

australian marxist review

Theoretical journal of the Socialist Party of Australia

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Australian MARXIST Review

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SPA on China

(Resolution on China carried at the Central Committee meeting of the Socialist Party of Australia held in Sydney on March 3rd and 4th 1979)

The Central Committee of the Socialist Party of Australia re-iterates the SPA's denunciation of the invasion of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam by the military forces of China and our demand for their immediate and unconditional withdrawal.

This unbridled aggression follows long harassment and border provocations instigated by the current leaders of China against Vietnam. For many years China's leaders have made claims to vast territories — to S.E. Asia, to the whole of Mongolia, to parts of India, Afghanistan, Nepal, Burma, the Soviet Union and elsewhere.

These claims are based on what are said to be "lost territories" going back many centuries in some cases.

Speaking at a meeting of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China in August 1965, Mao Tse-tung said:

"We must gain possession of South East Asia including South Vietnam, Thailand, Burma, Malaysia and Singapore. Such a region is very rich. There are many natural resources there. It is well worth the expense involved in gaining it."

Following the defeat of the aggression of the US imperialists against Vietnam, the reunited Socialist Republic of Vietnam became a barrier to the expansionist aims of the Chinese leaders.

As far back as 1975 the Chinese leaders commenced their pressure and provocation against Vietnam.

Part of their plan was support for the barbarous Pol Pot regime of Kampuchea. The Pol Pot Maoist clique which seized power in Kampuchea in 1975 began savage repression and murder of the Kampuchean people. The population of the towns and cities were forced into slave labour conditions in the countryside. Families were separated, compulsory marriages introduced, the money economy was destroyed in an attempt to introduce a bizarre but

monstrous form of Maoist civilization.

The declaration of the Kampuchean National United Front for National Salvation says that "our people have witnessed massacres more atrocious, more barbarous than those committed in the Middle Ages or perpetrated by the Hitlerite fascists." It is estimated that upwards of three million people were slaughtered.

Hundreds of thousands of Kampuchean people found sanctuary in Vietnam.

Throughout this whole period of three years the Pol Pot clique staged repeated border provocations against Vietnam.

By the end of 1978 the Pol Pot regime had mobilised 14 divisions on the Kampuchea/Vietnam border ready for further invasion. The Vietnamese military forces defeated these Pol Pot troops. It was at this time that the patriotic forces of Kampuchea rose up and destroyed the barbarous regime which was so lacking in popular support that it collapsed in three weeks.

The collapse of the Maoist regime upset the plans of the Chinese leaders to attack Vietnam on two fronts. But it did not lead to them abandoning their aggressive plans.

The visit to the USA by the Chinese Vice-Premier, Deng Xiaoping for consultations with the Carter administration was followed by open and public pronouncements of the Chinese government's intention to invade Vietnam.

At the time of this visit Deng Xiaoping put final touches to the invasion plan and the necessary political action. It is a plan of aggression jointly concocted by the Chinese leaders and the US warmongers. It does not have the alleged limited but arrogant aim to "teach Vietnam a lesson," but to remove the leadership of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, to restore the murderous Pol Pot clique in Kampuchea and to install a pro-Maoist government in Laos. Its aim is to end the socialist development and construction of Vietnam and other Indo-China countries.

That the Chinese aggression is fully supported by the US and other imperialist governments is shown by their failure to clearly condemn the Chinese aggression, by their diplomatic efforts to whitewash China's leaders and equate the aggressor and his victim on the same level, by the smooth and rapid establishment of diplomatic relations with China and many other facts.

We reject the false propaganda that Vietnam was the aggressor. It

was only in 1975 that 30 years of war against French and US imperialists, in which Australia was also a participant, finally came to an end. Vietnam desperately needed peace. In 1978 Vietnam suffered some of the most terrible floods in her history. Six million people were rendered homeless and three million tons of rice were lost. Furthermore, China is a vast country with a population many times that of Vietnam.

Vietnam's policy of peace towards her neighbours was expressed by many attempts to settle border conflicts with Kampuchea and China through negotiations. All her proposals were turned down by the Pol Pot regime and the Chinese leaders. In all the circumstances it is beyond common sense to suggest the Vietnam deliberately invited China's attack.

The blatant Chinese aggression has imposed new sufferings on the Vietnamese people and on the Chinese people too. The actions of the Chinese leaders show them to be irresponsible in this nuclear age and unconcerned for the consequences which could include world conflagration.

We recall the chilling statement of Mao Tse-tung made in 1957 before a world meeting of Communist and Workers Parties. He said:

“Can anybody suggest how many lives a future war would take? It will likely be one-third of the 2.7 billion people of the world population, that is, altogether 900 million people. But I think even this figure is too low if atom bombs really come into effect. Of course this is terrible, on the one hand. But on the other, it would not be annoying if it were half of mankind...if half of mankind is killed, the other half still remains... within half a century or within one century the population will grow again, and even by more than the half of it.”

The actions and declared policies of China show that the Chinese leaders have long since departed from genuine socialist and humanitarian principles which are based upon the scientific theories of Marxism-Leninism, the very cornerstone of which is internationalist solidarity of the working class forces.

Their open embrace of imperialism, proposals for China to join the International Monetary Fund, the recent repayment of interest to the dispossessed capitalists of China, and the flood of traders and investors from capitalist countries show that the revolutionary gains of the great Chinese people have and are being betrayed by their Maoist leaders.

The Federal Liberal government knew of and connived at the Chinese aggression. It has failed by any statement to condemn the aggression, but

tried to cover-up for China and to even put the blame on Vietnam. Furthermore, the Federal Liberal Government played an active international role as part of the plan agreed upon by the Chinese leaders and the US imperialists. The role of the Australian government in backing the Chinese aggression brought a letter of thanks and commendation from President Carter.

Feeding the flames of aggression is a discreditable role which can only have very serious consequences for the Australian people as part of the world community. At a time when the people of the world call for and need peace and disarmament those who make millions from weapons and the domination and exploitation of others are madly stoking a new arms spiral and fanning every conflict. It is a course which will be condemned by present and subsequent generations and will not be successful.

The expansionism of the Chinese leaders and the war plans of the imperialists are being fanned under the cloak of anti-Sovietism and anti-communism. This is the same bloodstained mantle used by Hitler to justify his mad dreams of world domination.

In the present crisis the socialist Soviet Union has acted with great restraint, responsibility and calm. But aggression cannot be allowed to succeed. Any appeasement of the new expansionists will inevitably lead to new demands by them and new dangers to world peace.

It is time for China to head the call of the Soviet Union and other countries for withdrawal and all nations to take up the repeated Soviet proposals for disarmament and detente.

The Socialist Party of Australia declares its militant solidarity with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The SPA, together with all others who are for peace and national independence, will step up the demand for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the invading Chinese armies, permitting the people of Vietnam, China and other countries in the region to live their lives in peace and security.

China out of Vietnam!

Essence and Form of Working Class Power

by Boris Leibzon, Doctor of Science (History) and Professor at the Academy of Social Sciences of the CPSU Central Committee.

A revolution, no matter in what way it is brought about - peaceful or non-peaceful, as a result of a coup or of a continued process of social transformation - always means the transition of state power from one class to another.

This is the 'first, the principal, the basic form of a revolution, both in the strictly scientific and in the practical political meaning of that term.' (Lenin, *Collected Works*, English-language edition, Vol. 24, p 44)

In Russia, as a result of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the bourgeois and landlord state was replaced by a state in which the leading force was the working class.

The working class at once faced two political tasks: to hold out in the struggle against the overthrown exploiting classes which were still hoping to regain their positions, and to strengthen the alliance with broad masses of the people, not on the basis of winning power, but of defending it and building socialism

Dictatorship of the Proletariat

This predetermined the need for the power of the working class or, as it was called by the classic Marxist writers, the dictatorship of the proletariat. Such power is by nature of a temporary character, gradually growing, as its historic tasks are achieved - the abolition of capitalism and the building of socialist society - into a state of the whole people.

Marxist put into the concept of 'dictatorship' a class content, namely that power belongs to the working class and its allies. **For marxists the dictatorship is not a form of power, nor the degree of coercion it exercises, nor the extent of democracy that it develops.**

The dictatorship of the people means nothing but the political power of the working class in alliance with the broadest masses. The forms which this power may assume depend on many conditions: international, the relationship of social forces inside the country and, primarily, the

degree of resistance put up by the classes hostile to the new system.

The first dictatorship of the proletariat was the Paris Commune, which lasted for only 72 days in 1871 and was drowned in blood because it proved incapable of ruthlessly putting down the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie and getting support from the peasant masses. Naturally, all those who wanted a victory for socialist revolution in reality, not in words, drew lessons from the experience of the Paris Commune and understood that, in order to hold out, the dictatorship of the proletariat must be a determined and firm power and at the same time enjoy the active backing of the majority of the population.

The power of the working class in Russia was established as a result of an armed uprising. The workers at once encountered the necessity of bitter struggle against the rampant counter-revolution which did not only count on its military superiority, but was also confident that it would be able to isolate the working class and undermine its alliance with the peasant masses.

The intention of the communists to allow other political parties to exist in the country after the victory of the revolution was unfulfilled. These parties refused to enter into an alliance with the communists and, far from supporting the new system, or just being in opposition to it, took the path of active counter-revolution. The revolution swept them aside. It was largely this that determined the concrete forms which the power of the working class took in Russia.

The fact that this power was able to defend itself in unbelievably difficult conditions indicates that the Soviets — the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat established in Russia — historically justified themselves. Not surprisingly, those who in all countries sympathised with the triumph of Soviet rule began to identify the concept 'dictatorship of the proletariat' with precisely those concrete manifestations which it assumed in the land of the October Revolution.

Forms of the Dictatorship

Since for a long time no other form of workers' power occurred, the concept 'dictatorship of the proletariat' began in daily use to lose its scientific content and was only thought of as synonymous with the form of power established in Russia.

Often it was precisely the main feature of the dictatorship of the proletariat, power resting on the masses and based on an extensive alliance of different social forces, which was forgotten. In other words, the forms of power that were imposed by an acute class struggle hid its central feature — its profoundly democratic and genuinely popular character as the power

of an overwhelming majority of the people.

In 1919, when the power of the working class was also established in Hungary and, unlike Russia, by peaceful means, Lenin attached particular importance to the fact that the Hungarian revolution was “born in a totally different way from ours” and that it “will reveal to the whole world that which was concealed in Russia — i.e. that Bolshevism is bound up with a new, proletarian, workers’ democracy...” (Lenin, *ibid.*, Vol. 29, p. 270.)

As is known, the international bourgeoisie brutally destroyed workers’ power in Hungary, thus proving that it will not tolerate, if only it has the strength, the working class coming to power even by the most democratic means.

Summing up three years of experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia, and drawing lessons from the defeat of the proletariat in Hungary, Lenin gave a classic definition of what the proletariat was and what its aims and social basis were:

“The dictatorship of the proletariat is a specific form of class alliance between the proletariat, the vanguard of the working people, and the numerous non-proletarian strata of the working people (petty bourgeoisie, small proprietors, the peasantry, the intelligentsia, etc.) or the majority of these strata, an alliance against capital ... an alliance for the final establishment and consolidation of socialism” *ibid.*, Vo. 29, p. 381).

New Forms

Whatever the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, depending on historical or national conditions, its essence as an alliance between the working class and all working people is an immutable law, obligatory in any situation. This conclusion has enriched the international working class movement. The size of the social forces supporting the working class has the most immediate influence on the forms of its power and on the nature of its measures to build a new society.

The people’s democratic revolutions that took place towards the end of the Second World War developed into socialist ones in conditions of very wide popular support for the working class. For that reason new power in a number of countries took such forms as was not at first even regarded as dictatorship of the proletariat. A feature of the revolutions in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and some other countries was the fact that the reforms of a socialist nature began, not after the workers won power, but in the process of the struggle for power. The very accession of the working class to power resulted from gradual

revolutionary development **and the step-by-step ousting** of the bourgeoisie from its economic and political positions.

This process of the development of the people's democratic revolutions lasted about three years, and the lines dividing them from the dictatorship of the proletariat were so imperceptible, the solution of democratic anti-fascist problems and socialist ones so intertwined and the forces on which the working class relied so extensive, that it does not now appear possible to establish exactly when in these countries power passed completely to the working class.

The Essence of the Concept

It was after defeat of fascism that the dictatorship of the proletariat took on new forms. The world socialist system under present-day conditions has become strong and mighty. A greater role is now being played by the countries that have shaken off their colonial dependence. The working class movement is gaining in strength, while imperialism is losing its positions.

It is, therefore, most likely to expect the power of the working class in the developed capitalist countries to be achieved in forms most suitable to these countries, and not in the forms which occurred at different times in the Soviet Union and in the countries of people's democracy. The Communist Parties of the developed capitalist countries believe that in the transition to power a great part will be played by **the democratic institutions of the modern state** and that socialism can successfully develop also under the conditions of a multi-party system.

The roads to socialism are becoming increasingly varied. This possibility would not exist, writes Enrico Berlinguer, general secretary of the Italian Communist Party, "had there not been the first major breakthrough, the first big revolutionary and socialist victory in October 1917 and the first experience — Soviet experience — of building socialism."

Many Communist Parties in the Western European countries are of the opinion that since the understanding of 'dictatorship' has changed over the decades from the one implied by the founders of Marxism and is often associated with the negation of democracy, it is more correct in present day conditions to speak of the power of the working class relying on a wide alliance of classes, without using the term 'dictatorship.'

The capitalist countries are dominated by a handful of monopolies exploiting all social strata and subordinating social development to their selfish interests. In these conditions an alliance that may emerge around the most revolutionary class of our time — the working class

— has every reason to be very broad-based and truly nationwide.

The positions won among the masses of the people by the Italian and French Communist Parties and the successes of communists in other countries make the prospect of left-wing forces coming to power quite real. Reaction is doing all in its power to prevent this. Among the methods of struggle most employed against the threat of society moving to socialism are the intimidation of the people with all sorts of horror stories and by counterposing 'freedom' against 'socialism' and 'democracy' against 'dictatorship.' In reality, however, it is socialism that brings real freedom; it is only the anti-monopoly power of the people that can ensure genuinely wide democracy.

The bourgeois press readily blows up the question about the term 'dictatorship of the proletariat' in the contemporary communist movement. Among its writers we see a sort of division of duty. Some, in connection with the 'dictatorship of the proletariat,' condemn communists for dogmatism, others, in the same connection, censure them for departing from the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

Communists, however, reject such playing with words. They understand the dictatorship of the proletariat not in terms of the form in which power is exercised, which is always historically determined, but in terms of its essence. For them this essence is the historical leading role of the working class in the modern world and an alliance of social forces capable of carrying out social reforms in crisis-afflicted capitalist society and paving the way to the victory of a socialist system.

Some views on the CPA's 1979 draft program

by P. Symon

The Communist Party of Australia has recently published for discussion a draft Party program. It will be up for decision at their Congress which will be held in June of this year.

The draft is called "Towards socialism in Australia" and as such is designed to span the period of transition to socialism. It also has a section elaborating the CPA's aim for "democratic, self-managed socialism."

A program is a substantial document which covers a whole historic epoch and it is not usual to be continually rewriting them. Substantial rewrites probably indicate shifts in political orientation.

The new draft confirms that the non-Marxist concepts which have dominated the approach of the CPA leaders for over a decade, persist. They put forward a brand of middle-class socialism or at best a form of "democratic socialism," very much akin to reformism in many respects.

To the extent that a political program needs to make an analysis of its starting point, that is, the existing national and international situation, it fails dismally. The analysis of modern capitalism is weak, scrappy and unscientific. The draft virtually ignores the existence of the socialist community of nations except to criticise them. The document does not attempt to offer a view on the world situation that is worthy of the name.

The draft does not draw any positive lessons from the fifteen or so socialist countries and carefully avoids any commitment to mutual assistance and solidarity. It is manifestly pessimistic when it says that "For generations, socialism has provided the hope of ordinary working people.... But the unexpected development, strength and flexibility of capitalism, the negative developments in countries such as the Soviet Union which stepped on to the socialist road, and mistakes and disunity of the socialist movement have so far frustrated these hopes."

The tremendous sweep of socialist revolutionary transformation and the smashing of the colonial system by the national liberation movements

in the last 60 years is not considered worthy of notice.

There are some astounding formulations coming from people who claim to be communists. For example:

“The great weight of the US economy within the capitalist world, the strength of the US dollar as a world currency and the trading agreements it enforced in the interests of its freedom of trade provided for a fairly lengthy period of relative stable world trading conditions.”

Hence, “stability” came through the domination of the dollar! Is the present “instability” due to the fact that the dollar has lost its pre-eminent position? And what about the savage and unequal exploitation imposed on the rest of the world? When the term “world” is used in this way it completely ignores the fact that the world also includes the socialist one third.

And another example:

“The fact that an additional number of countries left the capitalist orbit posed a threat and a challenge, politically, economically and in technology (especially the Soviet “first” in space, which was also of great military significance), promoted arms spending.....”

We must draw the conclusion from this that the responsibility for increased arms spending lies at the door of the “additional number” of socialist countries which emerged out of world war II and “especially” the Soviet sputnik which had “great military significance.” The scores of peace proposals and calls for disarmament put forward by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries and the responsibility of imperialism — US imperialism in particular — for the arms race is not mentioned. It is a notable feature of the draft that the issue of peace and war, the most urgent question facing humanity hardly rates a mention. It is facts such as this, irresponsibility of the first order, which leads one to question the game that the CPA leaders are playing. Surely they are not so politically blind or unconcerned at the fate of the world’s people to shrug off the question of humanity’s survival?

The draft says that “Australian manufacturing has always faced the disadvantage of having a small home market and a relatively militant and high paid workforce.” Pity the poor capitalist and his disadvantages!

One is entitled to ask seriously after reading these examples: “From whose point of view is the draft being written?”

A fourth example makes the point again:

“Nor has a strong labour movement allowed drastic cuts in living standards. This is one of the factors in another new characteristic of capitalism — stagflation.....”

If the capitalists had been “allowed” to cut living standards, stagflation might have been avoided or so it is suggested!

It is therefore not surprising to find that the characterisation of capitalism is strange to say the least. The introduction to the draft speaks of “the existing capitalist system, male dominated and racist...” In another place the draft says that the working class under capitalism “experience inferiority, subordination, subjugation, reliance on the employer for a living and lack of any real control over the work process.”

What is missing in these two quotes which are actually key definitions is any reference to the fundamental question of the exploitation of labor under capitalism. Instead there is concentration on what might be termed subjective aspects, important as they might be. This is not to say that exploitation is not mentioned, it is, but is omitted in places where it should be included.

In enumerating the changes in capitalism which is said to have reached a “new stage,” we find a surprising array of positives — “great expansion of production,” “a qualitatively higher level of internationalisation,” a “degree of planning,” “the provision ... of extensive though inadequate welfare,” “an increasingly sophisticated use of tools of social control,” and so on.

There is no real analysis of the present deep economic crisis of capitalism. Inflation and unemployment are treated quite casually as is the drive to force down living standards. Instead we get concentration on questions of lesser importance such as waste, inequalities, pollution and the environment.

The state remains a key question in politics. There can be no approach to socialism without dealing with it. The CPA draft defines the state as “a special body of people, separated to one degree or another from society, whose particular occupation is to rule and/or manage.”

The solution to this impasse is to be found in “self-managed socialism” in which the state will rapidly decentralise major powers and organs. “Self-management” is more and more an anachronism in today’s world of integration, complex technology and internationalism and actually sanctifies all the fears, pettiness, prejudices and individualism of the small producer.

That is why it is possible to speak of the CPA's program as being middle class socialism. It is as unrealistic and unscientific as the utopian socialism of the early socialists and as non-class as the "democratic socialist" theories of many left social democrats.

Self-management is by no means the highest manifestation of democracy but of individualism, parochialism and even anarchism.

The imperialists wage a ceaseless campaign to the effect that socialism is undemocratic. The CPA leaders have joined this campaign and talk (as the imperialists do) of "constraints on political democracy," etc. They ignore entirely the tremendous extension of democratic rights in existing socialist societies in political, economic and social fields and the actual participation of the people in running affairs.

The CPA claims that "self-management socialism is superior to other political systems in that it provides the maximum scope for the activist aspect of political rights." The implication that mass participation does not exist or is not promoted in present socialist societies is just not true.

The CPA draft gives great emphasis to "democratic transformation," to pluralism," "freedom for all views to develop," etc. While it is admitted that "at some point" the ruling class will attempt to reassert its power, the intensity of revolutionary class struggle at all stages is played down. **The capitalist ruling class will not give up its power and privileges without a more or less prolonged fight.**

The essence of socialism is the transfer of power from the capitalist class to the working class and the public ownership of the means of production. Working class power is expressed in the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat (as against the dictatorship of capital). The opportunism of the CPA leaders led them to abandon this concept a long time ago. In its place we have a vague and basically reformist "process" whereby the "grip of the ruling class on the levers of social power has to be loosened...leading to a point where capitalist control of them is broken and democratic control established...."

Of course socialist revolution is a "process" and is a great democratic action but this does not alter the fact that the establishment of working class power is a revolutionary transformation.

Attention is given in the draft to "uniting the forces for change" and to "building a broad alliance." This is a welcome change to the previous rejection of the united front.

However, the "coalition of the left" concept is retained but is now

seen as the “political nucleus” of the broad alliance. It is not clear who is to comprise the coalition of the left. There is mention of a “coalition of socialist forces.”

The role of the CP is downgraded. Under cover of not seeking to “impose preformed ideas” and striving to avoid “elitist, sectarian or adventurist tactics,” no leading role is seen for the CPA.

The question of the leading role of a communist party has nothing to do with elitism but it has a lot to do with the fact that communist parties make use of the revolutionary philosophy of Marxism-Leninism which enables them to understand the needs and realities of the social forces at work and to advance correct policies, strategy and tactics.

The CPA makes no pretence of being a Marxist-Leninist Party and more and the abandonment of scientific and revolutionary ideology has its logical consequences.

What is behind the term “preformed ideas”? From past experience we know that anyone who holds a firm point of view consistent with those of the world communist movement is likely to be branded a dogmatist. But why should “preformed ideas,” that is, ideas formed as a result of study of a particular situation or opinions formed as a result of experience, including that of other countries and parties, be wrong? This method of argument shifts the issue from the validity of the particular idea to name calling and vituperation. It is spontaneity in the realm of ideas.

The CPA, says the draft, will work “for a democratic diversity and unity in action.” Reading the CPA document one wonders sometimes whether the authors understand the meaning of the words that they use. For example, the above means that the CPA will work for “diversity.” Why? Should a “diversity” be created even when one does not exist? We are certain that the concept of political unity is anathema to the CPA which sees political unity as presupposing some kind of dogma.

The references to “diversity” and “unity” derive from Comrade Togliatti who spoke of “unity in diversity.” Surely this implies working for unity even when diversity exists. This is quite a different proposition to “working for diversity.”

The role of the working class in the “broad alliance” is in doubt. One paragraph speaks of the “workers’ movement” as “the core of the alliance.” Why not working class instead of “movement?”

However, the next paragraph says that social movements “need the support of the labor movement...to back up demands for reform and change.”

This is not a “leading role” but a “supportive,” “back-up” role. Who is the leadership then? The draft does no more than suggest that the working class “can” become the leadership.

“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,” says the draft.

In our view the working class needs a **society-wide** approach and understanding and be able to perceive not only those interests which may be held in common but also the differences between classes in society even among those who may form a broad alliance to achieve some common objectives.

In the course of the “process” and at different stages each social group and class takes up a position commensurate with its interests and outlook.

The “broad alliance” is seen as needed to make progress “for social changes towards socialism.” Again “a broad alliance...for fundamental change is an essential aim of socialist strategy.” The question arises: “Does the broad alliance open the way or actually achieve socialism?” The vague, imprecise and unscientific thinking and language which is a characteristic of the whole document leaves this very important matter unclear.

The draft speaks about winning small business people, shopkeepers, farmers and traders to the side of the working class...seeking to win them to the wider demands of the labor and progressive movements. It is certainly a correct objective to win these classes and groups in the struggle against monopoly and imperialism and for democratic advance. Some elements may also support the working class in the establishment of working class power and in the building of socialism, but it is sheer illusion to propose or expect that capitalists, even though they be small ones, are going to support their own expropriation. The recent experience of precisely these elements in society in socialist Vietnam is yet another historic example.

The CPA draft in speaking of these classes says that socialism should not “unnecessarily threaten their continued existence.” No-one is in favour of unnecessary threats but does this mean that small businesses and traders, etc., would continue to exist under the CPA’s brand of socialism?

Another formulation which raises doubts is the reference to nationalisation. The draft says that the “initial step ... from private ownership **may** take the form of nationalisation but the **aim** is not to turn means of production which are private property at present into **government** property or to make the government the **sole employer**. The aim is to do away with

the employer-employee, wage-labor relationship altogether by developing social property administered by workers in enterprises and institutions.”

One might ask the difference between national property and “social property.” The fact that it is posed this way shows that at least in the mind of the CPA there is a difference.

If “social property” is merely to be “administered” by workers who are the owners? Here again one sees the petty-bourgeois fear of government, a hankering not for the collective spirit of socialism but the individualism of the small trader and an anarchistic approach to the economy. One might also add that democracy is also a collective question - the will of the majority and the acceptance of majority decisions by the minority.

Socialism which is won and built by working class power and which turns the means of production into public property creates thereby a collective manager — the working people as a whole. The collective owner appoints managers of its property but this cannot be compared to the employer-employee relationship of capitalism.

Self-management socialism creates a number of little islands, decentralised, largely unplanned and co-ordinated and reinforces local interests and narrow horizons, rather than the interests of the larger national collective.

The reference in the draft to an “all-powerful central government” is yet another of the dishonest slanders which are hurled at existing socialist societies.

No-one claims that existing socialist societies are a utopia without problems and difficulties but it is hardly impressive for a tiny Party which has suffered two major splits in the last 15 years and which has never experienced anything even approaching a revolutionary situation to lecture all the existing socialist countries. Modesty is not one of the qualities of the CPA leaders.

The characterisation in the draft of the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders is entirely wrong. They are regarded as an ethnic minority together with migrant communities. At one point the draft speaks of “black people and other ethnic minorities and homo-sexuals...”

If Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders are seen as an ethnic minority it is not possible to get past the issues of racism, low wages, etc. It is not surprising, therefore, to find only a 10 word reference to the land rights struggle. There is no development of the issues facing migrant communities either although they constitute a big

proportion of the workforce and of the whole community.

There are many other weaknesses in the CPA draft program and it is not without its oddities. For example it is proposed that "military knowledge would become community property with all who wanted being trained in the art of self-defence, community defence and national defence" -- from karate to nuclear technology we presume!

We are also told that one of the functions of the nuclear family is the "socialisation of children" reviving one of the early slanders directed against the Soviet Union but in this case using it as an argument against the so-called nuclear family.

Three examples of scientific discoveries are referred to as follows: "the contraceptive pill, insecticides and the computer....!"

It is fairly well known that loud "women's liberationists" wield a considerable influence in the CPA at present. The repeated references on every conceivable occasion to "male domination" indicates a phobia concerning **this issue**. **The section dealing with the oppression of women is considerably longer than that dealing with the Communist Party itself.**

The crisis of the CPA which has been going on for over ten years is going to continue with no sign emerging out of the draft program that any change for the better is at hand.

Study of the various shifts and swings in this and previous CPA programs would make an interesting study. However, all the programs since 1967 are the product of an idealist philosophical outlook expressed as petty-bourgeois politics.

How did it come about that the CPA leaders have landed themselves in the ideological morass revealed in the draft program.

The document actually provides the key. It has a section dealing with the main contradictions to be found in the world today, according to the view of the CPA leaders. The elaboration of contradictions actually reveals the essence of ones thinking, it reveals the origins, the starting points.

Today's contradictions, so the draft says, include those "between capitalism and socialism, within socialism, between developed and under-developed countries, between nations and races and between the capitalist countries themselves."

There is no attempt to give any order of priority or importance to this list of contradictions. This is not accidental either, for it allows the CPA to move about from one position to another as it has in fact done, without any explanation or self-criticism.

There is no assertion in the document that the struggle between capitalism and socialism is the main contradiction of our era and a number of formulations suggest a detachment from this struggle.

We are told, for example, that the “movement for non-alignment, to bring into being a new world economic order and to end the bloc division of the world, can serve the struggle for genuine independence, economic and social liberation and peace.”

What is the “new world economic order” to be in view of the fact that the socialist one third is also part of the world? Is it also to be changed to some unspecified “new order”?

Again one gets the strong impression that the authors of the document, having lost their way, have lost confidence. We are told that capitalism is still “strong.” When talking about socialism it is a question of the “difficulties.” By far the longest part of this section deals with the “negative features of some existing models of socialism.”

The CPA actually opts for a position of non-alignment which is an untenable position for communists in the world-wide struggle against imperialism and for socialist transformation.

The elimination of the term, “Marxism-Leninism,” from the CPA’s 1967 Constitution was not accidental or a passing phase.

The trend of the 1960s was an expression of right-opportunism, of nationalism, anti-Sovietism, non-class attitudes on a number of questions, the down-grading of the role of a Marxist-Leninist Party, etc.

In the early 1970s there was a swing to left opportunism, or rather elements of leftism were added to the existing right-opportunism. A flirtation with Trotskyism developed. Policies of adventurism, “instant” revolution and sectarianism in the labor movement were advanced. The theories of the so-called New Left were advanced. Marcuse became the new preferred theoretician.

These policies have all failed. That is obvious. Who hears anything of the New Left today?

The new draft program does not make any correction of these right and “left” errors but represents a swing back to the original starting point — right-opportunism.

Perhaps the pre-Congress debate will improve the draft but what is really required is a fundamentally different approach — one that returns to Marxist-Leninist positions.

It is certain that there are honest and sincere members remaining in the ranks of the CPA but have they the clarity and the will to bring an end to the disastrous policies foisted on the Party by the leadership? Time will tell!

Lenin on Imperialism

by R.G. Clarke

Today, when so many Marxist-Leninist formulations are under fire from old and new quarters, it becomes necessary to re-state certain basic propositions and examine their validity in the light of current reality.

For example....Is Lenin's definition of imperialism, formulated in the first quarter of this century still valid in the last quarter of the century?

In his speech at the International meeting of Communist and Workers parties in 1969 Brezhnev said:

"The Leninist theory of imperialism provides the key to an understanding of the specific features distinguishing imperialism at its present stage of development."***

Before one can test this statement it is necessary to restate, precisely, what were the main tenets of Lenin's characterisation of imperialism.

***"The briefest possible definition of imperialism we would have to say is imperialism in the monopoly stage of capitalism." But he went on to emphasise that brief definitions, although convenient are nevertheless inadequate, since we have to deduce from them some especially important features of the phenomenon that has to be defined.

He then set out five of the basic features of imperialism:

1. *the concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life*
2. *the merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation on the basis of this "finance capital," of a financial oligarchy*
3. *the export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance*
4. *the formation of international monopolist capitalist associations which share the world among themselves*
5. *the territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers is completed.*

*** Lenin C . . Volume 22 Page 226

** Report on meeting Communist & Workers Parties 1969 Page 141

Imperialism, Lenin noted, undoubtedly represents a special stage in the

development of capitalism but it is not possible to define the exact date or point in time in which capitalism reached such a special stage in any given country or as a world system. But in general terms it was possible to speak of imperialism, in terms of the above definition, emerging on the world scene in the latter part of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. By the turn of the century for example, the territorial division of the world had been completed and he concluded that the only possible re-division would be by armed conflict.

In point 3 as set out Lenin drew attention to the export of capital as having acquired exceptional importance. The export of capital can only arise when the ruling class in a given country has acquired by whatever devious means, a surplus of capital, i.e., capital for which they cannot find a sufficiently high rate of return in that country.

The principle spheres of investment for British capital in the late 19th century were of course the British colonies which at that time ringed the world. In 1899 it was estimated the annual income of Great Britain from foreign and colonial trade was 18,000,000 pounds. But the income from capital invested abroad was estimated to be from 90,000,000 pounds to \$100,000,000, five times greater than the income from foreign trade of the biggest trading country in the world.* Such fabulous, mouth-watering profits provided the incentive for the late imperialist arrivals on the scene of history to provoke the slaughter of millions in the 1st world war trying to grab their share.

Lenin also formulated the law of the uneven development of capitalism and **noted that while the world had been divided up in 1876 between only three big imperial powers, Great Britain, Russia and France, by 1914 it was shared among six, with Germany, the USA and Japan joining the club.** Since that time other capitalist countries, having developed to the stage of imperialism, also joined the rat race and today it is possible to speak of a growing number of big and small imperialist states having joined in the scramble to find profitable spheres of investment abroad including Australia.

* Lenin C.W. volume 22 Page 277

The breakup of colonialism following the 2nd world war, while representing a very severe blow to imperialism, also opened the door for a new form of colonial exploitation, neo-colonialism. The loss of direct political control over former colonial possessions by the dominant imperialist powers made it possible for some of "the small, economically advanced capitalist states with accumulated surplus capital" to expand their operations. "Countries that previously had no colonies are today involved in the exploitation of economically underdeveloped states on a neo-colonialist basis."** This includes Australia.

A report on overseas performance of Australian multi-national companies issued by the NSW Department of decentralisation and development.

“Most Australians associated the word “Multinational” with General Motors, IBM, Shell of IT&T. But Australia has its own multi-nationals such as Pioneer Concrete Services Ltd., Wormald International Ltd, Thomas Nationwide Transport which have branched out into other countries in recent years.”

“While 50 companies were listed as multi-national, 20 were finally elected for a more detailed examination including manufacturers, traders and service industries representing a varied range of investment located in widely scattered areas of the globe. **They represent a fair sample of the multi-national owned by Australian shareholders..”**

Issued in 1976 this Report is based on data obtained from Annual reports for 1973-4 and 1974-5. “The study could only be general in nature because of the different methods of corporate accounting. For example foreign investment of Australian multi-nationals is quoted as ‘book value,’ ‘asset value’ ‘investment of holding company’ etc. etc. which places no accurate value on the overall assets held. It is probable that the real value of Australian overseas holdings would be many times that disclosed by the companies concerned.”

“The areas of the world were divided into the following geographical sectors in approximating order of importance based on total profit contribution to the Australian companies under examination.”

** K. Miluisky — Lenin's teaching on the world economy and its relevance to our time (Progress) Page 240

New Zealand...Papua New Guinea...Pacific Islands...Central and South America...Far East...United Kingdom...North America...African Continent ...Europe...South East Asia...Middle East...Indian sub continent...were included.

“Contributions to group profit from overseas sources declared in the company reports was approximately \$32,000,000 and \$31,000,000 for the 1975 and 1974 years, respectively, and the total value of investment was conservatively estimated at \$215,000,000 and \$194,000,000 for the companies under study.”

Not comparable with the super profits gathered in the hey day of imperialism but more than a modest addition to company profits of the 20 companies surveyed, and a continuing and ever increasing process. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics up to 30.6.1977, Australian capital invested abroad now totals \$1,298,000,000, which

at even a modest addition of 10% would represent \$129,800,000 in the pockets of the Australian ruling class from the export of surplus capital.

Worker — Farmer Alliance

Some modern problems

by JACK BOOTH

When we refer to farmers in Australia we mean those who work and live by their hands in agricultural production and animal husbandry.

This would be self evident if it wasn't for the fact that what was once the landed gentry are now calling themselves farmers, the name has been usurped by squatters, company directors, Pitt Street farmers, landlords, graziers and not least the Liberal/Country Party politicians.

As a matter of fact senior Federal Ministers Fraser, Sinclair, Anthony, Nixon, Hunt and a few of the lesser lights all describe themselves as farmers. Of course, we mustn't leave out Queensland's Joh.

Of the big farmers who do work their properties the overwhelming majority will never have affinities with the working class. If they are forced off their farms they rarely move into wage labour. With what is left of their assets they buy into service stations, repair depots, motels and the like. On the other end of the scale there are very few peasant farmers in Australia, at least not as we know them in other parts of the capitalist world.

However, there is a new development that will eventually give rise to peasants. Hundreds of farms that cannot be sold en bloc are now being cut up into 25 acre lots and sold to those who want to "Get away from it all" and try to be self sufficient. Very few of these lots have permanent water and most would gladly swap for a house in town after experiencing a hot dry season.

This leaves the grass roots family farmers whose children grow up and find work in the nearest town or city, the farm being insufficient to sustain them.

The parents having reared the family have acquired a kind of dedication to their farm and are loth to leave because they know nothing else.

Here let it be said that farming today is not the arduous toil that was the lot of their ancestors. The picture of the farmer working long hours from daylight till dark, year in year out came to an end with the coming of the tractor and modern machinery. Sowing and harvest time which used to occupy weeks are now being completed in days.

Vic Williams made the prediction some years ago that small farmers will be squeezed out. Then the middle farmer will be at the bottom.

This is actually happening now. What were once middle farmers are now sinking to the bottom. They too, are being squeezed out. There have been attempts by some to work their farms collectively, not from socialist or idealist reasons but from necessity. Naturally, under capitalist conditions, they end in failure. Farming in Australia is fast losing its rural distinction. Bitumen roads, TV, cars, have to a great extent urbanised the country. This coupled with the fact that farming is now an industry where technical skills with machinery and a knowledge of the bewildering display of agricultural inventions seen at the field days is a must if a farmer is to keep up to date.

It is at this point that middle farmers (now the small farmers) cannot compete with the mounting cost of machinery. Even spare parts are a drain on the farmer's resources.

Another drain on the farmer is the buying ring which operates at the stock sales.

If the large landholders and big companies are not already in full control of stock and farm produce they soon will be. The law of supply and demand is being turned upside down just as in other monopoly industries. Prices will not come down even when there is a glut of products.

Heinz and Edgells have a big say in the vegetable growing industry. CSR controls the sugar industry; Vestys, Tancred and Borthwicks control the meat industry. The grape growers are the slaves of the wine making companies. The list goes on. So far the various Boards created by other primary producers, the Milk Board, Wheat Board, Egg Board etc, give their membership some protection in spite of some manipulation but even here the struggle to abolish the Boards goes on.

Rightwing wheatgrowers in Moree and Southern Queensland campaigned in 1978 for the return to free marketing of wheat which would have meant the virtual abolition of the Wheat Board and a return

to the private wheat speculators rackets of the 1930s and 40s.

Wal Pratt, who was secretary of the Wheat Growers Union at that time, campaigned strongly for the setting up of the Wheat Board. This eventually ousted the speculators who mounted the old cry "We don't want socialisation in the industry." The Wheat Board came into existence in spite of them and time has proved its worth. So much so that farmers from a wide area held a mass meeting in Gilgandra in September 1978 and voted overwhelmingly for the retention of the Wheat Board. But how long can this last when farmers at the bottom are being ousted?

Rightwing farmers have already got the go ahead for free trading in grain by the Industries Assistance Commission and this is being pursued by the Council of Rural Industries.

An executive of the council, Mr Denis Mitchell, is reported as saying that "Illegal trafficking of wheat will continue in spite of opposition."

The number of farmers who see the need for alliance with the working class is very small. It is extremely difficult to separate farmers into status categories. They are either in big or on the way out and their relation ship with the working class at both ends is at a low ebb.

The recent grain elevators strike by ACTU members aroused the ire of big and small farmers alike.

When farmers gamble with the seasons and get a bumper crop only to have the harvest ruined by storm and hail as happened in parts of the central west of NSW then their bitterness against the striking silo workers knows no bounds when stripping is delayed because of lack of storage.

A big responsibility rests with AWU members (and meatworkers too for that matter) to convince small farmers that the struggle is not against them but the top brass. They are only too delighted to see the hostility. It facilitates their divide and rule policy. Farmers must be constantly reminded that wage workers have only one asset — their labour, and they have the right to withhold it if payment is insufficient.

Both the small farmers and the working class are living in a rat race and neither are going to be left behind if they can help it.

If working farmers direct their anger at the unions through capitalist

machinations then the same means are used to direct the anger of the workers against small farmers. An example is the financial aid given to small farmers a few months ago by the Victorian government.

The distressed farmers were given ten weeks work to pay off some of their debts, the AWU requested the payment of union dues which the majority of farmers refused to pay, due to the temporary nature of the work, the mass media played it up and sympathy went with the farmers. What was not mentioned was that about 2000 AWU members were unemployed. The Victorian government did not give them ten weeks work and their distress was greater.

But with all the divide and rule designs of monopoly capitalism, mutual antagonism against exploitation is the common stand of small farmers and the working class. Both are swindled out of their rights. Both labour at the point of production. Without their labour possession of wealth would be meaningless.

Perhaps this is not the place to say it, and existing conditions at the time will decide it, but it does not appear that large scale collective farming will be a feature of a socialist Australia. Vast expanses, climate, tradition lends itself more to State farming coupled with the fact that large companies will have paved the way for a state takeover. Another factor is the industrial nature of Australian farming. This does not mean that collective farming should not be encouraged.

The small farmers who do survive could quite easily retain their title deeds to their land if it makes them happy.

The petty bourgeois approach to possessing title deeds will have lost its importance. There is no point in having titled deeds to land if labor cannot be exploited for private profit. Of course, land nationalisation would have to apply to large holdings. But even this would be a useless asset if labour could not be exploited. This all points to the merging of the working class and farmers eventually.

Over the years Australian farmers have followed the market reports on sales of wool, wheat and other primary produce to "Eastern Bloc" countries but have never digested the full significance of what these millions of dollars from the socialist countries have meant to the rural economy.

Should the socialist countries decide to purchase elsewhere it would be a serious blow to Australia's rural economy. The balance of trade which heavily favours Australia would be a justifiable reason for

curtailment.

The future is bright for working farmers in a Socialist Australia. The battle for security will no longer be the excuse for ripping off the land and putting very little back into it. We are a supplementary feed barn for 2000 million people to the north of us. Here is a land that nature made for peace — no earthquakes, no volcanoes, no savage animals, six climates, antarctic, temperate, mountain, desert, sub tropical, and tropical with hundreds of creeks and many rivers yet to be dammed. Nature has not designed another country so varied and it is going to belong to the people when the parasites and bludgers are ousted. What a dramatic change will take place in the first generation.

A basic prerequisite for this is a concerted effort by all of us to prevent the outbreak of nuclear war.

★ An indication of the value of trade with the Soviet Union can be gauged by Australia's beef and veal exports to the Soviet Union in 1977. 86830 tonnes, our second largest buyer for that year at a time when the cattle industry was at crisis point. ("Land" newspaper, 18-1-79)

On the Australian Labor Party

(The Central Committee meeting of November 25-26, 1978 adopted the following policy statement on the role and character of the Australian Labor Party and the importance of developing united front activity between the SPA and ALP.

Social democracy, particularly in Europe, Australia and New Zealand continues to be a force in world politics, holding particular support among wide sections of the working class on the basis of reformist policies.

In Australia, the Australian Labor Party is a party of Social Democracy which has close connections with and support from major sectors of the Australian working class on the basis of its policy of social reforms, while at the same time remaining a Party which fundamentally supports preservation of the capitalist system.

Recognising that dominant forces within the Labor Party accept the non working class ideology of reformism rather than socialist change, the Socialist Party of Australia also recognises the wide potential for unity around specific issues which can and needs to be developed between the ALP and SPA.

Today, more than ever, it is important to develop the strongest possible united front between the Socialist Party of Australia and members and supporters of the Australian Labor Party for the consolidation of world peace, for the economic and social advance of the Australian workers and for understanding of the need for socialism as the basic requirement to overcome the economic crises and mass unemployment which are chronic recurring features of the capitalist system.

In order to adopt a correct, all-sided and consistent approach to the building of such a united front in a way that avoids both right opportunist and left sectarian errors, it is essential to note and define the dual character of the Labor Party.

The Labor Party is an important component of the Australian Labor movement. It emerged from the trade unions and the then existing forms of socialist and associated political bodies as the Australian workers

recognised that they had to struggle for social advance by political, parliamentary action as well as at trade union levels. These origins remain a powerful factor in the Labor Party today. However, from its origins, the Australian Labor Party has never been a party which sought to replace capitalist class rule with the broader, more democratic power of the working class supported by its allies among the farmers and intellectuals.

In the composition of its members and supporters the Labor Party is a party with a dual basis among the workers and middle class or petty bourgeoisie.

More fundamentally, the Labor Party's policies also reflect the two class character of the Labor Party. On the one hand, Labor puts forward a policy for reforms (sometimes even radical reforms) providing some immediate benefit to the working class. But the consistently dominant policy of the ALP is and has been for preservation of the capitalist system devoid of any serious policy for socialism or even the curbing of the undemocratic.

dominant policy of the ALP is and has been for preservation of the capitalist system devoid of any serious policy for socialism or even the curbing of the undemocratic class power of local and multi-national monopolies which are the main enemies of the labor movement generally.

The dominant ideology in the Labor Party is reformism. Reformism is not working class ideology but the ideology of the bourgeoisie adapted to the labour movement which serves to "justify" the preservation of capitalism. There are only two basic ideologies in modern class society. One is the ideology of the bourgeoisie and the other is the ideology of the working class — the scientific socialist ideology of Marxism-Leninism.

Side by side with reformist ideology the direct ideology of the bourgeoisie in outright support for, and justification of capitalism has a strong hold on sections of the Labor Party. This is expressed in Labor Party leadership tendencies to simply put themselves forward as "better administrators" of the capitalist system than the Liberal-Country Party Coalition. It is expressed particularly by the right and extreme right ALP elements who seek to push Labor into a more conservative position openly identifying themselves as champions of capitalism.

Some sections of the ALP left seek to base themselves on a

socialist outlook but any substantial, consistent and cohesive influence based on the scientific, socialist ideology of Marxism-Leninism is absent.

Lack of development of such understanding of scientific socialism is a fundamental limitation of the Labor Party. The Labor Party is a party which, while holding substantial working class support, is decisively dominated by variants of the ideology of the capitalist class.

On the basis of its long standing traditions, its origins linked closely with the labour and trade union movements and its service in gaining reforms in workers' immediate interests, the Labor Party enjoys wide support from the Australian working class. Periodically, it attracts sufficient support from sections of the middle class and farmers to win government at State and Federal levels.

In government, however, the historical facts are that the Labor Party has basically acted to preserve capitalism. In the cyclical crises of the 'thirties the Labor Party even though occupying the position of government in several areas did not come out with a call for basic change in the capitalist class system which is the only course offering a solution to capitalist instability and for advance to stable, scientifically planned society under socialism. The same feature marks the position of that Party in the periods of recurring crises since that time.

While there are fundamental shortcomings arising from the dual class character of the Labor Party it is necessary to maintain the closest unity of action with the Labor Party on the wide area of common ground we share in relation to Labor reform policies.

It is also important to establish close relations with those members of the Labor Party who support policies with varying levels of socialist content. These members can be an important force for developing an ever wider basis for unity of action as the consequences of capitalism's recurrent economic crises become more widely recognised.

CONCLUSIONS

The Socialist Party of Australia's view of the Labor Party and the attitude of the SPA to the ALP, therefore, is based on the following summarised points:

- ★ The Labor Party and its policies reflect dual class interests.
- ★ The ideology of the ALP is reformism, that is, bourgeois ideology in the ranks of the working class.

- ★ The ALP's working class links arise from the mixed origins of the ALP which include trade unions and some non-Marxist socialist groupings.
- ★ The membership of the ALP today includes many workers and it retains substantial support from the trade unions, many of which are affiliated with it and there is constituted participation in the ALP of these organisations. Those facts plus factors of a traditional character result in substantial support for the ALP from working class forces.
- ★ That support is strengthened by ALP policies of reforms which, while not in any way threatening the continuation of the system of capitalism, reflect some of the interests of workers within that system.
- ★ The Platform of the ALP is not related to scientific socialist concepts. Some members of the ALP profess an adherence to Marxist concepts and advance views on socialism which are much more developed than those contained in the official Party Platform, but they do not extend their Marxist concepts to an understanding of the need for a Party separate from the parties of capitalism.
- ★ The policies of economic and social reform put forward by the ALP, Labor's generally progressive foreign policy for detente, expanded trade with the socialist countries, an end to the arms race and world peace together with support by sectors of the ALP for certain concepts of a socialist future for Australia provide a wide basis for unity of action between the ALP and the SPA.

While making the above objective assessment of the ALP from a political and ideological standpoint the SPA fully recognises and firmly bases itself on the need to build the broadest possible united front for the advance of the immediate and ultimate objectives of the Australian labour movement.

★ ★ ★

"A basic need is the development of a broad anti-monopoly movement, the basis of which is a united working class, allied to other sections of the people whose interests are also served by the restriction and elimination of monopoly influence." — draft political resolution for the 3rd Congress of the SPA.

Australia and struggle against opportunism

by W.J. BROWN

Today, the universal validity of the science of Marxism-Leninism is winning new ground in all parts of the globe.

The economic and social stability and growing strength of the Socialist world system stands in sharp, challenging contrast to capitalism, now in its deepest economic crisis since the Great Depression.

The Socialist family of nations, the developing countries and the international Communist movement as a whole stand as the most powerful revolutionary force in human history. Steadily, inexorably, the workers of all lands are coming into action in ever increasing political strength and ever increasing consciousness of their class destiny.

The revolutionary, working class ideology of Marx, Engels and Lenin has become the most decisive social science of our epoch. Marxist-Leninist science represents a comprehensive system of philosophical, economic and political views. It provides a fundamental, materialist analysis of human history and social development. It exposes the basic contradictions of contemporary capitalist society. It scientifically sets out the revolutionary path required for humanity to advance to the next highest form of society.

Not only in the socialist world but in the capitalist world and the Third World of developing countries, the ideology of Marxism-Leninism is winning ever wider mass understanding as the most meaningful body of ideas in human history.

Deeply alarmed, the imperialists, and particularly the US imperialists, have intensified their efforts in recent years to finance and foster all forms of ideological confusion and diversion. Just as direct imperialist oppression failed, so right-opportunism, in its turn has failed to halt the growing challenge by the working class. As right opportunism became more and more discredited, new diversions were needed. Today the bourgeoisie have consciously turned to supporting new sophisticated forms of "left" opportunism. Maoism, Trotskyism, the muddled, non-class intellectualism of Marcuse, black power, women's power, students' power ... these plus a plethora of religious and obscurantist cults

have all served to divert and divide. New sophisticated paths have been developed to penetrate and subvert or divide and weaken established Communist Parties by advancing cleverly presented opportunist concepts dressed up as "new Marxist thinking." Australia has been no exception. In fact, it has been a major target.

It is now widely recognised that the Communist Party of Australia — once a Party firmly based on the principles of Marxist-Leninist science and proletarian internationalism — fell victim to the penetration of opportunism.

It is also now a well established fact that the Socialist Party of Australia, (founded in 1971 after repeated efforts for unity with the CPA leaders on the basis of Marxist-Leninist principles had failed) is the real Party of scientific socialism in Australia. It is the Party carrying forward the best Marxist-Leninist and proletarian internationalist traditions of the old Communist Party. What happened to the CPA; how a central section of its leaders succumbed to an admixture of right opportunist, "left" opportunist and nationalist degeneration is a complex subject requiring separate elaboration and analysis.

Lenin, in his article "Marxism and Revisionism," written in 1908 pointed out that "The inevitability of revisionism is determined by the class roots in capitalist society."

This has been confirmed even in the relatively short history of the Australian Labor movement.

From its imperialist beginnings as a British convict colony in 1788 and the ruthless suppression and dispossession of the Aborigine owners of Australia, the new acquisition to Britain's empire moved quickly to establish the classic conditions of the capitalist-wage earner type of society.

The ideas of scientific socialism were slow to penetrate Australia. Some writings of Marx and Engels gradually became available in the late 19th century and early years of the 20th century.

By contrast, the ideas of reformism, a form of bourgeois ideology diverting the workers from struggle for socialism and seeking only partial and temporary reforms quietly took root in the Australian labor movement from its beginnings in the second half of the 19th century.

Opportunism, meaning the sacrifice of the fundamental interests of

the masses to the temporary interests of a minority of workers or the "alliance of a section of the workers with the bourgeoisie" as Lenin put it, clearly has had a long term influence in Australian history.

"Left" opportunism has also long been a strong and harmful influence in the Australian movement. It has become an even deeper and more complex problem in recent years. But the major struggle against opportunism in Australia continues to be struggle against reformism (or right opportunism).

While consistently combating right opportunism and reformism, the Socialist Party of Australia seeks to build the strongest possible united front with members and supporters of the Australian Labor Party at all possible levels.

The SPA recognises that the Australian Labor Party, a party of Social Democracy, has close connections with and support from major sectors of the Australian working class on the basis of its policy of social reforms.

As an essential factor in ensuring a correct, all-sided approach to building a united front with the ALP in a way that avoids both right and left errors, SPA policy takes into account the "dual character of the Labor Party."

This dual character of Social Democracy has been noted internationally. Italian Communist leader Togliatti drew attention to it at the 6th Congress of the Comintern in 1928. In calling for a non-sectarian approach to Social Democrats as part of the task of building maximum unity against fascism, Togliatti defined Social Democracy as "a movement with a labor and petty bourgeois basis." In a more recent analysis, Soviet writer A. Weber (*New Times* 49-78) refers to "the internal contradictory nature and duality of Social Democratic policy as a whole." The article, analysing the 14th Congress of the Socialist International in Vancouver in November, 1978, brings out positive aspects of the Congress on detente, disarmament and other points. It provides a good example of finding the correct way to raise criticisms of right opportunist trends in a non sectarian manner, while maintaining the fullest dialogue, co-operation and unity with Social Democrats on areas of common agreement.

Consistent effort to develop such dialogue and co-operation with members and supporters of the Australian Labor Party is of particular importance today. More and more Labor politicians and Party figures as well as the membership and supporters are expressing increasing concern on the issues of preserving world peace, stopping the arms

race, curbing and controlling the power of the multi-nationals and local corporations. Additionally, while not approaching socialism from a Marxist-Leninist standpoint, Labor Party groups are raising various approaches to the need for a Socialist solution to the ills of capitalism which require serious fraternal discussion.

The "class roots" of opportunism referred to by Lenin not only gave rise to opportunism in the Labor Party. History indicates a number of instances when both right and "left" opportunism have penetrated the Communist Party of Australia. (Again, this is a subject requiring separate elaboration).

The real source of what happened to the CPA in the sixties is, of course, to be found not only, nor mainly, in the subjective errors of a group of individuals in the central leadership of the CPA. The real source rests in the objective inevitability of opportunism emerging from the social roots of capitalism, as Lenin indicated. However, the latter fact is not sufficient to explain what was behind the wave of various opportunist trends and petty bourgeois divisive facts which swept the capitalist world in the second half of the 1960's.

Always both the subjective and objective factors need to be considered in development of political trends. The subjective factor of conscious instilling of ideology hostile to Marxist-Leninist science needs to be noted and taken into account. US imperialism, in particular, has become an active centre for inventing and promoting diversionary idea streams hostile to scientific socialism.

Some recent, limited and still unfinished research into this factor focusses new light on the sudden burgeoning of so many petty bourgeois pseudo radical trends in the sixties. This emergence of a number of quite sophisticated diversionary trends was too conveniently simultaneous in historical appearance to be devoid of conscious, subjective assistance and even active sponsorship by certain ideologues, agents and hirelings of the international bourgeoisie. Evidence can be presented, in fact, which shows that the subjective factor of conscious fostering of a variety of petty bourgeois opportunist trends was combined with the opportunist pressures objectively resident in capitalist, private-profit-motivated society.

In the earlier period of imperialism, Lenin in warning against both right and "left" opportunism particularly drew attention to the treacherous role played by the "right lieutenants" of imperialism. By the mid 1960's the new element of a veritable crop of "left lieutenants" of imperialism had emerged. They appeared in wide and rapid growth of Maoist, Trotskyite, anarchist groupings, supplemented by various

petty bourgeois radical tendencies. In the case of Australia there was a thrust by Trotskyites and ultra radical groups for entry into both the Communist Party and the Labor Party. (In Australia before World War II and up to the 1950's there had been only an isolated Trotskyite grouping.) In the 1960's the Trotskyites effected a highly successful penetration of the Communist Party. Today, some five extraordinarily well-financed Trotskyite groups exist and almost all publish expensively produced papers).

A major source of this consciously fostered opportunism is the United State of America, the richest and most reactionary centre of world imperialism.

Organised visits to U.S. universities and industries by both representatives of the right and left of Australian politics have long been part of this modern sponsorship process. Trotskyists sources are traceable back to the U.S. Notably, most of the diversionary aspects of the various trends of the sixties, (the pitting of women against men, youth against older generations, black against white in the name of new "progressive" movements) had their origin in the U.S. Another significant feature of the late sixties and early seventies was the appearance of certain pseudo "left" academics from the USA in Australian universities. American figures also emerged in some local Trotskyite movements.

Specific evidence indicates that leading ideologues in America and other countries, including Australia, took part in seminars and discussions in the mid sixties which were of obvious value in developing more sophisticated methods of influencing the left.

A number of publications appeared in and around the early, mid and late '60s, reflecting this tendency.

A gathering of some significance was a Conference on October 5-7, 1964 at Stanford University organised by the Hoover Institute. Some 35 European and American bourgeois scholars, mainly historians and political scientists attended.

Anti-Soviet, anti-communist ideologues included Raymond Aron, Boris Souvarine and others noted for academic critiques designed to subtly (and not so subtly) denigrate Marx, Engels and Lenin and twentieth century socialist achievement in general.

A book entitled "Marxism in the Modern World" was subsequently published by the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace (Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1965). The book

contained the various papers presented to the Conference covering a variety of subjects related to revolutionary movements which for 100 years had maintained some direct ideological kinship with the International Workingmen's Association (founded in London by Marx, September 28, 1864).

In the light of the subsequent bourgeois lines of attack on Marxism-Leninism, it was of some significance to note the subjects. These included strong advocacy of pluralism, (subsequently taken up as an accepted line by the CPA leaders).

Significantly around the same period, Australian ideologues have also been active in this intensified bourgeois assault on Marxist ideology.

In August, 1964 a series of papers were presented to a conference at the Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University. These were published under the title "The Disintegrating Monolith — Pluralist trends in the Communist World." The book focussed on what was termed "pluralist trends in Communist politics, economics, culture and international relations" with particular attention to East Asian and Australasian areas.

Like the later American conference the subjects covered were pluralism, Maoism and anti-Sovietism.

The Australian bourgeois academic attack on Marxism made another notable contribution to the ideological offensive with the assistance of the government-run Australian Broadcasting Commission. A special ABC Radio series in 1973 entitled "Marx and Beyond" was presented as "a series of six lectures by leading Australian scholars examining Marxist theory and practice." The series amounted to re-hashing of a number of old stereotyped criticisms of Marxism.

Notably, these Australian university and radio seminars, while pretending to be based on detached academic objectivity are actually firmly committed to one-sided, subjective ideological attack of Marxism. Notably also, such projects as the ABC radio series "Marx and Beyond" are quite open in subjective, biased exclusion of any voice from the SPA, the only party in Australia firmly identified with Marxist-Leninist science and solidarity associations with the international Communist movement and the existant world Socialist system.

The updated, sophisticated and many-sided attacks on Marxist-Leninist science must not be under-estimated. Much deeper study and research

and more effective methods of defeating their diversions and false arguments need to be developed both internationally and by Marxist-Leninists within each country.

However, Lenin correctly said that the ideas of scientific socialism are omnipotent because they are true.

While these new, sophisticated efforts of imperialism to dress up the hoary old "divide and rule" processes may have this or that transitory success in conscious fostering of opportunist diversions, they can and will be defeated.

With imperialism itself losing ground as an outmoded system so the scope for opportunism of all varieties is contracting.

The very urgency of the struggle to stop the arms race and halt the drift towards world nuclear disaster is creating conditions for broader unity around the common-sense, humanist politics of the Socialist countries and the Marxist-Leninist forces generally.

The mass unemployment, inflation and chronic instability of capitalism are demanding serious consideration of the scientific socialist alternative and pushing aside attempts by either right or "left" lieutenants of imperialism to retard the law-governed processes of social advance.

The powerful forces of the Third World are more and more opting for the socialist road and alliance with the Socialist world.

Maoism, once able to divide and confuse with its pseudo revolutionary sloganising, sees its current leaders exposed as an open reactionary, rightist force allied with imperialism and committed to the irresponsible, inhuman and unacceptable dogma of inevitable nuclear war. (This exposure was recently heightened by the threats of aggression against Vietnam which rightly earned, wide international condemnation.)

Trotskyism, for all its undisclosed sources of affluence, is tailing behind history with its tedious repetition of anti-Sovietism.

In contrast to the negative role of opportunism, the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries consistently advance the positive course of detente, disarmament and development. To their credit, an important aspect of this is the opening up of international dialogue with Social Democrats in common search for agreement around sane and scientific solutions to the major problems of our time.

The facts of history are becoming more and more manifest. Objective

laws doom capitalism to defeat and all the desperate diversions of the imperialists and their opportunist aides cannot hold back the advance to higher levels of human society by the working class and their allies along the proven scientific path set out by Marx, Engels and Lenin.