State intervention in the economy was greatly developed, the state acting as an overall co-ordinating and control centre in the interests of capitalism as a whole (though it has also been an arena for struggle between different sections of capital).
- * Large corporations and the state, closely linked, carried out a degree of planning with large-scale state aid to private firms, adjustment of education plans to their needs, etc.
- * State welfare and social services (health, education, housing, pensions, unemployment payments) were expanded — though inadequately — to alleviate some of the worst problems which might threaten the system.
- * Increasingly, skilled use was made of various means of social control to preserve the system from conflicts which might endanger it, ranging from the economic planning attempted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), to the manipulation of people's minds and feelings through the mass media.
- * A higher level of internationalisation of production through the vast growth of the multinational corporations. These corporations coax or coerce the state to conform to their requirements in the countries where they operate. They have undermined the capacity of governments to plan within their own borders. Various efforts to plan internationally (OECD, etc.) are continually undermined by conflicting corporate and national interests.

Social changes

Profits gained during this period, especially through technical change and intensification of labor, enabled capitalism to concede increases in living standards while greatly increasing its own profitability. It was able to develop consumerism and win many workers to acceptance of the system.

Mass migration took place between countries and from the countryside to the cities. The rural workforce declined, the working class grew. Changes within the working class included a big growth of the non-manual and professional sectors. More women, especially married women, entered the workforce, though mainly into their traditional occupations. Tertiary students increased tenfold in numbers.

The growth in population, spread of the motor car, and decline in public transport, together with lack of planning by city authorities and the pursuit of profits by developers, laid the basis for the growing problems of the cities.

Television added a new dimension to the power of the capitalist mass media.

Other applications of science such as the contraceptive pill, insecticides, the computer, all in their different ways, greatly changed social life in many countries.

Threats to the environment became sharper. This arose from the use of new raw materials (from metals to plastics and synthetic fibres), a great increase in the consumption of old ones, and an enormous growth in the demand for energy; also from the way the cities developed and other factors.

Expansion of production and the drive for markets to consume the products led to a great expansion in sales promotion and wasteful expenditure of all kinds.

In their totality, these and other changes made life radically different from pre-war. All this posed for socialists new problems which often went unrecognised.

The crisis

These conditions and responses, and the intense anti-communist campaigns of the Cold War, helped generate mass belief in the vitality, beneficence and permanence of the capitalist system.

However, the changes also brought to the fore new contradictions in the late 'sixties and early 'seventies, even before the onset of the world economic crisis. Many social movements developed as people felt the promise of the early post-war years had not been fulfilled. Absorption in material values, lack of community life, authoritarianism and racism, the crisis in personal life and the nuclear family, as well as the threat to human survival from nuclear war and the crisis in ecology and resources — all this, and the Viet Nam war, created wide dissatisfaction and brought into being opposition movements, including those spearheaded by women, students, blacks and some sections of workers. Such dissatisfaction burst forth in great mass struggles, as in Europe in 1968 and 1969.

The economic crisis which developed throughout the capitalist world in 1974 shattered widespread views that capitalism had solved its problems and added a vital new dimension to existing struggles.

Capitalism and the profit motive

The motive force of capitalism has always been production for the maximum profit of the owning class, especially of the major shareholders.

Virtually every aspect of social life is shaped by this central principle.

This motive force greatly advanced production, technology and knowledge, taking society out of feudal backwardness. Wide social intercourse, organisation, freeing of people from personal dependence, such as existed with slaves and serfs, some democratic liberties and social welfare measures also accompanied the advance of capitalism.

These advances took place at an enormous human cost: forcible dispossession of small producers; persecution of the dispossessed and the poor (including transportation to Australia and other countries); brutal exploitation of workers, including women and children; invasion, devastation, plunder, obliteration of culture, genocide and interminable wars against weaker countries, and world wars among the capitalist powers themselves to determine division of the spoils.

Wherever opposing forces (such as trade unions, working class political parties or national liberation movements) brought threats of revolt against these cruelties, capitalism sought to destroy whatever democratic liberties had been won, even resorting to the most brutal forms of rule such as fascism.

Capitalism introduced also a new social phenomenon — economic crisis — with want and unemployment widespread, not because of natural calamities or lack of capacity to produce, but because the available means of production and the workforce could not be brought together in a way profitable to the private owners.

Years of expanding production have been followed by economic crisis — on an international scale — ever since the early nineteenth century. The most devastating of these crises occurred from 1929 to 1932 when one-third of the Australian workforce became unemployed.

The causes of this boom-bust cycle are complex but centre around the profit motive and the lack of social planning.

Workers of all kinds are employed in large enterprises or institutions where they co-operate with other workers to produce goods or deliver services, each part of the work process depending on the other parts. Production is social, but is not centred on social needs or socially controlled — a number of separate, private centres of power compete, each trying to maximise its own profits. Production and prices are not co-ordinated with real needs or with people's capacity to buy.

Thus the health of each enterprise, and the economy as a whole, fluctuate according to market circumstances and the spurts of investment aimed to take advantage of them.

The profit motive operates through the exploitation of the workers by the capitalists. Workers have no means of subsistence other than selling their capacity to work — their labor power — to an owner of capital. Workers by hand and brain add more value in the process of production than they receive in wages or salary for use of that labor power.

Profit is greater the lower the wage rates, and constant struggles occur over this between the two main classes. Profit is also greater the more value can be extracted from each worker and the higher productivity can be forced: so that technical change has become one of the main vehicles for increasing profits and relatively worsening the position of the worker.

These new production facilities use the most modern techniques, generally raising the ratio of machinery, raw materials, etc. to the amount of value-creating labor employed in production. The wages bill is reduced, and extra profit is made.

When the prospects for selling still more goods and making still more profit are favorable, capitalists reinvest much of their profit in new production facilities, in turn employing more workers in industries turning out producers' goods. Workers can then buy more, thus expanding markets further. Credit is easy, stimulating still more expansion and speculation on future profits. A similar result follows from investment in war industries.

But in time the greater mass of products turned out comes up against a market limited ultimately by the comparatively restricted purchasing power of the mass of workers, and sales fall. Possibilities of intensifying the exploitation of the workers during the production process reach limits, and the ratio of profit to investment falls. Weaker companies fail, and the mechanism of expansion is upset.

An economic crisis sets in, in which the contradictions and imbalances which have built up over the years of unplanned expansion are discharged at great material and human cost, particularly mass unemployment. Goods remain unsold, promises of payment cannot be fulfilled, credit dries up, bankruptcies occur, speculative bubbles burst, and the whole thing snowballs downwards.

Stored commodities and production facilities are destroyed and the strong gobble up the weak and seek still newer equipment to further reduce labor costs to restore their profit rates, leading to a new upward phase of the cycle.

Each crisis, however, is unique in its particular forms, depth, duration, etc. because of all the surrounding national and international conditions, and especially the strength of the class struggle against the effects of the crisis and the mass impact of alternative policies advanced to solve it.

Earlier crises were marked by a sharp fall in prices; but with the growth of monopoly the capitalists are now able to keep prices high even when supply far exceeds demand. And a still strong labor movement has so far prevented drastic cuts in living standards. These circumstances have led to another new phenomenon of capitalism, "stagflation", a condition in which high inflation continues alongside over-supply of goods and high unemployment.

Australian capitalism

Australian capitalism benefited greatly from the world boom but its weaknesses became evident when the crisis broke.

Australian manufacturing has always faced the problem of having a small home market and a relatively militant and high-paid workforce. When it expanded, between the two world wars and particularly after the second, it was behind high tariff barriers.

Australia could only compete on the world market by exploiting its natural advantages and exporting commodities (wool, wheat, coal, iron ore, bauxite, etc.) which can be produced with a small amount of labor. Exporters, such as primary producers and mineowners, opposed the reliance on expanding manufacturing industries but these continued to develop until the late 'sixties.

Meanwhile multinational capital was asserting itself. Under the long rule of the Liberal-Country Party coalition, foreign capital received all kinds of concessions and incentives. US capital gradually overtook British in dominance, and Japanese capital is now also moving in.

The growth of capitalist monopoly on an international scale has taken on a new dimension in recent years. Mergers and takeovers have become the order of the day. Whole sectors of the Australian economy are, in fact, directed from the USA, Britain, Japan and West Germany, and multinational corporations have special dominance over the developing mining industry (iron ore, coal, copper, bauxite, uranium, etc.) both as owners and as bulk buyers. They have tremendous political leverage, as shown in the undermining and final dismissal of the Whitlam government. They are in fact whittling away the economic foundations of Australia's national independence.

Meanwhile, Australia has also become a mini-imperialism, with expanding investments in the surrounding region and in South Africa.

From the late 'sixties, new major sections of Australian capital began to question the reliance on an expanded manufacturing base. They allied themselves with various multinationals (BHP with ESSO, for example) and pressed for restructuring of the Australian economy. Australia was to be integrated more closely into the international capitalist economy. It was to be the supplier of cheap raw materials, particularly minerals and energy resources, for multinationals that

were siting more of their production facilities in nearby low-wage countries. Australian manufacturers were also to be encouraged to move production facilities offshore. Those that didn't move with the times would go under.

This threat coincides with a speeding up of technical changes, the computer upsurge, the end of the long boom, declines in production, etc. Together these factors bring the prospect of a great reduction in the number of jobs available in Australia. They raise the possibility of long-term unemployment of the young, a permanent large army of unemployed, and a segmented workforce with acceptable living standards for a minority only.

This sets the framework for big class battles. What restructuring is there to be? What should be its aim? These questions hold big consequences for employment and for Australia's long-term future. They also point to the need for the workers' movement in Australia to build unity with workers in the Pacific region and south-east Asia.

These economic issues merge with broader social issues related to the workings of capitalism in general and Australian capitalism in particular.

Inequalities

Firstly, there is the extreme concentration of wealth in a few hands. Five per cent of Australians own 46 per cent of the total wealth, the richest 2,000 owning as much as the poorest 2¼ million. On the other hand, 50 per cent of Australians own less than 8 per cent of the total wealth. Despite post-war advances in living standards, the most the great majority own is their own dwelling (often on mortgage), a car and some other consumer durables. Hire purchase commitments for these help to tie people to the system and force many couples and families to remain in unworkable relationships.

There are also other inequalities, for example the gap between male and female wages for many similar jobs and greater than average exploitation of young, migrant and Aboriginal workers.

Waste

Wasteful production has become a more blatant feature of capitalism today. It arises from the urge to realise profits rather than to produce and efficiently distribute socially useful goods.

This is in addition to the waste resulting from economic crises and arms expenditure (today \$400 billion a year throughout the world).

Waste includes:

- * Much of commerce is concerned with promotion rather than distribution.
- * Similar commodities are transported unnecessarily within and between countries.

- * Much machinery is replaced before it is worn out or really obsolete.
- * Planned obsolescence.
- * With competition largely eliminated, monopolies often decide on the introduction of new technology on inadequate grounds. For example, many computers are not used efficiently, some are not justified at all.
- * Competition in gimmicks and accessories, leading to enormous costs in advertising and pointless redesign — for example of cars.
- * Manufacture of unnecessary consumer goods.

Waste is usually blamed on private consumers. But in advanced countries the overall consumption of energy and materials has been doubling about every ten years, while private consumption has increased only about 10 per cent.

Today, a large part of the cost of production goes on realising through sale the value already added in production rather than in generating more. For example, only about 20 per cent of the cost of an automotive part is factory cost and only some 40 per cent of that — 8 per cent of the total — is direct labor and materials.

Economically, all this contributes to inflation, with parallel unemployment.

It also takes a big social toll. Unnecessary production, waste and built-in obsolescence lead to misuse of resources, destruction of the environment and prolonging of the working week, which would be shorter if goods were built to last and to satisfy real needs.

The human and technical forces of production are already at a level high enough to satisfy the main material needs of the present world population were it not for the waste and inequalities the private profit motive generates within and between countries.

Capitalism has already laid the basis for the transfer of social effort to production of services, education and culture, and to the development of individuals for their own sake. But it resists all social changes which might threaten the making of profit. It acts to thwart the present great possibilities of human liberation, not accidentally, but because of its own internal driving forces.

Conflict with the environment

With the expansion of production, population and living standards, capitalism has run up against another obstacle, the physical limits of our planet earth. Production for profit requires endless economic growth, but this keeps expanding the demand for energy and raw materials and increasing the pollution of the environment.

But there are limits to this process and a crisis point is being reached:

- * Delicate balances of the natural environment are being disturbed to a stage where significant and harmful changes may take place.

- * Also economic growth has relied on the supply at fairly constant prices of mainly non-renewable energy resources. The cost of these is now continually increasing. The main substitute envisaged, nuclear energy, is economically dubious, environmentally hazardous, and dangerous to civil liberties and peace. It relies on uranium, itself a non-renewable resource that could not sustain high growth rates indefinitely — without the highly questionable breeder reactors. Production depends also on other non-renewable raw materials, the present flow of which can be maintained only by exploitation of under-developed countries and at increasing cost. (The most easily accessible and richest are ripped out first.)
- * The problem is made worse by failure to recycle used materials.
- * The earth's finite capacity to absorb thermal pollution — the waste heat emitted in all conversions of energy — poses a final critical limit on industrial expansion.
- * Neither the area of cultivable land nor the yield per acre can be increased arbitrarily. Thus renewable fuels for transport produced from plants cannot be available in unlimited quantities.
- * Water requirements are reaching the limit of the natural water circulation.
- * In many cases older materials and technology have been replaced by new ones which are more profitable but also more environmentally disruptive and energy-expensive (natural fibres by synthetic, soap by detergents, steel by aluminium, etc).
- * Soil exhaustion and erosion have been brought on by destruction of forests, planting of single crops, over-use of fertilisers and insecticides, etc.

Ever since the industrial revolution there has been serious pollution, especially affecting workers on the job (chemicals, dust, noise, etc.) and in their living areas. But the present environmental crisis is wider and deeper. Continued uncontrolled growth of production and population, with the associated waste in capitalist countries, actually poses significant threats to the whole planetary environment.

Reckless use of non-renewable energy resources and raw materials also poses grave economic consequences for the future. The cost will escalate at an increasing rate as oil, coal, etc, of poorer quality, and harder to extract, have to be used to keep up the flow of energy without which production cannot take place. More and more capital will have to be devoted to the purpose. Inflation will continue, and low income earners will suffer. "Restructuring" of industry must include over the next decades a switch to increasing reliance on the main renewable source — solar energy.

Capitalist power versus democracy

Important rights and liberties have been won in most advanced

countries, largely through mass struggles. But capitalism imposes limits on the development of democracy.

The two major constraints on democracy are corporate power and state power. Corporate power has become concentrated in fewer hands as wealth has become concentrated. Decisions about what is produced and how, who is employed and where, funding of political parties, sport, the arts, research and so on, are increasingly made by the big corporations.

Full political democracy cannot be built on private ownership and control of the means of production. If decisions are to be democratic the private concentration of economic power must be ended, with workers themselves exercising democratic control in the workplace.

Capitalism strives to confine parliamentary democracy to voting every few years for a parliamentary representative. Parliament itself is remote from the people, it is bound by the system and under heavy pressure from capitalist and bureaucratic interests.

Decisions in other areas are influenced or sabotaged by the same minority interests.

When even the limited parliamentary democracy stands in the way, the capitalists will move to sack an elected government (Australia, November 11, 1975) or even resort to fascism (Chile, 1973).

Capitalism especially restricts expansion of democracy because this would inevitably encroach on private owners' rights.

The state

In advanced capitalist societies a very powerful and complex state has developed. It consists of parliaments, public service departments running and co-ordinating areas of social life, and institutions of control and repression (police, armed forces, courts and prisons). The state also includes, to varying degrees in different countries, parts of the mass media, banks, public utilities, transport, communications, and health, education and social services. These services fulfil some of society's needs but usually in ways which suit the interests of capital. The state also includes institutions which help to manage the economy or to contain struggles undertaken by the workforce (for example, the Australian arbitration system).

Modern capitalism requires major state intervention and control despite propaganda against "big government".

These functions of the modern capitalist state are controlled by a small body of people at the top of the state hierarchy: senior public servants, judges, military and police top officers and the Cabinet. Parliament, while nominally the supreme decision-making body, is extremely limited in real power.

Working people employed by various state institutions carry out

many of the functions of the state, but are excluded from any participation in the decisions of those institutions. They face similar problems to workers in private industry.

The bureaucratic elite has at its disposal not only its administrative workforce but also instruments of physical repression which, even at the lowest rank, are consciously kept isolated from the working class and trained to be used in any major crisis. The rank and file police and military and security police have a specific role which separates them from other state employees. Nevertheless, most police and military come from working class backgrounds, and many may be won to support social change in given conditions.

Some of the **functions** at present performed by the state are necessary for the working of any complex industrial society at the present level of science, technology and culture. But the monopoly over the control of these functions by a small body of people and the centralised, authoritarian and bureaucratic methods involved, reflect the fact that the state serves the ruling class under capitalism, or is dominated by a powerful elite under bureaucratic socialism.

The great power of the modern state gives it a real basis for authoritarian solutions to the crisis. It conflicts with grassroots democracy. The struggle in defence of existing democratic rights and their expansion (including expansion within the state itself) is therefore an important part of the struggle for socialism.

The oppression of women

Capitalism continues the age-long subjugation of women.

The position of women in society, and the view taken of them, has been attributed to their biology and the development of a division of labor based on sex is wrongly regarded as being determined by it.

But in fact the role of women in the economy, the way they are regarded, and the forms of the family and acceptable sexuality, have varied greatly as between social systems, nations and classes. So they are clearly not "natural" or fixed.

But in most forms of society child rearing and nurturing is regarded as "women's work" and is undervalued.

Capitalism preserved and fostered, in new conditions, the subordination of women to men. It destroyed the basically subsistence economy of feudalism in which all members of a family contributed to production and services, though in different ways according to age and sex.

In its place, capitalism developed commodity production and the market. This included a labor market. Women and children, even more than men, were mercilessly exploited in mines and mills as capitalism arose.

The home became a completely private matter. Its only economic functions were seen to be the replacement of the supply of labor, the servicing of labor (at no extra cost) and the final consumption of the goods produced. Housework was no longer counted as labor because it did not enter into any market. Society consequently accepted no responsibility for it. The sick and the aged, now with no social function at all, had to fend for themselves as life was increasingly privatised and the extended family replaced by the nuclear one.

As capitalism developed the welfare state arose to bolster the nuclear family and take up some of the tasks of the previous extended family.

The removal of their work in the home from the economic sphere depressed the status of women even further. It was another step in subordinating them to men who were generally regarded as the "breadwinners", (though a large percentage of women now did two jobs, both initially under appalling conditions). Women were regarded mainly as child bearers and objects for male sexual gratification. They were treated as having little or no sexual desires of their own. Rape and violence against women grows out of such attitudes.

At the same time, women are held responsible for providing a haven of emotional support, warmth and care in an otherwise hostile social environment.

Within the home and family children are raised to fit into this environment. They are taught particular roles according to their sex and are prepared for participation in sexually divided work, within hierarchical structures.

All this largely determined the attitudes towards women in the paid workforce. Employers, always looking for means to divide the workers and cut wages, fostered these attitudes. "Women's work" was said to be of lower value and women not responsible to provide for a family (whether they were or not). All kinds of pressures and excuses have been used to exclude women from participation in the workforce, and, in times of crisis particularly, many working women are pushed out, forming a large part of the "hidden" unemployed.

In advanced capitalist countries, though "equal pay for equal work" has in many cases been won through struggle, most women are still employed in occupations which carry lower pay and status. Some of the better-paid areas are now being eliminated or de-skilled by automation.

Although women are indispensable in large sections of the workforce, the attitude that their place is in the home still dominates, supported for the most part by churches, media, schools and society generally.

Capitalism has also found new ways to exploit. It has impelled people to look mainly to their own material possessions and consumption to improve their lives. Its sales drive promotes the idea that each family (sometimes each individual) should own separately all the available consumer durables, turning people away from

exploring new ways of living, relating and sharing.

Not content with concentrating their special sales efforts on women, the big corporations use women's sex and bodies for promotion purposes.

The advances in technology make it impossible to defend rationally the exclusion of women from any occupation. The greater level of education, the development of contraceptives and the general material wealth of economically advanced societies make possible more acceptance of social responsibility for much of domestic labor and child rearing. The puncturing of many myths about women, and the activities of the women's liberation movement, have advanced the possibilities of women's liberation to a new stage.

These possibilities, along with the additional burden from the current crisis, are reflected in the continued, though uneven, advance in the women's movement.

But the old attitudes, the profit motives of employers, the vested interest of men in maintaining domination, the pressures on women of various institutions, especially the present nuclear family, are powerful obstacles to further advance.

For example, women are still struggling for the right to control their own bodies which are seen as belonging to men and society. This involves: the right to control their own fertility through education and through free and freely available contraception and abortion; the right to sexual satisfaction and free choice in sexual relationships; freedom from the objectification of women's bodies in pornography, sexist culture and advertising.

Even when the profit motive of a class of private employers is removed, easy progress cannot be expected. Sexist attitudes, included those concerning what is "normal" in family life and sexuality, will take a long struggle to overcome. To overcome these obstacles, however, must be one of the major aims of the socialist transformation of society.

At present we support transitional demands, in this as in other areas, within the context of more long-range policies. We believe that all socialists, men and women, the unions and the labor movement should take up the issues involved and fight for suitable policies here and now.

The aged

Modern capitalism shows increasing disregard for aged people and others no longer necessary for the workings of the economy or capable of producing profit.

The population is ageing as the birthrate declines, and the conditions of the old are worsening as unemployment grows, the pressure for early retirement increases, social services are scaled down, and already inadequate pensions lag further behind the cost of living.

The position of the aged and social attitudes towards them became worse as capitalism furthered the development of the nuclear family which eliminated social functions many had performed in pre-capitalist societies.

Homosexuality

Homosexuals have existed in all societies and classes throughout history and generally they have been repressed, ridiculed, victimised and discriminated against. Homosexuals in Australia today face this oppression and discrimination in law, behaviour and attitudes, stemming from the widely held, and wrong, view that homosexuality is sick, abnormal or indecent. Lesbians suffer a double oppression both as women and as homosexuals.

Social institutions and reactionary organisations such as the Festival of Light interfere in homosexuals' lives in child-rearing, education, social security, health, employment, the law and mental health. The threat of losing one's job strikes at economic independence and forces many homosexuals to conceal their harassment. Many gay people feel they have to live secret, guilty lives, alienated from society.

The basis of the hostility and prejudice against homosexuals is firstly that homosexuality questions traditional ideas about sexual identity, family life and the roles of women and men in society. Secondly, homosexual relations are thought to be unnatural because they don't lead to procreation. Yet sexual expression which doesn't harm others should be a pleasure and right in itself.

The homosexual movement's assertion that homosexuality is within the normal spectrum of sexuality and its fight for homosexual rights and acceptance has helped many gay people feel self-respect for the first time, and has begun to change social views about sexuality. The movement, which grew with other social movements in the '60s — especially the women's liberation movement — has overcome some of the heavy traditional anti-homosexual prejudice, won the support of important sections of the people, and sympathy for liberalisation and reform.

Sections of the working class, the labor movement, the left and the Communist Party reflect anti-homosexual prejudices. Combating these prejudices is important for building the broad alliance and the socialist movement. Changes in left parties, the setting up of gay unionists' groups, and decisions by some unions to defend homosexual members suffering discrimination have shown the way.

The Communist Party supports the struggles of the autonomous homosexual movement and encourages its gay members to be active in that movement. It supports and works for:

- * No distinction in the criminal law between homosexual and heterosexual acts.
- * Outlawing of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.
- * Changes in social structures, attitudes and practices which deprive homosexuals of their human rights.
- * The rights of homosexuals in all other countries.

Aboriginal and Black Australians

Aborigines are the most exploited and oppressed section of the Australian people. Australian capitalism was founded on the seizure of their land and the massacre of their people. Along with conscious policies of genocide, the remaining population was concentrated into reserves and missions, in which they were denied all human rights.

But contrary to predictions, the people survived and did not disappear as a race.

Most Aborigines lack employment, while those in the workforce are employed mainly in rural areas and under miserable conditions.

Oppression of the Aborigines reflects the deep-seated prejudices of all sections of white society. Racism does not arise inevitably from "human nature", but rather from class society. It becomes most virulent under capitalism, in which it is used to justify super-exploitation, the seizure of whole continents and genocide.

Aborigines have always fought and resisted the seizure of their land and racist oppression. Despite their humiliation, many maintained their pride and their strong cultural identity. In the 1960s their resistance assumed new forms and dimensions. In the past this reflected the liberation movements in Asia and the Third World, but also it coincided with a period of economic expansion in Australia, particularly in the mining sector, for example at Mapoon and Weipa. This expansion brought a new wave of forced removal of Aborigines from their lands.

They raised, and are continuing to raise, demands for civil rights. They assert the principle of Black control of their own organisations. They call for Australia to recognise the debt owed to the Aboriginal people and to recognise that their claims are for repayment of a debt and not for a welfare handout. Their central demand is for land rights and for compensation for two centuries of oppression. They got some limited response from the Whitlam government in the form of partial land rights in the Northern Territory and funding for Aboriginal programs.

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs which administers the lives of the Aboriginal people is bureaucratic, racist and white-dominated. Bodies such as the State Land Trusts are manipulated and, in turn,

manipulate the Aboriginal people. No policy of self-determination was implemented to give a real basis for Aboriginal programs. Financial support to Aboriginal communities has been continually cut back, with destructive effects on these communities. Many Aborigines drawn into the workforce were cast aside. Aborigines form the largest section of the unemployed on a per capita basis.

Despite these setbacks, Aborigines have a real desire for self-management, and respond to ruling class manoeuvres. They developed organisations to run their programs, such as co-operative farming and fishing ventures. The outstation and homeland movements in northern Australia are also a spontaneous movement for independence and land rights.

The problems of urban and tribal Aborigines take different forms, but the overall cause of the Aborigines is one. They are developing their own answers to problems confronting them. Other progressive forces should support their struggle in ways acceptable to the Aboriginal community, basing this support on their demand for self-determination.

The CPA supports the demands of the Aboriginal movement. At the same time, it recognises that only a socialist society can provide a real solution to their problems by ending the exploitation by mining and pastoral companies, ending racial and bureaucratic interference, and fighting consistently against racism throughout society. This fight should include the demand for a ban on all racist propaganda.

White communists recognise that they too are deeply affected by the prevalent racism, and must consciously fight against it in themselves and other workers. The trade unions have a primary part to play in this regard.

We must show in our own lives that we support and respect the independence of the Black movement and the right to self-determination for the Aboriginal people.

Prisons

Prisons are destructive and counter-productive institutions: the inherent physical and psychological brutality, the destruction of family and social links and economic standing, the withering of social abilities and job prospects are some consequences reinforcing the very problems prisons are supposed to eliminate.

However, the oppression is not indiscriminate. In Sydney, an official study found that unskilled workers — only 20 per cent of the population — constitute 70 per cent of medium and long-term prisoners — a massive over-representation of the working class.

This indicates the class-selective processes at work throughout the entire criminal justice system, from the laws themselves to prosecution, sentencing and punishment.

Considered more broadly, the bias is even more pronounced; whereas murders are criminalised, genocide and industrial "accident" deaths are not; police forces are well-funded and have excessive powers, while the Trade Practices and Corporate Affairs Commissions are starved of funds and have limited powers; trivial crimes are prosecuted while massive corporate crime goes unchecked; the crime of poverty (vagrancy) leads to imprisonment, while massive pollution and manufacturing of poisoned baby foods and death-trap cars leads to minimal fines — or merely some loss of profits.

Even if the inherent inequalities of the present criminal justice system could be eliminated, the class-based oppression would remain: to apply an equal standard in a structurally unequal society is to reproduce oppression. For example, can everyone afford to hire crafty lawyers to manipulate the laws and the courts?

Socialism would set out to eliminate the social basis of crime which cannot be achieved by blaming and punishing individuals. Many of the underlying social conditions which help produce it (e.g. unemployment, unequal distribution of wealth, alienation) will be eliminated. Laws which create victimless crimes will be repealed.

But, while the main, **social** basis of crime can be removed, individual criminal and anti-social acts are unlikely to disappear completely. Under socialism there would be a firm commitment to develop the maximum non-coercive responses in such cases. Wherever possible, the offender would remain within the community where there would be housing, training, educational and therapeutic facilities and personnel available, for voluntary use by offenders.

Depending on the particular crimes and the offenders' records, different and appropriate degrees of coercion will still be necessary. Juvenile incarceration would be abolished. Total imprisonment would be used only rarely and only for those who, by their proven behaviour, pose a threat to other citizens.

Strong measures would be taken to ensure that these prisoners are not degraded and that their humanity is protected. Intermediate degrees of coercion would include partial incarceration alongside compulsory community service and training.

In the past century, few advances have been made. Although many spontaneous protests have occurred (and been savagely repressed), prisoners have little effective organisation. The social and political isolation of imprisonment must be broken. The CPA supports the call of prisoners and their supporting organisations for the rights to organise inside prisons, to unhindered outside political links and to take part in the running of the system.

In their reactionary stands against even the smallest of reforms the prison officers' unions must be defeated in society as a whole and within the labor movement.

Other measure the CPA demands include:

- * A massive decrease in the prison population through decriminalisation, legislative and judicial changes in the type and length of sentences, and release of most current prisoners.
- * Strict adherence to the United Nations Minimum Standard Minimum Rules for the treatment of prisoners.
- * Development of non-coercive responses to crime which are alternatives to, not adjuncts of, imprisonment.

Australia and the world

Those striving for change cannot ignore the fact that Australian capitalism is integrated into imperialism, and that Australia is part of the US military alliance.

The fundamental contradiction in the world is that between capitalism and socialism. But other contradictions also exist: between developed and under-developed countries; between nations and races; because of conflicting religions; within existing socialist countries and between capitalist countries themselves. New, growing problems such as the energy crisis intensify old conflicts and promote new ones, at the same time pointing up the need for different paths of development.

The great variety of conflicting blocs, alliances, social forces, cultures and aspirations make the world situation today more complex than ever. Great disasters and great progress are both possibilities.

Until the Russian Revolution of 1917, capitalism dominated the world. This and subsequent socialist revolutions have broken the grip of capitalism over one third of humanity.

Since World War II, imperialism has suffered serious defeats; its power of direct military intervention has been restricted; its strength relative to the non-capitalist world has fallen.

Capitalism and imperialism, however, remain strong economically, despite the crisis. The US has an enormous nuclear arsenal. Several other imperialist powers also possess these weapons and large quantities of conventional arms. Capitalist ideology is still powerful. Imperialism uses economic and military aid, subversion, destabilisation, corruption, racial, tribal, religious and regional differences to promote developments favorable to itself.

Most former colonies have ended direct oppression, but are still to one degree or another dominated by imperialism. Where multinational corporations have encouraged development economies are made dependent and distorted. Imperialism enforces unequal trade relations and controls and exploits natural resources and labor.

The non-aligned movement involves most former colonies and under-developed countries. Among its members are socialist countries

and some repressive neo-colonial regimes. It aims to end the bloc division of the world, to establish a new, more equitable world economic order, and to develop a more democratic system of international relations.

Despite its varied composition, it serves the anti-imperialist cause, aiding the struggle for genuine independence, economic and social liberation and peace. It is, however, under constant pressure from imperialism and great powers.

A non-aligned Australia would loosen ties with imperialism, remove foreign military bases here, aid liberation movements, and seek to reduce the danger of nuclear war.

The growing economic and energy crises have greatly increased the strategic importance of raw and energy materials, many of which Australia has in abundance. Some producer countries have joined in cartels in opposition to those dominated by multinationals, for example OPEC. Australia should join such efforts.

The awareness of the continuing danger of nuclear war; the horror of Viet Nam and other imperialist wars; the new armed conflicts between some countries which have abolished capitalism, have led to a world-wide desire to end war. When mobilised, this desire can prevent and end wars. Similarly, world-wide anti-racist feelings and strivings to end poverty and hunger, although defied by governments, cannot be ignored by them.

Australian foreign policy is centred on the ANZUS alliance, placing Australia in the front line of US global strategy and making Australia a prime target in any nuclear war. US military bases here also undermine Australian independence.

Following its defeat in Indo-China, US imperialism has been forced to develop new strategies for the Indian and Pacific Ocean regions. The extreme tension between some countries which have abolished capitalism has given imperialism and reactionary regimes room to manoeuvre, particularly against liberation movements in the area.

Subservient to US imperialist strategy in these regions, Australia is developing closer military, political and economic relations with ASEAN countries, and has supported the aggression of Indonesia against East Timor. It also plays a major role in the island-nations of the South Pacific, together with French, US and British imperialisms. Australian governments have also helped prop up the racist South African regime. It may intervene militarily in ex-colonies in the future as it has done before.

The CPA supports national and social liberation movements throughout the world, and especially in the ASEAN countries, East Timor, southern Africa, Latin American and the island-nations of the South Pacific. We support the peaceful unification of Korea. We support

organisations of migrant workers in solidarity struggles against reactionary regimes in their former homelands.

The existence of countries which have superseded capitalism assists the struggle against capitalism everywhere. These countries have generally supplied aid to national liberation movements against imperialism. Their rapid and relatively crisis-free economic development and assault on poverty have shown a way forward for a number of developing nations.

However, in these countries various reactionary social trends still exist. In most cases, self-management and socialist democracy have not been developed and a bureaucratic elite exercises power. A narrow view of national interests by many such countries, and a striving by some to impose their hegemony on others, has led to armed conflict.

These are major reasons why communism is treated with suspicion by many people in Australia and elsewhere, and why socialism is not more influential in satisfactorily resolving international conflicts, and in attracting support as a viable alternative.

These negative features arose on the basis of objective conditions, especially economic backwardness, the need for strong standing armed and security forces to combat the violence of the local and international bourgeoisie, the culture and traditions of the countries concerned, an insufficiently broad view of social development, and the characteristics of various leading figures.

But developments are also to be seen which would aid the strivings, now widely growing, to uphold and reinforce the ideals and principles of socialism which are vital to progress in every country in the world.

The continuing arms race heightens the danger of war, as well as resulting in an enormous waste of valuable resources. The process of detente between the USSR and USA is welcomed, in that it can reduce the danger of world conflagration. It would assume even more significance if it led to real, meaningful disarmament measures. Problems of disarmament and international tension should involve all peoples and governments. The process of detente should not and need not run in contradiction to the continued striving of peoples for national and social liberation.

Australian progressive forces should integrate international solidarity and struggles against war, racism and fascism in their daily work, particularly in the trade unions, and avoid a parochial approach. Working class international solidarity is imperative to defeat the operations of internationally organised capital which otherwise would have a dangerous advantage in every struggle.

III. How capitalism rules

Capitalism has maintained itself over a long period. Especially in developed countries like Australia it has shown a great capacity to survive and adapt despite all its problems.

The power of the capitalist class takes many forms: economic, social, political, ideological, cultural and coercive, exercised in various ways through corporate and state institutions.

The capitalist class comprises the owners and controllers of the means of production, distribution, exchange and communication — the factories, banks, land, shops, media, etc. — and their agents.

People in top managerial and state positions, although they sell their labor power, are also part of the ruling class because they act on behalf of capital, identify with its interests, and are often shareholders themselves.

The capitalist class is only a small percentage of the population. But within it are still smaller sections of big capitalists, one or more of which usually exercises major influence over, or against, other big and smaller capitalists.

Its rule is based first of all on private ownership and control of the means of production. This gives it the power over people's right to work and to eat. Though many workers think they receive "a fair day's pay", they in fact receive only part of the wealth they produce. The rest — a large amount — goes to the capitalists either for their personal use or for re-investment to increase their wealth further. Wealth becomes more and more concentrated in a few hands and this leads to a concentration of power also.

The major firms have enormous power, yet are run by a *corporate elite* of the active major shareholders, directors and the executives who serve them. There are many links between company directors, who frequently sit on several boards spanning companies that may be closely connected with, or relatively independent of, each other. None of these are elected by, or responsible to, society, yet their decisions affect everybody.

Great though corporate economic power and the influence it brings are, ideological, cultural, political and coercive powers are also needed, the latter being exercised mainly through the various organs of the state. These organs are centralised, authoritarian and bureaucratic structures which at a senior level work closely with corporations, including exchanging personnel with them. As a result, capitalist interests and ideas permeate these institutions, making them instruments of minority class rule, not the neutral organs they are claimed to be.

The lives of ordinary people are so affected and shaped by these combined powers that either through conviction or necessity they find it hard not to act according to the logic of the system. Well-organised collective action is needed to win even mild reforms. And ruling class ability to compel, pressure and influence people is backed, where necessary, by the enforcement agencies: the law, police, and the armed forces.

The modern military and police forces are very powerful, having an advanced technology and disciplined organisation. In particular, the role of special security forces has been vastly expanded, and their means of surveillance increased by electronic devices and data banks. They frequently use agents-provocateurs. They pose a great threat to democratic liberties. While not preventing terrorism of the extreme right, they concentrate their spying on legitimate political activities of left, progressive and working class organisations.

But in today's Australia, capitalism maintains its power mainly through ideological hegemony: through the domination of its ideas and values as experienced in everyday life.

These ideas and values are promoted and reproduced by institutions such as the family, the school, the church and the media. Through these and the shaping of everyday life by the social relations of capitalism, the behaviour patterns, social roles and attitudes of people

are formed and seem "natural", though ideological hegemony in fact involves a pervasive, many-sided and conscious effort by the ruling class.

Consequently, most people still believe that capitalism is the natural way to organise society, that there is in fact no better alternative, that bosses and rulers are inevitable or necessary, that authority should be obeyed right or wrong, that Australia is fully democratic because there are parliamentary elections, and that in any case ordinary people have little power and can at best achieve small reforms. Belief that the profit motive is inherent and beneficial upholds the system and induces people to seek individual solutions. Sexism, racism and chauvinist nationalism all help to oppress and divide the people and perpetuate capitalism.

Ingrained habits and ideas, together with a fear of change, reinforced by ruling class agencies, are a powerful force opposing social change. Reactionary and ultra-right organisations make use of this force — such organisations as important sections of the churches, crusaders on moral questions such as the Festival of Light and the Right to Life, the RSL leadership, NCC, Workers' Party, Democratic Labor Party, and fascist and para-military organisations like the Croatian Ustasha. Such organisations are not always connected with the ruling class (though they usually are); nor do they always reflect its wishes and tactics.

In politics, the capitalist class, a tiny minority, seeks to promote apathy, to divide and intimidate its opponents, and to have its policies accepted by big sections of working people and by the intermediate strata. The avowedly capitalist parties (Liberal, National Country parties) seek support for capitalist policies among particular sections of people. And rightwing groups in the Labor Party promote capitalist ideas and policies by advocating, either that a reformed capitalism is better than socialism, or that socialism is now a dead issue.

In all the political and ideological institutions of capitalist power there is a top stratum which consciously carries out and helps develop ruling class policy. Top public servants, judges, leaders of the avowedly capitalist political parties, media chiefs, top echelons of educational institutions and others, between them constitute a capitalist political elite. This is strongly connected to the corporate elite through direct exchange of personnel, through meeting together in the normal course of their work and through the social network. With the top officers of the armed forces and police they exercise power on behalf of the ruling class. The politically, economically and ideologically active members of the ruling class together with those who serve it act for the ruling class as a whole.

With such powers the ruling class can exert enormous pressure on elected governments and, where necessary, undermine them. This is especially so in times of economic crisis. Only a government

determined to tackle the sources of ruling class pressure and backed by a powerful mass movement can hope to implement radical policies which really challenge ruling class interests.

The ruling class has usually been able to limit, head off or defeat the working people's struggles. Where it has been forced to make concessions it claims them as achievements of the system. Many believe this — their experience in winning gains often helps foster reformist ideas. This will happen less as the crisis restricts capitalism's capacity to make concessions, though it will take time to overcome old views.

But capitalist power does not hold unchallenged sway. In decades of struggle workers have developed their own strength, organisation and discipline — a workers' "counter-power". This counter-power is based on organisations such as unions, workplace committees and working class parties and on struggle in the form of strikes, go-slows, work-to-rules, demonstrations. Use of the vote to elect Labor governments has resulted in some gains and forced the ruling class to make concessions or change some of its methods. The media are not all-powerful and are distrusted by many.

Workers' counter-power has developed even inside the institutions of capitalist power. Workers in the public service, in the media, in the education system, have organised to protect their rights. On occasions they have challenged the basic policies of their institutions, as in teachers' struggles to change the education system and the attempts of media workers to remove bias in the media and to improve their quality.

The ruling class still uses confrontationist methods, and challenges even elementary rights, but sections of it have learnt that intransigent methods do not always work and that policies of social consensus and class collaboration may better achieve their ends.

To challenge capitalist power, the workers' counter-power must be further developed and a "counter-consensus" built up against the capitalist consensus.

To achieve this, a strategy is required, based on the social forces actually present in society.

IV. The forces for social change

The forces already exist in Australia whose interests would best be served by ending capitalist class rule.

These classes and social forces are:

1. The working class:
 - (a) Industrial workers, mainly in factories, mines and transport.
 - (b) Non-manual workers, in trade, shops and offices (but in factories and transport also).
 - (c) Part of the intellectually and technically trained workers in industries and services.
 - (d) Rural workers.
 - (e) Women doing unpaid work at home who move in and out of the workforce.
 - (f) The unemployed.
 - (g) Pensioners, retired workers.
2. Women as an oppressed sex.
3. Students (who will mostly become workers or members of the new intermediate strata).
4. The Aboriginal people, Torres Strait Islanders and descendants of the Pacific Islanders forcibly brought to Australia as semi-slave labor at the turn of the century.
5. Social movements of sections of the people, or movements around particular issues.

These are the forces to which the efforts of socialists in class and social struggle should be directed.

Not all the people comprising these forces will be conscious that it is in their interests to end capitalism. Some of them may actively oppose change. This may be for ideological reasons, or from a conflict of interests arising from their own class position (as with women who belong to the capitalist class for example).

The basic force for change is the working class. It comprises all who sell their labor power in return for a wage or salary and who work under the direction of employers or their agents.

They find themselves subordinate, relying on the employer for a living and lacking any real control over the work process.

Differences exist between workers, even on the one job in their function; the **directness** of their exploitation; in the extent of their ties, real or imagined, with the capitalists; in their trade union organisation, class consciousness, militancy and customary methods of struggle; and in their political allegiance.

Recognition of such differences is important for the welding of unity, because common interests only express themselves when people recognise and act on them.

Manual and non-manual

Since all workers use both hands and brain, it is more accurate to speak of work involving mainly physical effort and work involving mainly mental effort. In either case, effort is involved, and technology is breaking down some of the distinctions.

Manual workers in industry were traditionally called the working class. But non-manual workers in industry and distribution, such as technical, clerical and sales workers, also own no means of production, depend on the sale of their labor power, and usually exercise little control over what they do.

State employees also sell their labor power and contribute in many ways to capitalist production of goods and profits.

Increasingly, economic and social life depend on the collective, integrated effort of all workers. Non-manual workers are part of the working class, and their main interests broadly coincide with those of other workers.

The composition of the working class is changing rapidly with changes in technology and organisation of the economy. Employment in service industries (other than building, trade and transport) was relatively declining till the mid-sixties. But recently the numbers of service industry workers (who are mainly non-manual and often women) have increased sharply, largely as a result of increased expenditure on education and health and the spread of advertising and other business services. In most industries, new technologies have increased the proportion of technical and semi-professional workers,

while for service-type industries they have increased the proportion of manual workers.

The problems of non-manual workers have come much closer to those of industrial workers, and they are taking more and stronger action, strengthening their trade unions, and many are now joined with the ACTU.

The working class has thus become bigger, more diverse and more capable of handling economic and social affairs. Each section can bring its own particular strengths to a broad alliance of all sections.

Workers in basic industry, though declining as a proportion of the whole, retain special significance because, for them, the class struggle took a more open form and they saw earlier the need for solidarity and trade union organisation. There are conservative as well as advanced militant sections among them, but their continued central role in production gives them great economic and political strength.

Workforce segmentation

The working class is divided by occupation and industry, and by sex, ethnic and generation differences. This division weakens the working class as a force in the labor market and helps to perpetuate the oppression of its various sectors.

Women workers

While more women have entered the workforce they are concentrated in particular occupations which have been labelled as "women's work" and regarded as subordinate, for example, nursing, secretarial work, unskilled process work. They have been excluded from many occupations by employers, by male workers, by trade unions and by social attitudes. Working women are also still expected to do most or all of the housework, thus being forced to work a "double shift". Some male and female workers have moved across these divisions but there is a long way to go.

These conditions for women have often provided a basis for conservative and rightwing forces to work on. Women's liberation ideas, and the struggle against discrimination, have begun to make an impact but have not yet sufficient support. Without taking up the needs of women, both in the workforce and generally, the labor movement cannot develop the unity and strength to achieve its aims.

Ethnic groupings

The postwar mass immigration promoted to provide "factory fodder" for Australia's economic expansion radically changed the ethnic composition of the workforce. It also transformed Australia from a largely homogeneous, British-derived nation into a multi-cultural one.

These changes have enriched all aspects of Australian life and the traditions of the working class, but they have also produced special problems. Due to language difficulties, intimidation by employers, government departments and security police and inadequate help from a labor movement in which racist ideas are strong, many found it difficult to fight for their rights and become part of the union and labor movements. This not only adds to the oppression they suffer as workers, but also deprives the labor movement of the contribution they can make because of their political experience and commitment, militancy and culture.

Migrant workers, especially those from Mediterranean countries, have been slotted into the lowest paid, hardest, dirtiest and most exploited jobs, while many Australian-born workers were able to advance in skills, status and living standards. This has separated workers into distinct and often opposed segments.

Aboriginal and other Black workers are, in their majority, the most exploited, oppressed and deprived section of the working class. Many are unemployed or casual workers. A large section works in rural industries as pickers, station hands and domestics, usually for pitiful wages and allowances. Most are forced to live in reserves, shanty towns and fringe dwellings.

Involvement of the non-Anglo-Saxon section is essential to unite and strengthen the working class and this requires a persistent struggle against racist and chauvinist attitudes.

Generation differences

Each generation grows up in different conditions, and tends to develop different attitudes. For example, workers who grew up in the depression years and experienced the Second World War have an outlook different from those who grew up in the post-war boom years.

With today's crisis and high youth unemployment, many are finding widely accepted myths about the system rudely shattered. The young unemployed now form a sizeable section of the new generation with its own particular problems and experiences (for example, half of the under-twenties in Sydney's western suburbs are unemployed).

Such conditions do not automatically impel people towards the labor movement or socialism. Positive efforts are needed to understand the conditions and outlook of young people, unemployed or working, and steps should be taken to assist them and release their initiative and energy in the cause of radical social change.

The intermediate strata

Small business people, shopkeepers, farmers and traders, while squeezed by the big companies, often depend on them as suppliers and

distributors and adopt anti-working class views. Suffering from capitalist crises, and from workers' reduced purchasing power, they usually try to keep down the wages of their own workers.

The labor movement should seek to win them to the side of the working class, and prevent them from becoming a base for reactionary and fascist movements. This requires combating rightwing propaganda, recognising their special needs and campaigning for them when appropriate, and seeking to win them to the wider demands of the labor and progressive movements. Nor should socialism threaten their continued existence. As small-scale producers under socialism, they would enjoy more economic security than under capitalism. The intermediate strata include members of family businesses, those shopkeepers and small farmers who employ little or no labor, and professional sections such as lawyers, doctors, architects, writers and artists who are self-employed.

Some who sell their labor power also occupy an intermediate position owing to their special place in production and social life.

Middle levels of management (often with technical and scientific functions) and the middle-rank state employees act in varying degrees as agents of capital. But they often exercise only limited control, themselves suffering control by those at the top.

Different sections of the intermediate strata are affected in various ways and with differing results by the pressures of big capital and the crisis of the system which affect spheres that may particularly concern them such as health, housing, rural policy, ideology and culture. Therefore, some of them can be won for progressive or socialist alternatives. Their ideological role, for reaction or progress, can be considerable.

The working class as a political force

Workers, having a common place in production, feel impelled to take collective industrial action and to form trade unions and working class parties. But this does not mean that they all adopt the same political positions. There are wide differences between them in class consciousness, militancy and political allegiance.

A central task is to help the working class develop its consciousness and unity, overcoming narrow sectional attitudes.

To become a class politically, and the leading force in a broad alliance, workers need a class-wide approach based on the common interests of all.

This means attention, not only to wages and conditions of various sections, but to the material well-being of all workers, local community affairs, education and health, conservation, environment and

resources questions, social services, unemployment, the family, women's oppression, racism, chauvinism.

The working class becomes a social and political force when it perceives common interests and organises action around them. In this it is influenced by national and class experiences, culture and traditions.

An analysis of social forces must therefore take account of the specific traditions and organisations of the Australian working class.

The main influence of the working class in society is through the labor movement though this does not yet embrace all workers. It includes the trade unions, the ACTU, ACSPA, CAGEO and Labor Councils; shop stewards, delegates and workplace committees, the Labor Party, the Communist Party, the Socialist Party and small left groups and parties.

Australia has the second highest proportion of union membership in the capitalist world (54 per cent of all workers), with a relatively strong union consciousness. The ALP usually polls a higher vote than the combined labor movement parties of other capitalist countries. The unions have won relatively high living standards, often through militant struggle. Some sections, especially wharfies and seamen, have taken advanced international solidarity actions. By world standards, the movement has a relatively good understanding of environmental issues.

Weaknesses of the labor movement include: too little rank-and-file activity and job organisation; too many unions, mostly with a bureaucratic apparatus; little socialist consciousness, with reformist ideas and parliamentary illusions very strong, and sexism and racism prevalent; a low level of membership in labor movement parties, political apathy and passivity.

The strength of the labor movement has never been fully used in its repeated struggles against the effects of capitalism, still less for a struggle to end capitalism and build socialism.

Major factors influencing the outlook of the working class are:

- * The ability of Australian capitalism to concede relatively high living standards. This arose from the establishment by the world's then most advanced nation, Britain, of a colonial society in a territory rich in natural resources and short of labor. (Similar factors operated in Canada, the USA and New Zealand.)
- * The traditions and culture of the British working class which were mainly reformist, trade unionist and economist (though there were radical influences from deported Chartists, Irish rebels, etc.).
- * **Racism** as part of these traditions. Racism was linked with the needs of British imperialism. It was first manifested in seizure of the Aborigines' lands and genocidal attacks upon them, and later

in attitudes to Chinese and other colored peoples, southern Europeans and others.

- * The weakness of Australian socialist tradition.
- * The fact that Australia has never experienced fascism or war devastation on its own territory.

Through their traditions and experiences, reinforced by the media and reformist leaders, many workers came to believe that with organisation and struggle they could make adequate advances within the system. They saw the ending of capitalism either as unnecessary or as a remote aim to be achieved through piecemeal reforms.

The ruling class has used its powerful ideological apparatus to strengthen this outlook, so that it persists even in a period of crisis.

Hence the strength of the labor movement's prevailing outlook, reformism, which is fostered by the dominant groups in the movement.

Politically, reformism is expressed through the Australian Labor Party.

The Labor Party

The Australian Labor Party embraces a wide range of opinion. One section consciously supports capitalism, opposes socialism in any form and is strongly anti-communist. Another section — generally the majority — believes in reforms to alleviate social injustice, to be achieved mainly through electing Labor governments. And there is a left wing which includes militant activists with little ideology, socialists who believe they can achieve their objective by gradual reform, some wanting an avowedly socialist program, and others who doubt this can be achieved in the Labor Party but adhere to it because they see no viable alternative. The Labor Party also attracts many opportunists, who see in its mass support the road to personal advancement.

The relative strengths and relationships of these groups vary according to the prevailing conditions, including the level of mass movements and the strength of the Communist Party and other socialist forces.

The Australian Labor Party arose when the workers, through their trade unions, turned to political action after their defeat in the maritime and shearers' strikes of the 1890s. These strikes showed the limitations of trade union action (which had often been militant but also largely reformist).

Mass working class support was achieved very quickly. Many liberal-minded people and sections of the new manufacturing interests who had previously supported more radical elements of the existing

capitalist parties also gave support, so that the Labor Party soon became the official opposition, first in the states and then nationally.

Labor governments soon followed. Generally they strengthened state intervention in the economy, supported the struggle against the squatters to open up the land, advanced social welfare, opposed to a certain degree British domination and espoused (often chauvinist) nationalism.

Many workers and others have looked to the Labor Party as the means to improve working conditions and social life generally. Most workers have a deep attachment to the ALP which survives even heavy setbacks.

While most workers have a reformist outlook, in many cases it is not a consciously held position, and their spontaneous struggle often brings them into conflict with the Labor Party's reformism. This is reflected in the recurring struggle over the relationship between the Labor Party and its affiliated unions.

The Labor Party is sometimes harmed by conservative aspects of trade union thinking and practice, and has tried to use its trade union links to tie the unions more closely to reformism and curtail their independence. But in general the trade union connections has been an important avenue of left and militant influence from the working class. This counters the parliamentary opportunism and the great absorption of the Labor Party in electoral matters.

Organisations of women and youth within the Labor Party have also been important avenues of mass influence, sometimes of a socialist nature.

Labor Party branches are almost wholly geared for electoral work, rarely discussing major policy issues or organising campaigns to win support for party policy. The development of the mass media, especially TV, has reduced mass campaigning even at election times. The parliamentary party, separated from effective control by the rank-and-file, frequently distorts or betrays party policy.

Nevertheless, a significant proportion of the activists of most mass movements as well as the trade unions is made up by members of the Labor Party. Also, changes can take place in Labor Party organisations (as happened when the Socialisation Units were set up in the NSW branch in the 1930s, for example).

The conflicts and tensions in the Labor Party arising from its mixed composition, along with the changing needs of capitalism, have in the past led to acute developments such as:

- * The split over conscription in the first world war, when a section of the Labor Party leadership headed by W.M. Hughes deserted the Labor Party to form a conservative, jingoist government.
- * The split during the depression of the 1930s, when a section of Labor Party leaders headed by J.A. Lyons joined the conservatives

to form a government that organised a more aggressive capitalist "solution" to the crisis. A group of NSW parliamentarians owing allegiance to the then NSW Labor premier J.T. Lang voted with these forces to defeat the Scullin Labor government. Lang meekly accepted dismissal of his government by NSW governor Sir Philip Game in 1932.

- * The subsequent struggle against Lang's influence in the NSW branch of the Labor Party eventually led to the victory of a socialist-oriented left win in the branch. Dismissal of this leftwing leadership by the federal body in 1940 resulted in the formation of a second Labor Party in NSW which amalgamated with the Communist Party in 1943.
- * The breakaway of the extreme right wing in 1954-55, first in Victoria, then in other states, to form what became the Democratic Labor Party.

Similar developments could occur again in future, probably displaying new features and opening up new possibilities. But in any case, the Labor Party will continue to exist and will continue to influence those social forces which must be won before socialism can become an attainable objective.

Therefore, developments in the Labor Party are important, especially any growth of a more cohesive left wing with a more coherent socialist type policy for tackling today's problems, developing mass activity and struggling for democracy within the party.

In the present crisis period, the tensions within the Labor Party will increase. One trend, the dominant one, powerfully supported throughout the world by German Social Democracy, wants Labor to adjust on capitalist lines, offering itself as the best administration of a capitalism adapted to the new conditions.

Another, growing trend is for sections of the Labor Party left to go beyond previously held positions to a more open advocacy of socialism, mass action and co-operation with other left forces.

The possibilities so presented will be influenced by the work of the communists and other socialist and radical forces in advancing their own policies and activities. They will be influenced also by the strengthening of the industrial and social movements. These things are the key to socialist advance.

The Communist Party

The Communist Party, formed in 1920, is the main focus for socialist action in Australia. The early communists committed themselves to building a party which was more than a political expression of the

Our views on how the party should be organised and developed to enable it to function in this way are outlined in the last section of this program.

Women

Women, of whatever class or social situation, experience oppression as a sex, and constitute a force for change because capitalism utilises, perpetuates and reinforces this oppression.

In recent years, women have expressed themselves as a political force in the women's liberation movement, as well as becoming more active in all areas of social and political life. The struggle for women's liberation is a central political question for the working class, and a crucial part of the struggle for socialism. The emancipation of women is important in itself. And unless women are involved in the overall struggle for socialism, and men in the struggle to resolve the specific problems of women, the possibilities of developing working class unity and the broad alliance will be greatly diminished.

Students

With the development of capitalism, education has become increasingly important for training new workers, specialists, professionals, managers and ruling agents. On the average, people spend much more time as students in a particularly formative period of their lives.

Students do not form or belong to a class; they come from all classes and have destinations to all classes. Students also experience common situations. These, in some cases, lead many to adopt militant, progressive or radical positions. In other cases, pressure to conform and concentrate on the goal of a relatively privileged job lead to acceptance and support of the system.

Primary and secondary students come mainly from the working class and most will become workers. Students suffer from authoritarian relations in the schools, and from an education designed more to make them accept their roles as "cogs in the machine" than to develop all their talents.

Therefore the nature of education should be changed and democracy in schools should be extended, giving students more say in their own education.

Tertiary students were once a tiny, privileged minority from the capitalist class and strata close to it. Now, though these are still important, the majority come from the new intermediate strata, the intellectually-trained workers and, to a lesser extent, the working class.

Before World War II, a degree gave the expectation of high income and status. Now, most students train for teaching, scientific and technical work, administration, public service, social work, the media and lower echelons of the professions. The character of these occupations has changed under advanced capitalism. Relatively small professional elites have been largely replaced by workforces tens of thousands strong, many of whose conditions and interests have shifted towards those of other workers.

This change, and the special effects of the crisis on these sections, have had important political results in the tertiary institutions. Moreover, many tertiary students, like secondary school leavers, now face the menace of unemployment.

For these reasons, and because of the key positions many will occupy, tertiary students have a new importance as a social force.

Already students have struggled against the way education is shaped by ruling class needs and against cuts in education expenditure. They have struggled for greater educational democracy and reform of curricula and teaching methods. Tertiary students also play an important part in various social movements, supplying many of their activists and leaders.

Other social forces and movements

Capitalism not only exploits people at work. It impinges on every aspect of their lives. Thus people often enter into struggle in their communities and in their leisure activities. Movements and groupings develop which may not belong directly to a class (students for example), or may embrace people from different classes and strata (for example, Black, national, women's, youth, environmental, democratic rights, peace and solidarity movements).

Though the organised church is usually conservative, upholding the present social order, many religious people are concerned about social problems, adopting progressive and even revolutionary positions. These people are an essential part of any broad alliance.

Developing and uniting the forces for social change

All the class and social forces we have described have a common need, expressed in their particular ways, for a democratic transformation of society, for policies which put people before profit, for liberation from social oppression, for immediate reforms which also take care of the future, and for an independent Australia in a peaceful

world. These common elements can help to link their different struggles: for trade union and workers' rights including the right to socially useful work, industrial democracy and workers' control; for women's liberation; for the rights of ethnic minorities; for production to be democratically determined according to social and environmental needs; for a democratic constitution, a Bill of Rights and civil liberties; for peace, disarmament, national independence and solidarity with national liberation movements.

Australians have shown glimpses of their potential strength in decades of struggle. But if their various movements of struggle are to challenge the overall domination of the ruling class, then each must develop further and unite with others in a broad alliance.

Potentially, this alliance can embrace the great majority of the people and become stronger than the forces for the status quo. But building the alliance is not easy. It requires a much greater mass consciousness and big effort to overcome differences. It requires, too, an understanding of **how** the popular forces can use their strength to overcome the great power of the ruling class minority.

It requires a **strategy** which can guide the forces committed to change.

V. Strategy for socialism

Capitalism is strong and skilful. The process of challenging, curtailing and defeating it will be complex and many-sided, requiring dedication and sustained effort by the forces of socialism and change.

A force strong enough to challenge and defeat capitalist power would have to be an alliance of the widest possible social forces with a solid base in major areas of society and able to contest capitalist structures, policies, ideas and values.

The forces for change have to develop their power and influence within capitalism before they can successfully overthrow it.

Strategy must therefore be based on present realities and must link the present struggles and needs of the working people with a socialist solution to those needs. This will not be achieved simply by advancing maximum socialist demands or by advocating only minimal reforms. Rather it requires struggle for intermediate demands that deal with current problems and yet challenge capitalist power and help to develop socialist consciousness.

History shows that small minorities wanting social change cannot overthrow capitalist rule, particularly in advanced capitalist countries. We reject the idea of a small revolutionary minority attempting to seize power. The active participation of the majority of working people is needed to overcome the resistance of the ruling class and their state; and even if successful a minority revolt would run counter to our concept of socialism.

Only parties and social forces which are already strong, with widespread influence and broad mass support, can act effectively both in times when change is slow and in great political-economic crises during which conflicts sharpen, more people enter into action and mass consciousness can advance rapidly.

The achievement of socialism is thus a **process** in which all the main aspects of capitalist power are challenged by:

- * asserting democratic control in workplace, locality and social affairs, encroaching on the "rights" of owners, managers and bureaucrats.
- * establishing and strengthening democratic organisations at all levels.
- * challenging the ideas and social institutions that uphold capitalism, male domination and racism, breaking down the sexual division of labor at home and in the workplace, and winning majority support for socialist ideas.
- * taking from the ruling class its main centres of power in the corporations and the state.
- * forming a government committed to fundamental socialist change, based on a strong mass movement fighting for such a change.

But the process is not a smooth one. Ruling class power cannot just be whittled away bit by bit until there is none left. At some point the ruling minority will attempt to reassert its dominance by any means it is able to use, and there will be sharp conflict in which the popular forces strive to break capitalist power throughout society.

The preparation of socialist forces for such challenges must occur in the day-to-day struggles within the system. In these struggles the grip of the ruling class on the levers of social power can be loosened. As the struggles sharpen the capitalist control of these levers can be broken and democratic control established. The remaining power and influence of the ruling class, and of sexism and racism, must then be tackled in the process of building a socialist society.

Whether such a decisive contest occurs at any given point, and what form it takes, will depend on many factors. Rapid changes in tactics and even in strategy may be necessary.

The need for an alliance

At the moment, the most pressing need is to make progress in building a broad alliance for social change in a socialist direction. This requires: winning mass support for policies expressing such change; convincing people that the basic causes of our problems lie in the system; strengthening the various movements for change and developing their mutual understanding and solidarity; and winning greater support for socialist alternatives.

The conscious forces for basic change and socialism are small at present. But the basic components of a broad alliance already exist. Each has some mass support, each has much wider potential support that it must win.

Different sections of the working class challenge the ruling class on particular issues. So do people experiencing a common oppression such as women or Aboriginal people, and so do movements on particular issues such as uranium mining. But for each movement to remove the causes of its grievances it needs to challenge and defeat capitalist domination of society as a whole. The isolation of the different sections and movements must be overcome. Each needs the support of the other; each needs to understand the other's problems; each has something to contribute to a fuller understanding of capitalism.

Therefore a broad alliance of social forces is more than a simple sum of their separate strengths.

Only if the workers' movement, the core of the alliance becomes aware that oppression takes many forms and occurs in all areas of society can it be the leading force and win the allies needed to defeat ruling class power.

Social movements need the support of the labor movement especially the industrial working class which has the material power, through its role in production, to back up demands for reform and change.

Workers in the state apparatus such as teachers and public servants, as well as doctors, lawyers, scientists and journalists, all in the main play a role, sometimes unwittingly, in maintaining acceptance of capitalist rule. It is very important to support their demands and struggles where these are progressive and to win as many as possible to progressive and socialist policies.

The system gains powerful ideological support from the male domination of society and from the function of the nuclear family under capitalism in rearing children to fit into existing social arrangements. Therefore, the women's liberation movement is essential to the alliance, along with the struggle to overcome male chauvinist ideas within the labor movement and other sectors.

Capitalist rule intensifies the oppression of black people and ethnic groups. Its denial of the historical and cultural bases of Australian

society and its discriminatory laws and practices are divisive and must be challenged. Black liberation and ethnic groups are necessary to the alliance.

Despite great obstacles, the broad alliance should seek contacts among the police and armed forces. It should aim to win their support for progressive policies and for the people's democratic rights, including the right to govern when majority support is won. We should support greater democratic rights, including trade union rights, within these forces.

It must also be remembered that those sections which suffer from the domination of big capital but who are not won over to the broad alliance may be organised by reactionary forces and used against it.

It is not easy to overcome divisions between the popular forces because sexism, racism, ethnic chauvinism, worker sectional mentality, etc. have both material and cultural foundations. But developing the concepts, habits and practices of a broad alliance helps overcome such divisions which aid and often are promoted by the ruling class.

Coalition of the left

The broad alliance will be pluralist, involving a unity of many social forces. Its leadership and political nucleus will also be pluralist, consisting of a number of different groupings on the left. Building the alliance therefore requires a coalition of political trends within each movement and a coalition of socialist forces — a coalition of the left.

Such a coalition should involve both unity in action and the attempt, through debate and discussion, and learning from experiences, to arrive at a better understanding of political positions and differences.

It should involve all those parties, groups and individuals prepared to co-operate. There will be those with a fully developed position and others with a general commitment to basic change, perhaps mainly reflecting the concerns of their particular section or movement.

All these left forces have a responsibility to assist the maximum growth of the alliance and its constituent parts. Concern for their unity and respect for the real balance of political forces within them are essential. To achieve this requires rejection of sectarian and manipulative methods designed to impose policies and views on the movements rather than convincing and winning them.

As the largest left groupings, the Labor Party Left and the Communist Party have a particular responsibility. We consider that strengthening the Communist Party and its influence, particularly among the workers and in the unions is the most important contribution we can make to the development of a coalition of the left and the broad alliance.

Overcoming divisions among the people

The different social forces coming into the broad alliance are not mutually exclusive. People experience in their lives many different aspects of capitalist oppression.

Women, for instance, experience exploitation and injustice as workers in addition to their oppression as women. In fact, because they are women, they suffer greater exploitation and indignity as workers.

Similarly, all workers experience in varying degrees, the environmental crisis of capitalism as well as the economic crisis. The lower paid and most exploited workers usually experience the worst environmental problems at home, at work and in their localities.

Each section should recognise the problems of others and accept their demands as part of a common program. This is not easy. Workers wanting jobs sometimes feel that environmental problems cut across their interests. All men, including male workers, are privileged because of the subordination of women and so feel threatened by the demand for women's equality.

Oppression of ethnic groups can also advantage other groups of workers. Some workers accept media propaganda that the unemployed are "bludging" on them. Poorly organised sections sometimes resent well-organised, militant sections who can win higher standards, while militants often resent backward sections under rightwing leadership.

All such differences should be tackled in the process of building the broad alliance. This cannot be done by brushing aside the concerns of some sections as always secondary. Rather, it is necessary for each section to develop wider understanding of class and social issues and for the broad alliance to attempt to develop united action on agreed demands.

It is important to show that many seeming conflicts of interest can be resolved in a mutually satisfactory way. For example, environmentally sound industries and practices (waste recycling, for instance) often provide more jobs than high technology, high-pollution ones. The danger of nuclear power has been linked with its threat to employment and the advantages of solar power both for energy and jobs, for example.

But some conflicts can only be resolved by changes in attitudes and behaviour. Male domination and sexism can only be finally resolved by big changes in men's attitude and behaviour, but meanwhile it is important that some changes occur now, that male workers recognise and fight for women's demands, and that women do not require, as a pre-condition for joining the alliance, that all men in it rid themselves of all sexist attitudes.

In the process of building the alliance each gain in understanding lays the basis for common action, a strengthening of the alliance, and a further step towards a common outlook and a common program.

Policies and programs

To challenge capitalist domination effectively, the broad alliance should develop a set of programs which propose realistic solutions to current problems, yet challenge capitalist methods and policies and point towards socialism.

Such programs must arise from the experiences and opinions of the people affected, using the aid of sympathetic specialists. A transport policy, for example, should result from the combined efforts of workers in the transport industries, commuters, specialists in transport, energy, town planning, etc. and other interested individuals.

The programs should take account of broad community interest and thus help to overcome the sectional divisions fostered by capitalism, while also illustrating the socialist aim of co-operation and self-management.

The Communist Party, in consultation with workers, union and mass movement activists and others, is developing programs on many major issues which, between them point the way out of the crisis. These are put forward for consideration by all potential forces of the broad alliance.

While seeking to develop movements around such programs, communists work loyally in the various mass struggles on more immediate issues. Such struggles help overcome feelings of isolation and helplessness and give people experience in organising themselves and fighting for their interests.

Any struggle which advances the independent organisation, understanding and self-confidence of the popular forces is a challenge to capitalist power and can lead to more advanced struggle.

Wages struggles are very important, combating the efforts to boost profits at the workers' expense. They are specially important when they break through limits imposed by arbitration, such as indexation decisions and guidelines.

But such struggles do not of themselves tackle the basic causes of the crisis or its major effects such as unemployment, closures, relocation and restructuring of industries, technological change, etc.

The task of the left and the broad alliance is to work out proposals for action which will raise these wider issues, broaden understanding and take the movement forward.

Starting from existing concern over wages and conditions, workers and their unions need to evolve a strategy for tackling the basic workings of the big companies. They should get to know the companies' plans which not only affect the whole economy but also the workers' immediate economic interests.

Unions and workers are beginning to find that to defend jobs and working conditions they must intervene in the structure of power and

control. They need to broaden their goals and their forms of struggle and especially to work out comprehensive alternative plans. Such plans challenge not simply the fact of retrenchments or reduced working conditions but also their sources — namely, management decisions about investment and company operations.

Unionists should present alternatives about the types of products and machinery, layout and location of factories, organisation, training, production processes, direction of new investment, government intervention up to and including nationalisation, etc.

Locality and special interest groups of various types also find that they need to intervene actively in the running of their affairs. Alternative plans are needed for the design of urban areas; for the location of factories, shops, homes and recreational facilities; for the transport systems that serve them, and for the chance to participate personally in sport, culture, health and recreation activities, etc. Integration of industry, local and special interest plans can help to co-ordinate workplace efforts with consumer demands for more socially useful goods and services.

Such intervention and planning grow out of the existing situation, yet develop understanding, activity, self-confidence and organisation, taking the working class along the road from being a ruled class to becoming a ruling class.

Political methods

In the carrying out of this strategy stress should be laid on —

- * Mass involvement and action.
- * Building of a consensus of ideas and values in opposition to the consensus which upholds the existing system.
- * Development of independent mass organisations and institutions of grass roots democracy.
- * Linking of the various social movements and class forces around common interests.

These ways of working will help to guard against both perpetual containment of reforming movements and perpetual isolation of sectarian minorities making generalised calls for socialism. They can help to avoid the combination of pious talk about socialism with reformist practice.

Application of these methods would lead to a continuous, though uneven, extension of workers' and popular control in all social areas. This process, beginning under capitalism, would speed up and become decisive in the revolutionary period and be consolidated with the building of self-management socialism.

Challenge all aspects of capitalist power

Capitalist power takes many forms:

- * Economic power, exercised through corporations and the state.
- * Ideological power, exercised through the media, the education system, the church, the law, the family and through pro-capitalist leaders of public opinion.
- * Coercive power, exercised through the law and the enforcement agencies of the state, especially the police and the army.
- * Political power, exercised through parliaments, local government bodies, etc. and through the openly capitalist parties.

To build a workers' and people's counter-power all these forms of capitalist power have to be challenged and the ruling class grip on all these institutions finally broken. Economic and state power cannot be effectively contested while capitalist ideas hold sway. State power on its own would leave intact the great power of the corporations which can be used to undermine and destroy governments. Nationalisation of major corporations by a left government would be met by international economic pressure or even military coups.

A left government could only survive and keep on course if backed by mass mobilisation and organisation throughout society, especially in the workplaces.

Thus, the many-sided capitalist power must be met by an equally many-sided, conscious and co-ordinated counter-power of social forces.

Challenging economic power

Contesting capitalist economic power requires:

- * Public intervention in areas usually regarded as the private domain of owners, managers and bureaucrats.
- * Widespread mass activity in challenging specific company and state plans, in the process laying the basis for worker or community control of enterprises.
- * Selection of the key points of the economy for public intervention.
- * Expansion, through mass action and wider democratic rights, of popular control over the state economic machinery and over the management of public enterprises.

The right of the capitalists to decide the nature and goals of production should be contested. The great problems of waste and inefficiency, of pollution and the environment, can only be adequately tackled if workers start demanding the right to determine how their labor is used.

Struggles for workers' control can challenge both the economic power of capitalism at its source in the workplace and its hegemony of ideas in society as a whole. Such struggles challenge the hierarchical, authoritarian structures of capitalism, exposing the contradiction between a political system based on universal franchise and an economic system based on capitalist private property and minority domination. These struggles challenge capitalist domination of society as a whole while also developing workers' self-confidence to take charge of workplace and industry affairs.

Capitalism cannot be beaten simply through workers taking control of the means of production in a range of individual factories because the system works as a totality rather than in separate units. However, when expressed in militant job action, and when linked with the demands of other social sections, workers' control demands will be a vital part of the overall movement. They will provide a basis for broad support for the actions of left governments.

Struggles for workers' control can help to develop a new kind of labor movement as the core of a wider alliance.

Challenging the ideas of the system

The material conditions for self-managed socialism already exist, but people's consciousness lags behind. A "battle of ideas" is therefore necessary against the ideological domination by which capitalism maintains a social consensus suited to its purposes.

The battle can be conducted in many ways; in everyday conversations; through alternative media — newspapers, films, theatre, video, etc; in leaflets, pamphlets and books; and where possible in the existing mass media.

Since capitalist ideas are dinned into the people every day, the battle of ideas cannot be won by small and isolated minorities. Hence the need for wide circulation of alternative publications and for the use of any opportunities in the existing mass media. The left, the broad alliance and the various movements should continually strive for a **mass approach** in their publicity, making it understandable and appealing to ordinary people.

Alternative policies and programs have a special role to play in developing the counter-hegemony required. They show that the present system is not the only one possible. They also help to bring people into **action**. Dominant social ideas are not displaced only by argument — experience and struggle are also necessary to expose them.

Fight reactionary and conservative forces

Especially in periods when reactionary forces are on the offensive, it is important to counteract their ideological influence. There is a danger

that the capitalist crisis may strengthen rather than weaken trends to reactionary and conservative "solutions". The left must carefully assess the balance of forces at each stage, develop the widest possible alliance against the reactionaries and seek to isolate them, while helping new forces to arrive at more advanced positions.

Challenging capitalist political power

The Australian ruling class exercises its political power through various state institutions which are in theory controlled by parliament as an expression of "the will of the people".

It has therefore to legitimise its rule either through openly capitalist parties winning a parliamentary majority or by pursuing its objectives through pressure on elected Labor governments.

Challenging capitalist political power requires:

- * Combating the policies of openly capitalist parties and governments.
- * Mobilising workers and progressive pressures on Labor governments.
- * Organising activity to implement radical and socialist policies.
- * Winning sections of state employees for such policies, in turn providing a basis for
- * Contesting the outright ruling class control of the state institutions.

Standing for and winning positions in local councils and state and national parliaments helps the challenge to ruling class power. They are important places in which to fight capitalist policies and publicise alternatives. As long as they are seen as institutions expressing the popular will, mass pressure should be exerted on them and efforts made to win majorities for radical reforms.

To win positions at the local level, where popular influence can be most readily exerted, is especially important. Campaigns around the every day oppressions experienced by people in local neighborhoods help to raise their consciousness and their capacity to act collectively. Local struggles should be linked with struggles in the workplace and with regional, state and national programs. Struggles against freeways can be linked with national transport and energy programs; problems of unemployment in depressed regions can be linked with regional economic plans and plans for restructuring of industry; and so on. In this way, through fighting around their everyday local experience, people can develop a wider alliance in support of policies and programs of national importance. Such action should stress democratic practices that will help build a bridge between tomorrow's community self-management and worker control at the workplace. Local support also provides a base from which to contest state and national elections.

Communists know well the ineffectiveness of parliamentary control over economic enterprises, over the bureaucracy, military and police, cabinets and governors. They strive to overcome the view, common in the Labor Party, that parliament is the main instrument for social change and that extra-parliamentary activity should be subordinated to parliamentary tactics.

Communists fight for a People's Constitution which would abolish the Senate and all upper houses, abolish the position of governor-general, replace the state political system with one based on regional governments, establish the principle of one vote one value through proportional representation at all levels, and include a Bill of Rights that would guarantee and extend human and democratic rights and liberties.

In their parliamentary work communists will work closely with workers' and progressive mass movements. They will aim to make parliament more democratic by involving the electors in decision making, by introducing the right of recall and by ensuring greater community access to information.

The Labor Party and left Labor governments

Given the strong traditional support for the Labor Party, and our undemocratic system of single member constituencies, the first reflection of the broad anti-capitalist alliance in parliament is likely to come from representatives of the left wing of the Labor Party.

If the Labor Party left develops a coherent program, and fights for that program, it would exert greater pressure against the Labor centre-right policy of "managing capitalism".

In all this, the strength of the broad alliance outside parliament is primary and decisive. Even the election of Labor left representatives committed to alternative policies depends mainly on the mass movements and on development of the ALP rank-and-file left and its participation in the broad alliance.

So long as the centre-right's dominance in the Labor Party is not effectively challenged, large sections of workers who look to Labor and who are not yet ready to support other parties will not get beyond reformist ideas and aims. The Labor left has an essential role to play in altering this.

Until the broad alliance becomes stronger, Labor governments committed to managing and reforming capitalism are the only alternative to Liberal/National Country Party governments.

Such Labor governments, as in the early days of the Whitlam government, may introduce reforms benefiting the working people and restricting the capitalist class to some degree.

However, when faced with the economic crisis, that government accepted without a struggle the necessities of the system, backed away from some of its own reforms and met the crisis by policies of profit-boosting, "wage restraint", etc.

This expressed the basic dilemma involved in taking responsibility for the functioning of a system whose problems can only be tackled by the radical measures which challenge the economic and state power of the capitalists. That power was seen in action in the last months of 1975 when the flight of capital and an intensive and dishonest campaign in the media prepared the way for the Whitlam government's defeat.

This and various state Labor governments have displayed strongly an attitude of dampening down mass movements, urging that action be left to the leaders, the boat not be rocked, etc.

Pursuit of personal advancement by opportunists in the Labor Party also has more scope when Labor is in office, and inducements are liberally offered to vested interests.

Labor's centre-right has not been able to win a lasting majority even for the "moderate", "responsible" policies which it says are necessary to win the middle ground. It has never tackled the underlying causes of social problems, and so, as workers and the intermediate strata face mounting difficulties, some of them swing back to support of the conservatives.

Despite all this, we support the return of Labor governments and aim to develop non-sectarian mass movements so as to prevent a conservative resurgence, to secure a shift to the left in mass sentiment and to press for whatever government action is possible to challenge ruling class dominance.

In certain conditions (politically distant in Australia at present), with mass action more developed and a much stronger Communist Party and left movement, a Labor government with a strong and active left wing could be an important factor in developing a broad alliance for radical social change.

The transition to socialism

The development of a broad alliance for socialism will not proceed smoothly. As its mass support develops, and as capitalist power is eroded, the possibility of transition to socialism is opened up. This will be a revolutionary democratic process in which decisive state and economic power is taken from the ruling class minority and the active democratic rule of the majority asserted in all social affairs. This decisive shift in the balance of power will not happen all at once, but it must take place over a relatively short period to prevent the ruling class using major levers of power left in its hands to subvert the popular will.

The actual course of events cannot be predicted but a revolutionary transformation will involve a period of sharpened class and social struggle developing beyond normal limits. Such a period could arise in various ways: through an upsurge of struggle for mass demands, through an outburst of discontent with ruling class policies and methods, through mass struggle against capitalist attempts to sabotage the work of a democratically elected government, etc. We have seen examples of such upsurges in the May 1968 events in France, in the Allende government period in Chile, and on a smaller scale, in the strike against the penal clauses in Australia in 1969 and the mass reaction against the Kerr coup in 1975.

Successful revolutionary transformation would involve:

- * People's power at a high level at the grass roots — in workplaces, communities and social institutions, and on this basis:
- * Democratic transformation of the state to make it serve the wishes and interests of working people.
- * Mobilisation of the popular forces supporting the broad alliance to ensure implementation of the transitional program.
- * Formation of a left government reflecting the majority, and which will be responsible at every stage to the broad alliance, and committed to regular democratic elections and acceptance of their results.
- * Nationalisation under democratic worker-community control of the main corporations exercising dominant economic influence.
- * Changes in the family through expanding the range of options in family associations, in child care and performance of housework. In particular, in combating male domination and parental coercion.

The revolutionary process requires the development and interaction of all these elements. Changes in state personnel cannot fundamentally alter the state, let alone the wider society, unless the working class makes fundamental changes in economic and other fields. Similarly, public ownership in industry depends more on the workers taking control in factories and institutions than on nationalisation by law. On the other hand, workers' control in one factory does not in itself constitute public ownership.

The revolutionary transformation involves the working class taking control of industry and social life and also taking state power and changing the nature of the state.

All these developments require winning majority support for the program of the broad alliance.

The state

The state and its role in the transition period are particularly important. Because the state represents concentrated and centralised power, and because it has developed to suit capitalist interests, it cannot serve social interests or carry out socialist policies without big changes in its structures, in its leading personnel and in the ideas of the mass of its employees. Therefore, democratic transformation of the state involves a high level of popular power, new institutions expressing this, dismantling or replacing state organs that, by their nature, cannot carry out the popular will, and dismissing those controllers and employees who refuse to do so. This applies particularly to the coercive organs.

Under self-management socialism the aim will be to eventually do away with the state as a special group of people whose function is to rule and manage. Meanwhile, the function of the state will be to express the decisive power of the working people and their allies and to defend their revolutionary gains. The different nature of the state will be expressed in the rapid decentralisation of major powers to organs of self-management and in the thorough and ongoing democratisation of the state machinery. Representatives in governing bodies will be made subject to recall by their electors, to limited tenure of office and to receiving an income on a par with others.

In seeking to transform the state along these lines it is especially important to win the support (and/or loyalty to the popular will) of large numbers of state workers including at least some in the enforcement agencies.

At each stage the broad alliance, the mass movements and the left government would have to be prepared to combat the various forms of resistance and sabotage employed by the ruling class to frustrate the popular will.

Flight of capital would be stopped by government action as far as possible. Other forms of economic sabotage would be met by a combination of workers' and state actions. In the remaining private sector, enterprises engaged in sabotage could be taken over, relying on the ability of workers and specialist advisers to run them efficiently. Assistance from workers' movements and sympathetic governments in other countries would also be of great importance.

The ultimate form of capitalist resistance — the most dangerous — would be the resort to violence by sections of the armed forces and by para-military organisations of the extreme right. This would have to be met by a great mass response appropriate to the given situation. In the main, the response should take the form of non-violent political mobilisation such as demonstrations, strikes, etc. because the aim of much rightwing violence is to provoke a reaction which gives them an excuse for further, escalated violence. Nevertheless, the broad alliance

should be prepared to counter violence through self-defence groups in workplaces, localities and movements.

As its program of change is implemented, and as remaining elements of capitalist power are reduced, the broad alliance and all the popular forces which have been won to support it can move towards socialism.

VI. Democratic, self-management socialism

The CPA aims for a democratic, self-management socialism based on social ownership and democratic control of the main means of production, natural resources and social wealth.

This would involve the development of the widest forms of popular participation at all levels and in all branches of social life, a multi-party system, democratically elected representative institutions, trade unions and other people's organisations independent of the state and of the parties, freedom for opposing views, extended human rights, religious freedom, and freedom for cultural, scientific and artistic creation.

The aim of production, science, technology and social policy would be to satisfy genuine human, social needs, to end oppression and to develop a new outlook and lifestyle based on the values of peace, equality and co-operation of nations, ecological harmony, conservation of resources, and rejection of capitalism's crude pursuit of material possessions as an end in themselves.

The goal would be a classless society, overcoming the sexual and ethnic division of labor, unnecessary distinctions between manual and mental work and between town and country, and the material, intellectual and cultural advancement of humanity through co-operation in which the development of each individual assists and is assisted by the development of others.

Difficulties and conflicts are to be expected. Many of these would come from the former ruling class which, with the aid of international capital, would use its power and expertise for subversive purposes, as in Chile in 1973 and in other countries.

Linked up with this could be dissatisfactions among small business people and sections of the intermediate strata. Difficulties would arise also from ingrained habits unsuited to the new society — from sexist, racist, sectional and individualist ideas.

There would also be contradictions and conflicts, such as the problem of reconciling in practice the rights of workers in separate self-managed enterprises, those of the people in different regions, etc., with the overall needs of society.

Difficulties would be reflected politically and previous alignments could change.

The exact situation cannot be predicted. It would depend on the international setting at the time, the condition of the economy, the degree to which workers' control, women's liberation, anti-racism and mass participation had been developed previously, on mass understanding and on the foresight and skill of components of the left coalition and individual leaders.

But the difficulties can all be overcome because the insoluble problems of capitalism would be tackled at their root. Vigorous construction of the new society would proceed.

Economics and politics

The first step in the change-over from private ownership may be nationalisation, but the aim is not to turn means of production which are now private property into government property, or to make the government the sole employer. The aim is rather to do away with the employer-employee, wage-labor relationship altogether by developing social property administered by workers in enterprises and institutions. Personal property for individual or family use would be secured.

Social goals and programs would not be handed down by an all-powerful central government. Decisions would be made democratically, with the widest possible participation of the people. Overall questions of policy and planning would be decided by national discussion, referenda and elections. Within these guidelines, decisions would be made by appropriate sections of the people or representative bodies.

There would be a balance between direct and representative democracy, with the aim of a progressive shift towards direct democracy.

In politics, culture, science, religion, philosophy, etc., self-

management socialism would be pluralist, with freedom for all views to develop and contest for social recognition and acceptance.

Citizens' rights

Economic democracy and the democratic control of all social institutions would represent a qualitative extension of democracy impossible under capitalism. But economic democracy does not automatically guarantee political and civil democracy, though it is essential to achieving them. Other forms of democracy must be exercised and legally guaranteed. The constitution of an Australian socialist republic would include a comprehensive declaration of the rights of citizens — human and social, political and civil rights, ensuring them the freedom to change ideas and policies in accordance with their freedom of action in the new society.

It is essential to ensure that rights can be exercised in practice and do not become purely formal. This requires community control over, and democratic functioning of the media, the education system, the public service, military and police.

It also requires the right to information and freedom to disseminate it. Small elites can often frustrate the popular will by their possession and selective use of information.

The struggle to overcome male domination and oppressive attitudes in the family will play an important part in liberating women and children and will encourage wider participation in the democratic life of the community.

Self-management

Self-management will be in the framework of national planning decided democratically through assemblies of representatives from the enterprises and institutions. Plans will be made after discussion at industry, local, regional and national levels.

Each workplace and institution will have its own governing council, elected and subject to recall. Major decisions on policy will be taken at general meeting of those involved. Each will also elect delegates to wider bodies concerned with overall running of particular industries, branches of the public service, etc. In addition, particular sectors of an industry, or particular trades and professions, may have their own councils dealing with their special problems.

Workers' councils will be responsible for the use of all enterprise equipment and funds remaining after contributions for national and local community purposes. They will decide on rates of pay within national guidelines. They will appoint their own management and technical experts.

The ingrained reliance on material incentives, along with big differences between incomes, will be gradually lessened as consciousness develops. Bureaucratic tendencies will be combated, and a contribution made to breaking down the division between mental and manual labor since specialists and workers will have to work out problems together.

The exact method of self-management in each enterprise, industry, etc. will be decided by those involved, in consultation with the wider community.

Delegates from workplaces would also be elected to councils deciding policy in key areas at national levels of economic decision-making, such as banking, insurance, investment planning, marketing, other areas of social life such as the media, health education, culture, social welfare and science. Particular communities, such as ethnic and Aboriginal communities, would have their own councils.

Parliament and representative institutions

Australian parliaments are, in our view, a limited form of representative institution but any change in them would depend on the decision of the people.

Representative institutions, local, regional and material, are an indispensable part of socialist democracy. They would be responsible for the proper conduct of democratic decision-making on major issues, including the conduct of referenda and other tests of public opinion, and would have to ensure the carrying out of majority decisions. They would be elected by proportional representation. They would be required to consult fully with self-management institutions and other grass roots bodies.

Their functions would be specified to avoid over centralisation of power. The aim would be progressive decentralisation so as to overcome the separation of representatives from electors and to avoid discussion or action at "top levels" taking the place of grass roots activity.

The state

Under self-management socialism the capitalist state will be replaced by a state of a new kind. This state will have the aim of gradually curtailing its own activities and eventually doing away with itself — that is, doing away with the existence of a special group of people whose particular occupation is to manage and coerce, such as has existed in all class societies. The aim is for all people to participate in government with rotation of the direct participants.

The state would be secular, with no religion or particular ideology regarded as "official".

In the relatively long period between the overthrow of the capitalist state and the disappearance of the state as such, the danger will remain, even in the new state, that a new bureaucratic elite will develop, adopting many of the attitudes of the former bureaucracy, including the use of repression against the workers and against socialist democracy. Such tendencies will affect parties and unions as well as the state. The working class and its parties will need to be vigilant against this danger and ensure that the new state protects socialist democracy and self-management and expresses the power of the working people.

Political parties

All democratic political parties, including those opposed to socialism, would be free to exist and seek political support.

They should pledge to respect the people's verdict in elections. However, should parties and groups hostile to socialism use force or other means to sabotage the democratic process, the people and state would use whatever counter force was necessary to defend democracy.

The functions of political parties would be clearly marked off from those of the state. As long as it exists, the state embodies social power, while political parties advance policies and work to implement them, seeking a majority for them in elections.

Different views on what should be done will arise even after classes have disappeared, let alone while remnants of them still exist, along with habitual views deriving from class interests. There must be freedom to express these differences. This need not always take the form of party politics which often limits real choice.

The legal system

The legal system would be made more democratic and accessible to ordinary people. The judiciary would be guided only by the socialist constitution and laws and would be free from government direction or interference. Principles such as habeas corpus (to protect citizens from arbitrary detention), trial by jury and the presumption of innocence would be preserved and strengthened. Powers of arrest and search would be strictly regulated. Capital punishment and corporal punishment would be abolished. Acts of officials would be subject to appeal. A free legal aid and advice system would be provided for all who require it.

The media

The press, radio and television would be thoroughly democratised with general standards of operation laid down after public discussion. An independent national authority would enforce these standards and

adjudicate on alleged breaches. Operators of various media would be licensed on a non-profit basis, and have a managing council including representatives of political parties, co-operatives, trade unions, ethnic community groups, professional organisations, universities and scientific, cultural, religious and sporting organisations and appropriate. They would co-operate with media workers who would run the media from day to day. A representative public body would be set up with power to ensure access to the mass media for the public in general and for minority viewpoints, including those of individuals. Individuals would be able to publish or have published their own material.

The public service

The public service would be democratised and decentralised, both to improve its functioning and to develop community control over it, particularly in the fields of education, health and welfare.

The aims would be open administration, involving freedom to inspect files, simplification of texts, protection of citizens against arbitrary acts, encouragement of participation in drawing up, carrying out and checking on decisions, and education to foster the ideas of service and democracy.

The military and police

The military and police would be transformed from elite bodies separated from the rest of society into forces acting under democratic control for the good of the majority. Military knowledge would become community property. All who wanted could be trained for self-defence and defence of the country.

Police forces would, as far as possible, be decentralised and put under local community control by such measures as election of police chiefs and encouragement of self-management enterprises to look after their own security. Regional and national forces would be under government control, with community organisations represented on a supervisory committee to guard against abuses of power.

Security

Socialism will be protected mainly by the vigilance and action of the people exercising their self-management functions. Any special organs that may prove necessary will be staffed with people committed to socialist democracy. Definitions of "subversive", "violence" and "threat" would specifically exclude those wishing to democratically make social changes, however fundamental. There would be a strict

limit (say ten years) on the period of service. The security forces' mandate would be restricted to genuine gathering of intelligence about threats of external, violent or minority overthrow, or disruption, of socialist democracy.

Their first duty would be to uphold socialist democracy and guarantee the right of all citizens. They would be responsible to the government and to a community supervisory committee.

Nevertheless, history has shown that security and political police can be the source of gross distortions of socialist democracy and the means for suppressing all opposition. This can occur despite legal and other restrictions on their operation. The use of security organs would be progressively diminished with the aim of their earliest possible abolition.

Voluntary organisations

To defend their interests under capitalism, Australian people have created a great variety of voluntary organisations, such as trade unions, women's organisations, tenants' associations, etc. A socialist Australia would make constitutional provision for democratic initiatives by such groups as a check to bureaucracy and the abuse of power.

Voluntary organisations would supplement and reinforce the institutions of self-management and socialist democracy. Their activity would be essential for the moral and cultural transformation of society. Out of their experiences new forms of democracy could develop.

Foreign policy

The foreign policy of a socialist Australia would be non-aligned. It would repudiate the ANZUS Pact and the military arrangements with ASEAN countries. It would eliminate foreign military bases on Australian soil and withdraw military forces stationed in other countries. It would be opposed to the existence of military blocs and Great Power domination. It would aim to strengthen solidarity and friendship with anti-imperialist and socialist countries on the basis of mutual respect for national independence and self-determination.

It would actively support social and national liberation struggles while renouncing war as an instrument of foreign policy. It would act for disarmament and for a new international economic order.

Making it work in practice

Legal rights and democratic systems make it possible for socialist democracy to flourish. But they cannot ensure that it will, or provide

iron-clad guarantees against abuses. People's rights are realised in the struggle to implement them.

The expansion of democracy, and the prevention of undemocratic practices and the emergence of a new elite, can be guaranteed only by the people themselves, their political consciousness and capacity to struggle.

Self-management socialism provides the maximum scope for active participation by the people in political and social life. They will be encouraged to participate by the fact that they will really be able to exercise power over things affecting their lives.

Further goals

Socialism, as described here, is not envisaged as the end of development of society. Some further goals can be foreseen, even if dimly at this stage.

Whereas socialism is based, broadly, on the economic principle: from each according to ability, to each according to work; a higher form of society, usually called communism, would adopt the principle: from each according to ability, to each according to need. Such a change would require an economy which could fairly easily supply the reasonable material needs of all, taking into account social and environmental considerations.

It would require changed attitudes to material possessions and consumption, with greed checked and people taking only what they needed, as well as a widespread outlook of co-operation and concern for the common good.

Commodity production, money, a fixed division of labor and separation of mental and manual labor would gradually disappear. The satisfaction of material needs would be put in its proper place as merely the pre-condition for a full life, not the main aim.

These developments, and the education and training of people to take a rotating share of administration, managerial and political tasks would provide the basis for most of the bureaucratic apparatus to disappear, the state to "wither away", and freedom to develop, creating a society in which "the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all".

Such a society could hardly develop fully in a separate country. Nor would it mean the end of change. When such conditions become reality the people at that time will be able to freely choose their new goals.

VII. The Communist Party

The Communist Party is committed to working for these aims through the strategy outlined here, which it believes is the correct one for Australian conditions. Party members have a responsibility to act for this Program and to support struggles against capitalist exploitation and war, and against racism, sexism and suppression of the human rights of ordinary people, wherever they occur.

Proceeding from current circumstances, the Communist Party has these aims:

- * To help build a broad alliance and left coalition which can transform society and build socialism, while retaining the right to put its own independent position as appropriate.
- * To develop into a much stronger and larger party, with a significant base among all sections of working people, with organisation in workplaces, institutions and localities.
- * To seek the opinions and help of workers and others in further developing programs and policies for socialism.
- * To help develop the independent activity, organisation and policies of working people.
- * To help develop the analysis of Australian society and the political understanding necessary for effective political activity.

The CPA is both an independent Australian party and an internationalist party. It does not follow or owe allegiance to any overseas party, political centre or dogma. It seeks relations with all communist, marxist and socialist parties and working class and liberation movements on the basis of equality, non-interference and unity against capitalism and oppression. It adopts a resolute position of opposition to world imperialism, support for the independence of all peoples and solidarity with all working class and liberation movements both national and international, and upholds the resolution of conflicts within socialism in a principled way.

The party seeks to express in its own practice its concepts of democracy and self-management. It aims for unity of leadership and activists and for a style of work overcoming bureaucratic methods, including combating false distinctions between leaders and activists or between experienced and less experienced cadres. Overcoming sexism, racism, group and sectional attitudes within the Party is an important task requiring considerable efforts to break down old approaches, and translate our theory into practice.

Party functionaries and leading committees are elected and are responsible to the members and bodies electing them. They are required to report to, consult with, learn from and work with, members and activists. In their turn, members and activists are expected to convey their views and experiences to party committees and to actively supervise their work.

The party's organisational forms and democratic procedures, and the rights and duties of its members, are set out in the party constitution.

The CPA aims to be a party of activists and to educate its members in marxism and socialist theory and practice. It encourages and assists them to become effective mass workers and activists. It seeks to develop methods of work which can win and bring into struggle the maximum number of people.

Such methods include that communists do not seek to impose pre-formed ideas but learn from as well as advise working people while actively promoting their views. Communists strive to avoid elitist, sectarian or adventurist tactics as a substitute for action by the working class and in its name. Such methods are both incorrect and ineffective and can reinforce reformist ideas and practice, alienate communists from those they seek to win, expose the movement to repression and set dangerous precedents for the relationship between revolutionaries and the mass of the people

Because capitalist ideas and values are dominant in Australian society, and because the capitalist mass media is central in fostering individualism, consumerism, and conservative political attitudes among the working class, the attention the Party pays to ideology and

media is crucial. The Party needs a flourishing press, particularly its main mass paper **Tribune** and its theoretical journal **Australian Left Review**. **Tribune** is prepared and published by a collective selected by the National Committee and supervised by it, and responsible to the party membership as a whole. Members should assist to distribute, collect money for, write for, report to, and sell it. Members should also utilise other forms of mass communication whenever resources and expertise are available.

In pursuit of its aims the CPA does not expect or seek to be the only party with correct policies and opinions. It works for a democratic diversity and unity in action of all forces in the labor and progressive movements. It seeks always to find points of agreement with them which can advance the struggles and interests of all those who suffer from the system. In proposing and working for a broad anti-capitalist alliance and a coalition of the left it tries to develop, with other left and progressive parties, groups and movements, principled relations which neither exaggerate nor hide differences, but which assist mutual understanding and united action.

Civilisation and human nature — the long view

The whole future of human civilisation is at stake today. Modern society has enormous potential for either social progress or destruction. The difficulties of capitalism do not mean that its collapse or overthrow is inevitable, or that socialism will inevitably replace it. Stagnation and repression are possible, as seen during the Middle Ages and the fascist experience.

Capitalism has great reserves and flexibility. It has plans now to handle permanent crisis, permanent unemployment and their social consequences. Without mass support for an alternative those plans may win, despite their inhuman, anti-social results. The clash of political forces will decide the outcome, not forces operating independently of human beings.

Nor is social development the product of an inborn, unchanging "human nature". Rather, society is the product of human activity, feeling and thinking. These are shaped by the structures of capitalism, by historical traditions and culture.

Human beings are not innately selfish and competitive. Except for various drives to satisfy needs "human nature" is socially determined and can therefore change in the process of social practice, just as ideas and values change, difficult and prolonged though such changes may be. The selfish, competitive, privatised individual of today is a product of capitalist society and can disappear as the main social type as that society is overthrown and a new one built. The individual initiative and creativity of all people, not just an elite, will be released for the first time.

Replacing the pursuit of profit with the pursuit of democratically determined human needs will not automatically end all social problems. But it is the first essential step forward.



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