

# australian marxist review

**Theoretical journal of the  
Socialist Party of Australia**

- *Eurocommunism?*
- *Job democracy*
- *Growth of CMEA*
- *Students — whither?*
- *The Socialist Alternative*

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# Australian MARXIST Review

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It is proposed that this important article be used as basic study material in study classes in all States. See footnote: "Historical background to Jacques Duclos' article."

# For international solidarity against opportunism

Reprinted from *Political Affairs*, April 1977, theoretical journal of the Communist Party of the USA.

by JIM WEST

**The Communist Parties of France and Italy are among the great working-class parties of the world.**

It is not only the size of these parties which make them outstanding. It is also their history of struggle against fascism, in defense of the interests of the working class and oppressed peoples, their proletarian internationalism (one may cite Algiers and Vietnam), their struggle for peace, which have brought them to their present size and influence among the working class and masses of their countries as well as their international prestige.

Communists of the United States, studying the creative application and development of Marxist-Leninist science in France and Italy, experience joy in every gain and sorrow in any setback of these, our brother parties.

We recall with gratitude the invaluable contribution rendered our Party by the historic Duclos article which strengthened the position of the Marxist-Leninist forces opposing Browder revisionism. We regarded the

Duclos article as fraternal assistance, the help which class brother gives class brother. On the other hand, the revisionists angrily and arrogantly rejected it as "gross interference and a violation of the right to independently make our own decisions." Needless to say, it was not Duclos, but the U.S. Communists who decided to expel Browder. And our Party is indebted to our French comrades for their help in difficult time. (See explanatory note at end of article).

It is in that spirit of proletarian internationalism that we write these words. We agree with Enrico Berlinguer, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Italy, who said, "In the present conditions, the ideas and potential of internationalism are more vital and effective than ever" and we find ourselves in accord with the declaration of the French Party's 22nd Congress, which said, "The importance of our national tasks, the significance we attach to the interests and well-being of our own country in no way detract from our internationalist duty."

Of late, certain views emanating from the French and Italian Parties have thrust themselves onto the U.S. scene and have given rise to questions among Communists as well as non-Communists.

We refer specifically to the article, "A New Policy of the French Communists?" by Jean Kanapa, head of the foreign affairs section of the Communist Party of France, which appeared in the January 1977 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, a quarterly published by the Big Business outfit, the Council of Foreign Relations, with close ties to the U.S. State Department and the interview given to the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade on October 18, 1976, in Florence, Italy, by Sergio Segre, head of the international relations office of the Communist Party of Italy, which has been circulated in Left circles in the United States. Segre also wrote an article, "The 'Communist Question' in Italy" for the July 1976 *Foreign Affairs*.

We can not forget that it maintains military installations with atomic weapons in Western Europe and around the world, and that the politics governing the use of these instruments of death are directed against socialism, in countries where the working class and its allies are already in power, as well as against the working class and its allies in countries where they are struggling to come to power.

We recognize that as a result of the shift in the world balance of forces — the ever-growing strength and power of the world of creative labor, of socialism and national liberation, and the defeats and setbacks inflicted on US imperialism, the latter is compelled to retreat and manoeuvre. We know it has compelling self-interest reasons to adapt to the reality of military-strategic parity between the USSR and the USA.

But we also know that powerful circles, such as the Pentagon, represented

by such figures as National Security Advisor Brezezinski, Senator Henry Jackson, et. al., seek to manœuvre detente to gain some new advantages over the USSR, to attempt to restore the balance in favor of US imperialism, to frustrate disarmament and prevent limitations on the arms race. Witness, for example, the result of their influence on the one-sided proposals tabled by Secretary of State Cyrus Vance in Moscow on strategic arms limitation, which the USSR had no recourse but to promptly reject.

The U.S. imperialists want a Western Europe which is anti-Soviet, anti-socialist. No amount of concession to them by anyone calling himself a Communist will satisfy them until they have positive proof that one is also anti-Soviet and anti-socialist, that is, until one ceases in fact to be a Communist.

Segre holds out the prospect before the United States of Italy becoming "an element of democratic progress and stabilization within the Atlantic Alliance." Kanapa advises the U.S. transnational corporations that "businessmen are the first to know they have nothing to gain" by the breaking of "the bonds — economic and otherwise — which have been established among the Western countries." These bonds, he affirms, would not be broken by the Communists coming into the government.

Both reinforce their assurances to big capital by avowing that their countries would not leave NATO should Communists come into the government.

Kanapa, in his *Foreign Affairs* article, pledges that a France with Communists in the government would pursue an up-to-date defense policy "ready to face *any* eventual aggressor" (emphasis in original). What meaning does he intend for the State Department and Pentagon to place on this special emphasis? Doesn't this smell of the anti-Sovietism that U.S. imperialism is looking for?

Among veteran U.S. Communists, these articles cause no special problems. Having gone through the experience of Browderism, they recognize the essential revisionism in these documents, even down to the similarity to the non-class terminology used by Browder. Nor are they taken by surprise that it is possible for individual leaders to expound such views. They express their full confidence in the fundamental soundness and working-class character of the basic cadre and membership of these two great Parties. This is not to say they are unconcerned or indifferent, for they have learned at great cost the harm which revision can inflict, a damage which can take years to overcome.

Among some younger comrades and Leftward moving youth and adults, the Kanapa-Segre views raise many questions on the positions of the French and Italian Parties which give rise to confusion on some Marxist-Leninist principles.

The French and Italian Parties speak for themselves, of course; we can not speak for the specific, national features of their policies and will not presume to do so. We do hold to the view, however that Kanapa and Segre bend and distort their Parties' histories and traditions to point of opportunism and revisionism. We shall discuss their concepts as they impinge on the policies of our Party and on our understanding of the universally valid principles of Marxism-Leninism.

Both Kanapa and Segre proceed from the fact that their countries are in a "deep and lasting crisis." Neither sees any connection between the crisis and the general crisis of capitalism, neither speaks of it. Both speak of solving the crisis within the framework of the "Atlantic community."

Each holds that it is in the interests of the United States that their countries come out of the crisis. Why only of the United States? What kind of "solution" would be in the interests of the United States, and more to the point, to whose interests in the United States? These questions are ostensibly unanswered.

Yet the articles as a whole provide the answers.

We U.S. Communists can not forget that we live in a class society in which state monopoly capitalism exploits and oppresses the working class, the Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano, Native American Indian and other minorities and other social strata.

We can not forget the avowed aim of our ruling class to be Number One in the world at the expense of the peoples of the world as well as at the expense of its imperialist rival/allies. We can not forget its brutal wars of aggression, its propensity to violence at home and abroad, the fact that it was the first and only power to use the atom bomb against civilian populations, its racism and anti-Communism, etc.

Segre, for his part, pictures an Italian government with Communist participation which preserves the "military-strategic equilibrium between the two blocs" (NATO and Warsaw Pact). He maintains that Italy's withdrawal from NATO would "damage or destroy one of the premises on which the whole process of detente rests!"

From this, one must conclude that the cause of detente and world peace would not be strengthened by the withdrawal of Italy (and France) from NATO! But without strategically located France and Italy, how long would the anti-Communist, anti-working class NATO last? In fact, except for the threat posed by NATO, there would be no need for the Warsaw Pact, which was created as a defensive alliance in response to the formation of NATO. The Warsaw Pact countries have repeatedly proposed the simultaneous dissolution of the two alliances.

Clear, one would think. But when one forgets or ignores the essential difference between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, when one discards the class approach and reduces everything to "the confrontation among the great powers" equating the USSR to the U.S., then, of course, one finds it easy to justify NATO and "maintaining the equilibrium."

It is not for nothing that this equilibrium has been called "the balance of terror" by its proponents in the United States. And this is regarded as a favorable condition for the peaceful road to socialism?

To be sure, this equilibrium is one of the factors which necessitates detente. But the object of detente is to move Europe and the world beyond the military confrontation to an end to military blocs, the arms race and atomic weapons. In a word, detente is a bridge away from the cold war to a state of peaceful coexistence.

Surely Segre must have forgotten something when he can speak of the "confrontation among the great powers" and the cold war in a way that makes it appear that the USSR is equally guilty with U.S. imperialism for the "change in the international framework and climate in 1947 when the Communists and Socialists were excluded from the government."

Again, neither Segre nor Kanapa refer to the general crisis of capitalism and the shift in the world balance of forces away from imperialism and toward national independence and socialism.

In effect, both seem to be staking the Italian and French roads to socialism on a static (or escalating) equilibrium of military power as between the USA and the USSR. But nothing is static. What emerges is a kind of inside-out version of the Maoist two super-power concept which, to all appearances says, "A plague on both your houses."

In both articles one may search in vain for a critical word about U.S. imperialism. On the contrary, one finds some laudatory remarks. On the other hand, they are laced through with falsehoods and distortions which slander and misrepresent the position of the Soviet Union and the world Communist movement.

"There is really only one country in the world that did not turn to the right following the crisis of 1929, and that was the United States, with the New Deal," says Segre. In this one sweeping assertion, Segre negates the socialist Soviet Union as a country with a form of democracy far superior to any that capitalism has ever produced.

Further, he falsifies U.S. history, covering up Roosevelt's initial moves to the Right, moves which were defeated only by the mass upsurge in which the Communist Party, USA played a decisive role and which compelled Roosevelt to inaugurate the progressive New Deal measures. Ignored,

too, is Roosevelt's aid to Franco under the spurious "neutrality policy," the support for Chamberlain's Munich policy, the active support to Mannerheim, and the tremendous struggle that had to be waged to turn the U.S. in the anti-Axis, anti-fascist direction.

Such omissions, combined with the attribution to the U.S. ruling class of democratic motivation, are not accidental. They flow from underestimation of the role of the working class and overestimation of the strength of the ruling class, especially the U.S. ruling class.

In providing an overall framework and justification for the positions they develop, Kanapa and Segre put forward the idea that democracy is the cureall to all problems.

The democracy that is projected is an abstract one; it means all things to all people. The class essence of democracy is entirely missing.

At one point Kanapa speaks of the Common Program on which both the Communist Party and the Socialist Party stand in France as "being a great step forward on the road to democracy" (emphasis added), as though no democracy whatsoever exists?

And what kind of democracy does Kanapa have in mind when he says he wants to "take back from their [the 'barons' of big industry and high finance] the main levers of control"? Who had these main levers before, who would Kanapa give them "back" to?

Kanapa writes of a "socialism which must be *authentically* democratic" (emphasis added). What is authentic? By what class standards is it measured? He doesn't say. He says, "Democracy is the sole machine that will make France move forward." When you say machine, you usually refer to a mechanism of some specific shape and form. What structure, what mechanism? The existing state machine, or what? Kanapa doesn't say.

But he does say what kind of "machine" and what kind of democracy he does not want — the dictatorship of the proletariat! In fact, he speaks of it in the same breath with totalitarianism and personal power!

Kanapa makes it quite clear that he means abandonment of the very concept — not just the phrase — of dictatorship of the proletariat. To make it appear that this is not such a big thing after all, he casually remarks that it is "classically considered by the communist movement as *a* condition of socialism" (emphasis added). But no, Comrade Kanapa, it is not *a* condition of socialism; it is *the* essential condition of socialism, the guarantee of the development of the maximum democracy attainable in a world where classes still exist.



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In turning his back on the dictatorship of the proletariat, Kanapa repudiates the great heritage of the French working class, the Paris Commune and its profound bequest to the international working class.

In the Kanapa view, democracy is a non-struggle concept, an idyllic peaceful road to socialism which is paved only with the ballot box. We are so committed to this abstract democracy, says Kanapa, that we have decided there is only one way to socialism, the peaceful way of universal suffrage.

"France of 1977 is not Russia of 1917; only the small ultra-left groups dream of the D-Day of armed rebellion," Kanapa proclaims.

"What basically has happened is that several communists parties in industrialized capitalist countries...have come up with similar answers...outlining a socialist perspective strongly marked by a common concern for democracy," says Segre.

This "common concern" for democracy is put forward as though it is a newly-found revelation, and as a rejection of the experiences of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European socialist countries!

Segre writes of a "fundamental choice" made by the Italian party in 1944 and 1945 "in favor of a democratic republic, based on pluralism, a multi-party system," and of a "search for a type of socialism that would be quite different from the socialism that has developed in Eastern Europe."

Every party has the right and obligation to work out its own road to socialism. History shows that such far-reaching decisions are made in consultation with the masses in struggle and drawn from their history and experience, nationally and internationally; and not "decided" upon exclusively within Party circles.

No Party, of course, sets itself up as the sole authority as to the road another Party should take. To imply that it is necessary to repudiate the experience of other Parties in order to work out one's independent course is a sign of immaturity among other things, to say the least. It is a kind of reverse dependency instead of independence.

To impute to other parties and to Marxism-Leninism matters which are simply not true in order to justify one's own position is not only slander, it is also cause for concern about the motivation and purpose of that position.

The Leninist decision to carry out the October Revolution by armed means, for example, came only after the historic moment had passed

when a peaceful taking of power was possible. Lenin saw this possibility and the Bolsheviks did all in their power to materialize it. But the historically fleeting moment passed. History records that the revolution itself was practically bloodless. It was the Civil War and the intervention of 14 capitalist states which brought violence and bloodshed.

To compare Lenin's Party to the small ultra-Left groups, and the Great October Socialist Revolution, the greatest event of the century, to an "armed rebellion" is vile slander indeed. All the more so in the face of the well-known struggles waged by the Bolsheviks against ultra-Left opportunism and putschism.

It is false to present Lenin and Leninism as being opposed to democracy. Lenin's works are replete with the call to struggle for more and more democracy as the road to socialism. But Lenin never mocked common sense and history, as Kanapa does. "If we are not to mock common sense and history," Lenin wrote, "it is obvious that we cannot speak of 'pure democracy' as long as *different classes exist; we can only speak of class democracy.*" (*Collected Works*, Vol. 28, page 242).

It is false to make it appear that Lenin wanted only one party in the Soviet Union. The impact of the Revolution had smashed the bourgeois and czarist parties whose leaders had led the counter-revolution or fled the country. The Social Revolutionaries, as a middle strata party, existed and operated in the early years of the Soviet Republic. It brought about its own demise, losing any meaningful mass support, by going over to the side of the enemy.

In almost all other socialist countries of Eastern Europe, peasant, agrarian, small-holder and other parties exist and cooperate with the Communist and Workers' Parties. What would be so different in France and Italy? That they would permit parties to exist which would work for a return to capitalism? We are confident that the French and Italian workers and peasants, remembering the lessons of the Paris Commune, of Chile, of Czechoslovakia, of the civil war in the young Soviet Republic, will have the final word on this score, and not the advocates of a non existence "pure" democracy.

It is false and slanderous to imply, as Kanapa and Segre do, that all Eastern European countries, on establishing socialist governments, "nationalized *all* industrial and commercial enterprises and collectivized family farmers."

When Kanapa writes that "the French Communists do not intend to imitate the experience of the countries of Eastern Europe in this regard (religion) or any other," he is misrepresenting the truth. For separation of church and state, which he calls "the republican tradition in France," came about in Russia only as a result of the October Revolution, and freedom of religion as well as from religion exists in all the socialist

countries. In some, the socialist state even assists in the restoration and building of churches. And Kanapa, we are sure, knows this very well.

The young Soviet Republic encouraged the landless peasants to expropriate the big landlords and come into possession, for the first time, of family sized farms. The movement toward collective farms, a superior system, started more than ten years after the Revolution. In the German Democratic Republic and other socialist lands, nationalization of only the biggest monopoly enterprises took place to begin with, in most cases these having belonged to war criminals, and small and medium businesses continued to operate for many years.

It is false to claim, as Kanapa does, that the French Communist Party in 1934 “conceived of the keynote of the Popular Front *despite* the opposition of the Communist International,” (emphasis in original). The fact is that within six weeks of the projection of the Popular Front concept by Maurice Thorez, the Executive Committee of the Communist International endorsed the French Party’s initiative with only a minority opposed (Lozovsky), and the leadership of the CPSU “expressed” satisfaction at the bold policy of unity.” (*Outline History of the Communist International* Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973).

“We are a national party with an international vision,” says Segre. But what Communist or Workers’ Party — or for that matter, what political party in general, is not?

The question is what kind of national party, what kind of international vision? If one rejects proletarian internationalism, what kind of internationalism is left?

Segre rejects Marxism-Leninism as a “closed doctrine.” But who closed it? Did not Marx and Lenin declare that it must grow and develop.

What kind of tilting at windmills is this, and for what purpose? Far from being “closed,” Marxism-Leninism is being enriched and developed in all directions based on the multi-faceted experiences of victorious socialism and working class and liberation struggles on all continents.

Segre quotes Palmiro Togliatti as saying, “No theory has ever succeeded in becoming a universal theory.” Evidently, Togliatti did not say a theory could not become a universal theory. Certainly, no theory of society before Marxism-Leninism could become universal because they all came into conflict with reality. Only Marxism-Leninism is based on reality, and has no stake in obscuring the reality of class domination and exploitation. Nothing has happened to show that it is incapable of being a universal theory. To the contrary, all development moves in the opposite direction. What should be added is that it can be a universal theory in fact only by the struggle to uphold and develop it in all directions and in the struggle

against revisionism and Right and Left opportunism.

In the science of nutrition, it has been established that protein is essential to human life everywhere on earth. This is everywhere recognized, hence it can be called a universal scientific truth. But the science of nutrition does not say you must take protein only in the form of beef. If beef doesn't suit you, take lamb, or pork, or fish, or eggs, or cheese or some other form of protein. But, please, just because you may not like beef, do not reject all protein and go on an all-carbohydrate diet for you will find, despite its sweet temptations, that it is suicidal!

What runs through the Kanapa-Segre documents is a lack of confidence in the working class, both in power and those contingents still fighting for power. On the other hand, there is an unwarranted trust and confidence in U.S. imperialism.

"Basically, it seems to me at least that the tri-polar policy with the United States has been carrying out [with respect to the USSR and China] has been a responsible policy." Segre uses the word "responsible" without spelling out for whose benefit and to what ends. One must be very naive or trusting of U.S. imperialism not to recognize U.S. imperialism's effort to exploit Maoism not only against the USSR but also against the working class and national liberation movements in all lands.

Kanapa is so confident that the only road to socialism is by way of the ballot box that he gratuitously and graciously offers to abide by the verdict if, after having come to power, the Communists and their electoral partners are voted out of office. This may sound like an expression of confidence in the working class and people (but, then, why should they vote them out of office?) but what Kanapa is saying is that he has confidence that the monopolist ruling class would abide by the election outcome which first placed the Communists and Socialists in power, and that U.S. imperialism and its transnational corporations in Europe would also abide by such an outcome.

History tells us that a Thiers called in the Prussian army to crush the Paris Commune. Is Kanapa assuring us that the French ruling class has changed its stripes, that there are no more Thiers? And that the U.S. imperialists, the would-be destroyers of the popularly-elected Allende government of Chile, the would-be assassins of Fidel Castro, etc., etc., would calmly accept the popular electoral will of the French people?

U.S. imperialism and its class brothers in France need no assurance from Kanapa that they will have the democratic right to maneuver a Socialist-Communist government out of office by means of the ballot; they will attempt to use whatever means are needed in their view to bring about the downfall of such a government.

The peaceful road to socialism is not a new idea, let alone a French or Italian idea. It is a possibility Lenin foresaw as far back as 1917. And Marx and Engels indicated, even earlier, certain conditions in which this might be possible.

It is an idea which has taken on greater possibilities of realization in the wake of World War II, with the deepening of the general crisis of capitalism and the shift in the world balance of forces. It is an idea which has possibilities for any country, depending on time and circumstances, not the least of which is the cohesion and international solidarity of the three components of today's revolutionary process: the socialist countries, the national liberation movements and the working class movements in the capitalist countries.

The peaceful road to socialism is not, however, a non-struggle road, nor is it exclusively the electoral road. The electoral struggle and electoral victory is a major component of it, and at given moments the decisive element, but it cannot be the sole element in the struggle to end monopoly capitalism's reign.

Almost a quarter of a century ago, in 1953 (in the midst of the McCarthy Era) the Communist Party, USA, wrote:

No minority can bring socialism into being; it cannot be imported and it certainly cannot be forced upon the people against its will. Actually, it can come only by way of fighting for more democracy, a higher degree of economic security, and a world of peace....

The governmental form of socialism in our country, and the methods whereby it arrives, will be determined by a combination of many factors such as the historic traditions and institutions of our country, the experience of the people themselves in the fight for social progress, and the conditions in which the new society is born. It is in the people that all power resides, and it is the people who will ultimately decide these questions...

As to what the Communists *prefer* and *favor* — what we would like to see — that is a matter which is clearly established in the record. Communists *always* prefer the least costly way for the people, the way of the maximum good for the maximum number, the road along which it is easiest and best for the people to move *forward*...

Because Communists *do advocate* the least costly and least painful road forward to socialism — the most democratic road and the only one that can be successful — do we favor the working class to develop alliances with the 17 million Negro people, the millions of poor farmers, and the lower-income groups of the city middle strata — so that a grand alliance of all people who are oppressed by monopoly — the vast majority

may be formed to facilitate the whole democratic movement forward...

Communists reject and condemn any and all attempts of any small minority to foist its will on the majority — that's why we oppose capitalism and its hideous offspring, fascism....

Steel kings and big money lords who murder striking steelworkers seeking union recognition and a few cents wage increase will not hesitate to use the utmost force and violence to keep their rotten system alive. Warmakers who pin their hopes on the atom-bomb as the 'new diplomacy' government relations in the family of nations are simply telling the world that it is *they* who have embraced force and violence....

In this sense, the Communists deem it a solemn duty to warn workers to be ready to defend themselves — that while we hope and work for the best and easiest way to social progress, to also be prepared to expect the worst. As a responsible and truth-speaking party of the working class, we can do no less. And for this, we enjoy the hatred of the capitalist class." (All emphasis in original. *Steel Labor's Road*, pages 78-79)

These principles still hold. We are, then, not dealing with new discoveries or uniquely French or Italian experiences. What we do face in the Katapa presentation is a one-sided and therefore unrealistic view of the road to socialism.

It is sad, indeed, when the leader of a Party stoops to slander a brother Party in order to justify his own opportunist positions.

Apparently stump by a question about the possibility of a Right opportunist danger in his party, asked of him by a Lincoln Brigade veteran, Segre could do no more than make this slanderous retort: "I want to limit myself to the situation of a few countries, including some big ones. Some Communist Parties, including some big ones. Some Communist Parties count very little or not at all in the actual political lives of their countries. Why don't they count? Because these are parties that in the last 30 years have simply done nothing but make propaganda for socialism, and have never really given an answer to the problems of their countries. Basically, they were parties that very often seemed to be nothing but sounding boards for the Soviet Union and its policies in Eastern Europe," so says Segre.

When Segre speaks of a big country, he isn't talking of Denmark. What other party but the Communist Party, USA, is he talking about? And the best he can bring himself to say is to agree with the J. Edgar Hoover-Birchite-ultra-Right slander that the CPUSA is but a mouthpiece, an instrument of Soviet policy!

When Kanapa, writing of what he calls the French Party's intolerance of "foreign intervention" says that he is "even arrogant on this point," he was surely voicing Segre's feelings as well.

It would be very easy to make out a case of "foreign interference" into the affairs of the CPUSA by the Kanapa and Segre documents. But we are not interested in making such a charge, and, in fact, welcome comradely discussion of differences as an expression of working-class internationalism and fraternal assistance.

But we resent and reject as a slanderous lie the foreign agent calumny, whether it comes from outright class enemies and reactionaries or from "comrades." The whole system of McCarthyite repression in the early years of the Cold War was erected on this big lie and slander. Under the hysteria created by such calumnies, Communists were jailed and driven off their jobs. Gus Hall, our General Secretary, spent 8 years in prison and Henry Winston, our Chairman, lost his sight due to official government neglect while serving a long prison term.

Can this be unknown to Segre? To revive this big lie at a time when it is fast losing its credibility in the U.S. is a strange thing, indeed. Certainly, it is not comradely, fraternal assistance. Rather, it has more in common with strike-breaking, with the breaking of ranks in deference to the class enemy.

Segre's assessment of the CPUSA shows he knows little or nothing about the United States. Putting up a fierce show of resistance against following the models or roads of any other country — which no one is forcing on him — he evidently believes that Italian experience is sufficient to measure the situation and problems in all other countries.

But our Party had an opportunity to follow Segre's concepts when Browderism temporarily prevailed in our ranks. Had we not cleansed ourselves of that opportunism, our Party would have been caught totally unprepared for the cold war-McCarthyite onslaught. It would have been completely wiped out, as were so many other "Left" and progressive groups which could not go beyond bourgeois liberalism and accommodation to capitalism.

As it is, the Communist Party survived the era of repression and has re-emerged as the strongest force on the Left in our country, whereas individuals and groups which embrace Right or Left opportunist and revisionist views, including "Eurocommunist" and Maoist views, are stuck in the quagmires of stagnation or have gone out of existence altogether.

Our Party exerts an influence far beyond its as yet relatively small numbers. It is enough to recall its roles in the mass struggles

against the barbaric war against Vietnam, in the struggles against McCarthyism and for democratic rights, in the struggles against racism and for full equality of Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano, Native American Indian and other oppressed groups, its role in the defense of the living standards and job conditions of the working class and for the democratization of the trade unions on the basis of class struggle policies, its role in the fight for detente and an end to the arms race, for democratizing the electoral process and opening the road to a new anti-monopoly party based on labor as the political expression of a grand anti-monopoly alliance.

We believe we understand the dialectical relationship between quality and quantity. In rebuilding our Party under difficult conditions, we stress adherence to Marxist-Leninist principles and flexibility in tactics. A new generation of Marxist-Leninist is coming into Party leadership. Together with the veterans, they will produce that Communist Party of mass influence which our country sorely needs.

Naturally, we are dissatisfied with our size and influence. We know we have weaknesses and shortcomings to overcome. But there is nothing wrong with us that revisionism and opportunism can cure. We have seen what revisionism did to our Party when it had 100,000 members. We have paid a very heavy price for it, and it has taken many years to overcome.

That is why we express our concern when we recognize the hallmarks of revisionist opportunism in the Kanapa and Segre articles. Nonetheless, we have great confidence in the working classes of France and Italy, and in their ability and capacity to clear away the cobwebs of fuzzy, obscurantist, non-class ideas and concepts and to uphold their great Marxist-Leninist traditions.

We know the spirit of the Commune lives in the land of its birth. The French working class will never renounce its birthright. Neither will the Italian working class. Both, we are confident, will renounce opportunism and revisionism.

## **\*HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO JACQUES DUCLOS' ARTICLE ON BROWDERISM**

At the end of World War II a marked right opportunist trend was developed by the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the United States of America, Earl Browder. His theory was based on illusions arising from the level of co-operation achieved between the USA, Britain and the Soviet Union in the war years. Browder held the view that progressive features of the Teheran wartime agreement would be implemented by the imperialist



countries. He advanced the theory that the imperialists would work with the USSR for the complete eradication of fascism and would co-operate with the Soviet Union, the newly-emerging socialist countries and the working class for social advance towards a better world without the need for class struggle.

In the euphoric conditions of the immediate aftermath of Allied victory over fascism by the joint forces of the socialist Soviet Union and the capitalist democracies, Browder's concepts won certain support in some other parties. Browderism developed some influence in the Communist Party of Australia but this was rejected in Party discussion; a rejection confirmed by the 14th National Congress in August, 1945.

A fundamental error in Browder's "new theory" was that it blurred over the realities of class struggle. Actually it lapsed into old illusions that basic social change to a new society free from the exploitative features of capitalism could be achieved through some form of class collaboration with "high minded" capitalists.

As W.Z. Foster, leading American Communist, who strongly opposed Browderism, put it: "Browder's opportunism had in it the typical right Social-Democratic policy of class collaboration, which means the subordination of the working class to the dictation of the capitalist class. He put the whole control of society in the hands of intelligent capitalists. The working class had no revolutionary role nor had the Communist Party."

Browder put up a view that the Party be liquidated and reorganised into a "political education association" and despite strong opposition the May, 1944 Convention of the US Party carried the Browder line.

Intense ideological debate continued in the CPUSA and also within fraternal parties, including Australia.

Jacques Duclos, secretary of the Communist Party of France, made an historically decisive contribution to this debate in an article published in the French Party journal, *Cahiers du Communisme*, in April 1945. Duclos wrote the article primarily in reply to an article lauding Browderism in the Communist paper, *France Nouvelle* and because Browder's dissolution of the Communist Party in the United States was encouraging liquidationist tendencies in the French Communist Party.

The Duclos article had an "electrifying effect" as W.Z. Foster records in his *History of the Communist Party of the United States* and the CPUSA was reconstituted with a revolutionary line based soundly on the scientific principles of Marxism-Leninism.

Above we publish an important article from an American Communist raising some fraternal criticism of "new theories" on what has come to be popularly called "Eurocommunism."

The article appeared in "Political Affairs", the theoretical journal of the CPUSA in April and the writer while paying tribute to the Communist Parties of France and Italy as great working class parties, takes up views expressed recently by leading representatives of these parties.

The Socialist Party of Australia considers this article is a very important contribution towards clarity on the "Eurocommunism" question and recommends its study by all SPA members and supporters.

**W.J. Brown**  
**On behalf of the**  
**Central Committee**  
**Education Committee**

# Job democracy and socialism

by **PAT CLANCY**

*Based on notes for an address to a seminar on democracy in the workplace.*

**The demand that workers have a greater say in all questions that affect them is a basic demand which, properly developed can be an important part of the struggle for socialism.**

The struggle for workplace democracy and extension of rights in the workplace is an essential part of the general struggle for greater democracy in our social life.

This question of workplace democracy is often presented extracted from life and dealt with as something in itself and I think, consciously and deliberately so as to distract the attention of workers from other aspects of life and to concentrate their attention in a narrow field.

Workplace democracy and the struggle for it need to be seen as part of the overall struggle for improved social and economic conditions and for the strengthening of trade unionism.

The right for greater democratic rights in the workplace is part of the whole general struggle for the essential aim of the workers, that is, for a new society, for a socialist society.

No matter how we tinker with the capitalist system under which we live and no matter what improvements we get, these improvements can't be lasting unless they are part of the overall struggle for a new and better life, that is the essential part of my concept.

If our horizons are limited to some concept of more worker participation in management, job enrichment and similar ideas then such gains would, in my view, be small and illusory.

Over recent years there has been a lot spoken and written about the experiments in worker participation in Germany, Sweden, Norway and Yugoslavia.

We should examine experiments that have been undertaken and to draw the most positive aspects from them for application here in Australia.

However, we should also examine the motivation of the main proponents of the scheme of worker-participation and involvement of workers on the boards of directors of such schemes.

Our society is dominated by huge capitalist enterprises many of them multinationals, and the existence of such large scale industry with such enormous power in the hands of monopolies limit the effectiveness of workers' representatives on the boards of management.

There has been a lot written about the industrial aspects of human relations and industrial relations and all of the other sociological cliches that have been developed over recent years.

One such book was written by two United States sociologists named George Strauss and Len Sayle called "Personnel problems of management."

In it there is this little gem:

*"The purpose of business is not to make people happy (though some have argued otherwise) but to achieve its overall goals of productivity and profitability and the purpose of human relations is to help management elicit the co-operation of people in working towards these goals."*

Another statement is that of an American sociologist Peter Drucher in a book called "The New Society" and this particular writer makes no secret of his adherence to the ideals of capitalism and the goal of greater profits.

In this book he says:

*"The self government of the plant community can only be justified if it strengthens management, its functions are not only limited, they are also strictly subordinate."*

We have had some experience of workers' representatives on boards in Australia and that experience has shown that representation of workers' representatives on boards of directors hasn't markedly changed the policy of the particular enterprise.

John Egerton represented the ACTU on the Board of Qantas and the unions representing Qantas workers put forward a log of claims on Qantas.

John Egerton called all of the union representatives together insisting that only top level union leaders come to the meeting by special invitation and the aim of that meeting was for him to harangue the unions about their wrongness in making these demands and to convince them that Qantas couldn't afford to meet any of the demands from the unions.

Later events showed that he certainly was not a workers' representative at all, but that event took place while he was still a member of the ACTU and acting as a workers' representative on the Qantas Board.

I am not indicating that we should not have as part of our demands the right to representation on boards of directors and influencing management and taking away from management some of the rights they now have. However, I believe that we need to approach the question of industrial democracy on a working class basis; that "tokenism" as expressed in worker participation is not an effective way of expressing our concept of industrial democracy.

My concept of the direct application of workplace democracy is to extend the range of democratic rights the workers have achieved.

This starts and remains with the strengthening and extension of the role and rights of job delegates.

It means strengthening the role of the shop committees, building and extending shop committees in every possible enterprise; it means strengthening job organisation so that it is able to take out of the employer's hands certain important rights.

Take the question of safety. How many workers have been injured and lost their lives as a result of management neglect of safety regulations and why should management have the right to determine questions of safety when it should, in my view, be solely the prerogative of the workers' organisations.

Strengthening unions is basically linked with increasing the percentage of workers drawn into unions covering their work. In West Germany, which is often presented to us as the ideal, both of union organisation with a small number of unions and the participation of workers on management boards, there are only about 25% of the workers in trade unions in trade unions.

While the number of unionists in Sweden and Scandinavian countries is of very high level, never-the-less, it is quite noticeable that in America with about 25% or 26% of the workers in trade unions, in Great Britain with a somewhat similar percentage, that the development of workers participation can be and in some instances is, an alternative to development of unions and a means of drawing the workers closer to the management.

We should be extending the rights of the workers on all social and welfare questions of the enterprises. There should be regular consultation with the unions before any significant questions affecting workers is made. That goes to all of the questions affecting workers including job design, job enrichment, the question of security of work and all of the other factors with which we are concerned.

It is my view that the essential aim of the employers is to use the concept of human relations to weaken the class consciousness of the workers and to weaken the trade union movement.

The improvements we have won have only been won by unremitting struggle, whether that struggle be concealed or open, whether it be active or passive, it is only as a result of struggle that we have been able to win any improvements. It is only as a result of struggle we have been able to win any extension of democratic rights.

It is very interesting to look at the way in which the concept of worker participation has been floated in a number of countries with the attempt to hold down the struggle of the workers, to see what has taken place in the world over the past period.

In the period between the two world wars the average number of workers on a world scale engaged in strike action was 3,800,000 a year.

In the period from 1946 to 1963 the average was 12,000,000 per year.

In the rest of the 1960s, 53,000,000 every year and in 1970 alone 70,000,000 workers took part in strike action.

The figures indicate the rise in the organisation of the working class on a world scale and it indicates the willingness of the working class to take part in struggle to defend their rights, to advance to a higher level of living standards and democratic rights.

While giving every support to every advance of democratic rights no matter how small and to in every way take advantage of opportunities to assert the rights of the workers, it is only by our strength as an organised trade union movement and the use of that strength that we will be able to, in any substantial way, extend the democratic rights we have won in the workplace, and socially.

# Whither the Australian Union of Students?

by **BRUCE HEARN**

**Recent developments in the internal struggle within the 250,000 member Australian Union of Students have reached crisis proportions and left A.U.S. impotent in the face of proposed cuts in this year's education budget by the Fraser Government.**

Why is A.U.S. currently tearing itself apart? Who are the factions which are conducting the battle? What can ordinary students do to bring this catastrophic situation to an end?

For the past several years the leadership of A.U.S. (elected democratically at A.U.S. Council) have become increasingly isolated from the mass of Australian students. What led up to this situation?

During the Vietnam war, most people recognise the radicalisation which occurred on campuses in Australia and other countries. Australian youths (among them students) were being forced to fight, possibly lay down their lives, in an immoral war, many thousands of miles away. Students reacted against the imperialist policies of the United States and Australian governments and were at the forefront of the anti-conscription and anti-war movements.

Australia from 1949 until December 2 1972 had been ruled by the most conservative and reactionary government in Australia's history. Tertiary fees were astronomically high, there were no allowances for students, and educational institutions were generally authoritarian structures, providing little scope for choice of assessment or a student voice in course content.

The combination of these factors tended to radicalise a significant section of students. Australian students were also influenced by student

movements in other countries, particularly the French and Italian student riots of 1968 and the student movements in the U.S. culminating in the massacre of students at Kent State University.

The late sixties saw the growth of the ideas of the 'New Left,' Trotskyism, Anarchism, and the spread of Maoism. Overall, these ideas (largely emanating from the U.S.A.) tended to emphasise the revolutionary role of students and the need to radicalise them as a vanguard in advanced capitalist countries.

The main proponents of these ideas on Australian campuses were, up until the last few years the Communist Party of Australia (through various loosely formed communist clubs), the Maoist C.P.A.-Marxist-Leninist (whose front organisation led by Albert Langer was the Worker-Student Alliance) and the embryos of Trotskyist organisations of which the main one today is the Socialist Youth Alliance. The Young Labor Association was not a stable organisation with consistent policies. The YLA approach tended to depend on who was most influential from campus to campus.

As this radicalisation process continued, the leadership of A.U.S. increasingly came under the influence of the C.P.A., until even their opportunist line (one of jumping on bandwagons and supporting trendy campaigns) was no longer considered to be "left" enough. The upperhand is now held by the Socialist Youth Alliance in conflict with the Maoists (now calling themselves Students for Australian Independence).

The election of the Whitlam Labor Government in 1972 immediately brought to an end conscription and Australian involvement in the Vietnam war. Immediately this dissolved one of the main issues which united the radical student movement and on which it was almost completely based.

The introduction of the Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme, the abolition of tertiary fees, and the huge increase in government expenditure on education, all contributed to dampening discontent among students. In many respects students now had it better than many other sections of Australian society. More importantly, they knew it.

This de-radicalisation amongst students from 1972 onwards did not result in a consequent moderation of A.U.S. policies (whose leadership under ultra-left influences did not alter their approach in the face of changed circumstances and conditions). Ultra-leftists were still the most active on campuses, while the majority of students became apathetic concerning A.U.S.

This situation possibly could have continued for quite a while but for the 1975 coup.

The constitutional overthrow of the Labor Government, the reactionary policies of the Fraser Government, the economic crisis, the attacks on the trade union movement, the real cuts in education expenditure (coupled with increases in military expenditure), proposed re-introduction of tertiary fees, the proposed loans scheme, and the loss of value of T.E.A.S.; all this has contributed to a renewed radicalisation amongst students.

In the face of the current situation, students have turned to A.U.S. for sound leadership only to find A.U.S. more concerned with political infighting than genuinely defending and struggling for students rights.

Because of the power bases built within A.U.S. by the various ultra-left factions (the organisation of A.U.S. with various semi-autonomous departments lends itself to political misuse). They have been concerned only with pursuing their own organisations (be it Maoist or Trotskyist) sectarian views, without regard to what student support there is for such policies.

For instance, policies were passed at 1977 Annual Council supporting the Kurdistan Liberation Movement (barely a known, much less a popular movement in Australia); opposing alleged Soviet attempts to take over Australia by lending money to a company to build flats in the Sydney suburb of Woolloomooloo; declaring that all males are complicit in the act of rape; arguing for the abolition of the entire capitalist system (a worthy ideal, but hardly appropriate to Australian Students in 1977). One motion was passed opposing the USSR from building port facilities on a tiny island in the Pacific ocean.

Regardless of the rights or wrongs of these motions one must ask how relevant they are to the role of A.U.S. and to the aspirations of the majority of Australian students? This last question does not concern the sects in control of A.U.S.; all they are concerned with is getting their organisations policies passed at annual council.

The current infighting is largely between the extremist students for Australian Independence (Maoists) and the Trotskyist Socialist Youth Alliance, the CPA and other Trotskyist elements.

The maoists power base within A.U.S. is the media department, within the newspaper 'National U', and the Overseas Student Service (whose connections with Asian maoist parties link it with the Australian maoists).

The 'Students for Australian Independence' was responsible for cowardly bashing of opponents at Melbourne University and Maoists attacked the Melbourne May Day march with poles sending two people to hospital on May 1

'National U' this year under S.A.I. control, has been used to attack A.U.S. and to provide a propaganda machine for the maoists. Large



articles have appeared on "A.U.S. Bureaucrats," "Soviet Imperialism," "Blinky Bill," "Australian Independence," and there have been reviews of Maoist publications. Little mention has been made of the needs of students (have they forgotten the students?), of A.U.S.'s education campaign for increasing T.E.A.S., fighting education cuts, the loans scheme, the introduction of tertiary fees, etc.

The Trotskyists who hold the upperhand in the leadership of A.U.S. are almost as much to blame for A.U.S.'s current dilemma.

They fail to recognise the mood of Australian students (reflected in the Direct Elections Debate), fail to moderate A.U.S.'s more extreme policies and involve rank and file students in A.U.S. They attempt to maintain a power base and push sectarian views through A.U.S. Despite this however, the S.Y.A. was instrumental in formulating this year's A.U.S. education campaign which was a move along the right lines.

Presently the struggle between Maoist and Trotskyist factions is gaining momentum. No end to the internecine conflicts is in sight.

A complete change is needed in leadership, approach to methods of work, structure and policies in A.U.S.

Despite the fact that the arguments in favour of direct elections of office bearers for A.U.S. sound very valid and democratic, they in fact are invalid, undemocratic, and represent part of a right-wing attack on A.U.S.

A.U.S. is a Federation of student bodies (organisations which exist at each campus) not a union of individual members. A national election by all students for office bearers would hand over A.U.S. to students with party machine-backing (namely Liberal, ALP, or DLP forces active in student politics) — who else could afford to conduct national election campaigns once a year?

Nevertheless it is important to recognise that the majority of students in Australia are in favour of such reforms. The reason so many students want to reform the electoral system of A.U.S. is not because they deeply believe it is undemocratic (most students wouldn't know how A.U.S. officials are elected), but because they are dissatisfied with the policies and current leadership of A.U.S.

The issue of elections was completely clouded in the debate and both sides contributed to this. Michael Darby spoke about "commos" running A.U.S. and attacked A.U.S.'s policies, while A.U.S. in defence, accused Darby of being a fascist, policy spy, and tool of the state. Little about elections was discussed.

The violent attack on Darby and the alleged use of violence at A.U.S. executive meetings by the Maoist S.A.I. has resulted in widespread

recognition amongst students that the S.A.I. are nothing but a bunch of thugs who are hell bent on destroying A.U.S.

Students politics has no place in it for violence and so the S.A.I. must be isolated and exposed.

The actions by the various sects running A.U.S. are leaving A.U.S. wide open to attacks by Darby (and his "coalition to reform A.U.S.") the Liberal Students Federation, the Murdoch press (which frequently features large articles attacking A.U.S.), and other reactionary forces, which must be resisted by all students concerned with and committed to building a strong sound national student union.

To date, the debate around A.U.S. (reflected in the Monday Conference program earlier this year) has divided students into either supporting the A.U.S. leadership (under Trotskyist influence), the maoist grouping within A.U.S., or Darby's 'coalition to reform A.U.S.'

In Victoria the 'Democratic Students for Socialism' (established this year on several campuses, largely as the initiative of Young Socialist League members) are opposing all these factions and is seeking to end the political infighting. Students need to create a strong, united, students union which will be a militant, dynamic, and powerful force capable of leading students in defence of their rights.

If ever such a students union was needed it is now, in light of the reactionary education policies of the Fraser Government which are directed towards maintaining higher education almost exclusively for the privileged elite.

However, if A.U.S. continues on its present course it will self-destruct within a short period of time, leaving students at the mercy of Fraser, Carrick and Co.

# “The Fastest growing economic area in the world...”

by JACK MCPHILLIPS

The above description was recently claimed for the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), frequently referred to in the capitalist press COMECON. CMEA was founded on a decision made in January 1949 by a Moscow Economic conference of European socialist countries attended by representatives of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and the USSR. Albania joined the Council in February 1949, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in September, 1950, Mongolia in July, 1962, and Cuba in 1972. In 1961 Albania withdrew from the CMEA and is not now a member country.

Yugoslavia while not a “full member of the CMEA is a “member” in a special category and participates actively in the organisation on an agreed but limited basis.

Some socialist countries of the Asian area attend meetings of the CMEA bodies in an “observer” capacity.

Thus the CMEA involves in several ways not less than thirteen socialist nations in three continents viz. Europe, Asia and South America.

The CMEA was formed to facilitate the development of the economies of the participating socialist nations, to strengthen the economic position of the bloc of socialist countries and to cope with the imperative international division of labor made necessary for the most advantageous use of skills and resources and for the effective application of new techniques arising from the scientific and technical revolution.

During the period of its existence the CMEA has developed an extensive and sophisticated apparatus including fully representative policy-making, administrative and executive bodies and two banks viz the International Bank of Economic Co-operation (IBEC) and the International Investment Bank (IIB).

In addition to being fully representative of the member countries these various bodies and the two Banks function on the basis of complete equality with each member country having one vote. Thus the newest and smallest member country, Cuba, has the same say in the CMEA organisations as does the largest and most powerful of the members i.e. the USSR.

This contrasts sharply with capitalist international organisations in which voting rights are uneven e.g. the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in which a small number of larger nations out-vote a greater number, the majority, of members.

An integral part of the CMEA apparatus is a council of Heads of Governments whose periodical meetings assist to further ensure that the CMEA proceeds with the full approval and backing of each country's elected Government.

The aims of the CMEA have been consistently pursued with outstanding success and without break since its formation.

The publication which recently described it as "The Fastest Growing Economic Area Of The World" backed that claim with some statistics and said:

"In the preceding five-year plan period, (1971-75), the national income of the CMEA countries increased by more than 36%, as against 14% in the industrial capitalist countries. The gross industrial output of the CMEA countries went up by 50%, as compared with 9% in the industrial capitalist states. The CMEA countries now account for about a third of world industrial output. Efficient utilisation of reserves for intensifying production and accelerating scientific and technological progress increased industrial output in 1976 as follows: Bulgaria 8%; Hungary 4.1%; GDR 5.9%; Mongolia 6.9%; Poland 10.7%; Romania 11.5%; USSR 4.8%; and Czechoslovakia 5.5%."

These are the seven longest standing member countries of the CMEA. Some other sources provide statistics emphasising the dynamic nature of the CMEA area. In 1974 the national income of the CMEA countries increased more than six-fold compared with 1950, while that of the Common Market countries merely trebled in the same period. In the same period industrial output grew more than nine-fold in the CMEA countries against 3.4 fold in the EEC countries. In 1971-74 the volume of industrial production in the CMEA countries increased by 35% against 14% in the EEC.

Such facts, and others, enabled CPSU General Secretary Brezhnev to claim early last year that "CMEA member countries have become the most dynamic industrial area in the world and in rate of growth are ahead of any other group of states."

However comparisons of economic growth and of production levels between the CMEA and the EEC do not mean that the nature and functionings of the two groupings of countries are similar.

The dis-similarity between the two groupings stems from basic differences. These are pointed up in a recently received publication "CMEA Today" by Ninel Bautina in the following excerpts:

"Under capitalism, with its principle of private enterprise and private ownership of the means of production, the reproduction cycle is geared to further private economic interests and as such cannot be a uniform structure. In a similar way, distribution under capitalism is subordinated to private economic interests. Under capitalism the pursuit of profit is the driving force of production but it also keeps the capitalist class disunited. Each component of social production under capitalism, personified in the capitalist owner or in a group of owners, is geared to making the biggest possible profit, even at the cost of harming the other components of the system. The society itself is disunited and does not have any common socio-economic interest."

In contrast the author says: "The socialist form of production relations embraces a single unified pattern of production and the possibility of developing it in the interests of society as a whole and achieving a common economic interest. Economic relations between socialist countries are, in their essence, international production relations. The community of economic interests between the socialist countries is determined by their similar economic base. This constitutes the public ownership of the means of production, similar state structure, popular power led by the working class and a common ideology, Marxism-Leninism. In this sense the economic interest of an individual socialist country is common to the rest of the socialist community."

This community of interests is not seen as a form of idyllic harmony and there are some contradictions but the manner in which the common concerns of the CMEA countries works out in practice is shown by some figures.

The share of industry and construction in the national income increased in the 1950-73 period from 43.4 to 60.3% in Bulgaria, from 35.1 to 55.4 in Hungary, and from 40.9 to 63% in Poland.

That form of industrial development is further revealed in the structure of industrial exports. Finished industrial products as a percentage of

total industrial exports increased, between 1950-73, from 3.7% to 55.3 in Bulgaria from 45.9 to 60.1% in Hungary, from 0.9 to 11.5% in Mongolia, roughly from 20 to 63% in Poland, from 11.6 to 53.8% in Romania and from 57.7 to 74.4% in Czechoslovakia.

In that same period the overall volume of exports per head of the population of the CMEA countries has increased almost seven-fold.

An associated feature of this development of industry in the CMEA countries is a lowering of the gaps in their respective economic levels which was a heritage from the past.

In the 1950-70 period, the maximum disparity in per capita production of national income that existed within the CMEA decreased from a ratio of 3.1 : 1 to 1.9 : 1; that in per capita industrial output decreased from 4.6 : 1 to 2.7 : 1 and that in per capita agricultural output from 2.1 : 1 to 1.65 : 1.

Scientific-technological development levels have also been brought much closer together, their maximum value in per capita estimation, not exceeding a ratio of 1.5 : 1 for the European CMEA countries.

Quoting those figures, a recently received publication dealing with CMEA development observes: "This makes possible more effective joint utilisation of the achievements of science and technology."

The disparity in the levels of production of national income per head of the population is currently much smaller between the European CMEA countries than between the United States and the developed West European countries, between these and the medium-developed Mediterranean countries and between the United States and Japan.

That state of affairs makes the CMEA one of the most uniform segments of the world economy.

Another feature of the CMEA countries indicating their economic strength is the capacity of their power industry. They are large consumers of power but have emerged as prominent exporters of solid, liquid and gaseous fuel and despite those facts they are not affected by forms of energy crisis such as are facing the capitalist countries.

The "Australian Financial Review" of June 16, 1977, reported on increased exports of oil from the USSR to the so-called Western countries. The FR noted the USSR as "...now the world's leading producer" of oil and reported that of the total output of crude oil and refined products of the USSR in 1976 close to 30% was shipped abroad.

Those facts contradict the recently reported forecast by the Central Intelligence Agency of an imminent shortage of energy in the USSR.

A CMEA session held last year considered a report on the creation of a single energy system for member countries interested in its creation.

The CMEA energy supply includes extensive and increasing use of nuclear fuel.

Much of the activity of the CMEA, but by no means all of it, is concerned with the organising and development of reciprocal foreign trade amongst the member countries. Since 1950 such reciprocal trade has accounted for 60% of CMEA's foreign trade turnover. By 1990 the volume of reciprocal trade within the CMEA is expected to increase 5.8 times on a planned mean annual growth of 9 to 12%.

That trade is financed through the International Bank of Economic Co-operation (IBEC) on the basis of a specially created currency of "Transferable roubles." That currency, even though it does not exist in material form, has a gold content and on that basis can be related to the national currencies of the member countries but of course is not exchangeable.

Both of the CMEA banks i.e. the IBEC and the International Investment Bank (IIB) carry out operations on behalf of the CMEA outside the CMEA area. The volume of IBEC operations carried out on behalf of the socialist countries in gold and the currencies of capitalist countries more than doubled between 1971 and 1974.

Both of those banks are recognised by the leading banks of the capitalist countries and they are represented, in one form or another, in the capitalist countries, including Australia.

A noteworthy feature of the relations between the CMEA member countries is the absence of raids on one another's currencies and the long term existence of stable currency relations. Other features marking the economies of the full member countries are the absence of currency inflation, of Budget deficits and of unemployment.

The further development of the CMEA proceeds in accordance with the objectives of specialisation, co-operation and economic integration.

Planned developments along these lines proceeds in accordance with the "Comprehensive Programme of Socialist Economic Integration" adopted in 1971.

That Programme "...defines the strategy and tactics of economic co-operation within the CMEA both in the immediate years ahead and over a 15-20 year period." In accordance with that Program the CMEA countries are constantly seeking ways and means of extending mutually beneficial economic co-operation with the capitalist countries.

For that purpose the CMEA Council, immediately following the Helsinki Conference on European Security, and in accordance with the terms of the

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Final Act of that Conference, submitted to the appropriate body of the European Economic Community (EEC) specific proposals for extensive co-operation in Europe.

The reply of the EEC was not quite in the same spirit but the CMEA countries are maintaining their efforts.

As the publication we have already referred to puts it: "The activities of the CMEA indicate that in carrying out their integration policy the countries of the socialist community at the same time are working for a peaceful and constructive future for Europe and pursuing, in effect, the twin tasks of (1) extending international socialist division of labour and (2) consolidating the position of CMEA countries in the system of world economic relations."

Those objectives are assisted by the processes of detente and the best interests of the people of Australia are similarly served.

**Publications available: "CMEA and European Economic Co-operation" by Y. Shirayev and A. Sokolov published by Novosti Press Agency Publishing House Moscow, 1976.**

**CMEA Today: "From Economic Co-operation to Economic Integration" by Ninel Bautina published by Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975.**



*"...Labor has an ideal. It realises that there never can be social justice under a capitalistic system of production, distribution and exchange." W.G. Spence, Australia's Awakening, Sydney, 1909.*

# Labor and the Socialist Alternative

by **W.J. BROWN**

**There is no alternative to the recurring economic crises that repeatedly rack capitalism and plunge millions into mass unemployment and misery except the Socialist Alternative.**

This fact of life needs to be raised with renewed and sustained emphasis today in the midst of what the recent National Conference of the Australian Labor Party in Perth correctly termed the worst crisis to strike the capitalist world since the Great Depression of the '30s.

Today all sorts of "reasons," "explanations" and "palliatives" are being put forward by big business spokesmen, economic research "experts," certain university professors and various capital-serving politicians.

But how much is heard — even from the Left of the labor movement — in fundamental and popular exposition of the basic causes and cures of capitalism's recurring malaise as set out quite specifically in the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin?

The time is overdue to do much more throughout the labor movement and the Australian community at large to bring to the fore the too often unspoken subject of the Socialist Alternative.

What is needed is the launching of a sustained campaign to popularise the basic, scientifically-established truths on just what is happening to the capitalist system; why it is happening, what has been done about it with such remarkable success in total elimination of economic crisis and unemployment in existant Socialist countries and what needs to be done about it

in our own national conditions of Australia?

Developments at the recent National Conference of the Labor Party in Perth showed that it's more than time that the basic causes and cures of recurring capitalist economic crises became an issue of serious dialogue in the Australian labor movement.

The fundamentals of capitalism's cyclical crises were specifically and comprehensively set out by Marx and Engels in the middle of the 19th century and creatively developed in the period of imperialism by Lenin at the turn into the twentieth century.

Yet, outside of left circles the basic works of Marxist-Leninist science clearly setting out both the cause for and solution of capitalism's recurring economic crisis are seldom even mentioned.

Silence of the capitalist class and their "experts" in political economy is understandable. But the question arises — what can be done to break the lack of discussion and action around the Socialist Alternative in trade union and labor movement circles?

Take the Australian Labor Party's National Conference in Perth in July. Tucked away in one report of the Conference was a small item indicating the Conference retained paper reference to Labor's stand for socialism.

Yet the debate at Conference was marked by a heavy retreat from even important social reform goals let alone the slightest hint that Labor did, in fact, recognise that the basic cause for the economic crisis was to be found in the insoluble contradictions of capitalism and that the basic cause could only be achieved by advance to Socialism — Labor's own ultimate objective.

Here I make no mindless suggestion that the Labor Party (or for that matter we of the SPA) should put forward any "instant Socialist Australia" alternative. While Mr. Whitlam was Prime Minister, the SPA put forward concrete proposals for a realistic, immediate interim program to mitigate the instability of Australia's capitalist economy. The program included a comprehensive plan for extended public works and a project for government assistance to non-monopoly business sectors as measures to provide work for the unemployed.

However, the ALP's conference, while marked by strong condemnations of the current crisis as "world economic stagnation" and the "worst unemployment since the Depression" and calls for "an end to the Fraser-Lynch recession" advanced no serious program as to how the crisis was to be tackled. A general note struck was that Labor, if it was to regain national government, needed to abandon any serious program of extending the public sector, postpone social reforms and concentrate on

efforts to try and make the private enterprise sector work better in order to overcome inflation, provide jobs and solve the economic crisis.

Here the two-class character of the Australian Labor Party was clearly in evidence. On the one hand the Perth conference put forward a number of positive decisions in the interests of the Australian working people and on the other came out for a policy of propping up and perpetuating capitalism — the very system responsible for imposing recurrent economic crises and all its consequences on workers, farmers and all other sections of the working community.

As always SPA policy will be to work in unity with the ALP on all its decisions which serve the people's interests. Among Labor policy points the SPA will work in unity around Labor's decision for indefinite suspension of the mining and export of uranium, bringing to the fore SPA policy to remove all aspects of uranium from monopoly exploitation and place it under democratic public management. But the central issue remains — what is to be done about the economic crisis.

Criticism must be made of Labor's line of moving away even from its own program of basic social reforms to more clearly show themselves as a Party concerned with "making the system work better." A clear majority of delegates at Perth considered that this offers the best path back to political power. But Labor has been through this all before. How many times has capitalism got to plunge Australian capitalism (and the world) into economic crisis before the Labor Party — or, at least, substantial sections of it come out and openly say what any intelligent, objective person should know.

Capitalism will continue to inflict recurrent economic crises on the people as long as it exists as a system.

Even supposing Labor's attempt to present itself at the next elections as a better Government for capitalism than the Liberal-Country Party does result in Labor's return to power — what then?

The Labor Party, like all sections of the Australian community (yes, even the capitalist class) need to face the inescapable facts on capitalism's chronically unstable economy.

The economic crises that repeatedly break out under capitalism are inevitable because of the fundamental contradiction of capitalism — social production of goods and services by the great mass of the people and private appropriation for private wealth by relatively small groups of individuals. Private enterprise caused the crisis. Assisting private enterprise to endure can only compound this system of recurrent instability.

Mr. Whitlam and other Labor leaders spoke at Perth with commendable

vigour in condemning Mr. Fraser. They charged Fraser with "deliberately depressing" Australia's economy.

Fraser is indeed a particularly arrogant, deeply class biased representative of wealth and privilege. He is certainly setting out with deliberation to make Australian working people, small businessmen and small farmers pay for private enterprises economic crisis. But Australia's current economic mess arises not from the will of this or that man, or group of men — even whole groups of "wicked capitalists." **It arises from objective laws which govern capitalism independent of the will of man.** If Labor is to govern the nation it needs to recognise the operation of these objective laws and the inescapable fact that they will operate just as inexorably under Labor as well as under Liberal-Country Party Government.

These are laws which lie at the base of unemployment, poverty, inflation and general insecurity under capitalism. While they are the laws which lie at the base of capitalism's economic instability paradoxically they are among the most unspoken subjects of our unstable times.

What are these objective laws?

Let us restate some of them.

Production of surplus value is the basic economic law of capitalism. Marx specified this in "Capital," (Kerr edition, Vol 1, p.678) when he wrote: "Production of surplus value is the absolute law of this mode of production."

The essential feature of this law is that surplus-value is that part of the value created by workers in their daily labour which is retained by employers as their private, personal profit.

Part of this surplus value extracted from the worker is added by capitalists to the original capital thereby leading to expansion or accumulation of capital. Lenin described this build-up of capital as "transformation of a part of surplus value into capital not for satisfying the personal needs and whims of the capitalists but for new production."

Defining the law of capitalist accumulation, Marx wrote: "The greater the social wealth, the functioning capital, the extent and energy of its growth, and therefore also the absolute mass of the proletariat and the productiveness of its labor, the greater is the industrial reserve army the relative mass of the industrial reserve army increases therefore with the potential energy of wealth. **But the greater this reserve army in proportion to the active labor army, the greater is the mass of consolidated surplus-population whose misery is in inverse ratio to its torment of labor.** This is the absolute, general law of capitalist accumulation." (Capital,

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After setting out the whole process of objective laws governing capitalism, Marx pointed out that "the ultimate cause of all real crises is the poverty and restricted consumption of the masses as compared with the tendency of capitalist production to develop the productive forces in such a way that only the absolute consuming power of society would be their limit."

The foregoing represents of course, only bare extracts from the wealth of data and analysis made by Marx, Engels and Lenin and subsequently developed by numerous modern adherents of Marxist-Leninist scientific approach to political economy.

It is set out in the hope that it may help stir as many as possible to read and study more of Marxist-Leninist science for themselves in relation to the current economic crisis.

The fact the people of the capitalist world today need to face is that this crisis now gripping the world, creating mass unemployment and mass misery among millions has been and will always be a repetitive process while capitalism lasts. Analysis shows that before World War I, economic crises occurred about every 10-12 years. Between the world wars there were actually three economic crises not just the Great Depression ('29-'33). These crises occurred in 1920-21, 1929-33 and in 1937-38.

While there were a number of recessions since World War II, the fact that no major sustained crisis occurred in the capitalist world up until now was attributable to various factors. These only postponed but did not cancel the operation of the objective laws of capitalism which inexorably lead to a renewed major breakdown.

(It is not the purpose of this article to provide a comprehensive explanation of this period. Briefly, factors deferring a major post World War II crisis included the vast amount of restorative and replacement work after the War and subsequent development of a huge arms industry. While the arms race continues today it has turned into an aggravation rather than a so-called "cushion" of economic crisis. Other factors included relative and absolute increase of imperialist exploitation through remaining and absolute increase of imperialist exploitation through remaining imperial holdings and through neo-colonialism side by side with the fact that even in so-called "boom" or "affluent" times, millions in capitalist countries were condemned to chronic unemployment and mass poverty).

Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto (published 1848) were then drawing attention to the fact that economic crises were already an obvious repetitive process of capitalism.

"Commercial crises by their periodical return put the existence of the entire bourgeois society on trial..." they wrote.

Over 100 years since that was written the placing of capitalism on trial is needed more than ever.

The complacent, attitudes of the Australian labor movement to the basics of

the struggle between capital and labor need to be more consistently combatted.

Popularising of revolutionary ideas are no substitution for revolutionary action, of course, but development of serious dialogue and the widest possible popular discussion and advocacy of socialist ideas in a "Socialist Alternative" campaign can play an important, action-stimulating role.

To enumerate some things which might be done:

\* Hold broad discussion groups between SPA members and all interested Labor Party members together with other genuinely interested forces including people of no particular party.

\* Develop a forum in AMR pages and in trade union and labor movement journals raising the Socialist Alternative.

\* The SPA to consider stickers, posters, leaflets and pamphlets on the "Socialist Alternative" theme.

\* Popularise the successes of existing socialist countries including periodical fact-finding delegations from a cross section of labor movement forces, particularly with broad content of Labor Party representatives. These to be on a more serious economic study basis.

\* Encourage of the Young Socialist League to take up their own forms of popular exposition of the "Socialist Alternative" (recognising Lenin's comment on how the younger generation can effectively bring Socialist understanding to their contemporaries in their own way).

Ironically, study of Australian history shows that discussion of the "Socialist Alternative" was a more lively process in Australian unions and the labor movement generally in the '80s and '90s of the last century. True, it tended to be based on Utopian Socialist concepts. Yet it was vigorous as well as visionary in expression. Then literature on scientific socialism was scant. Today, the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and modern Marxist-Leninist writings are readily available. A qualitatively new situation is the existence of a world Socialist system where, at various levels, Socialist countries are functioning free of unemployment and economic crises.

The challenge is plain. It's time to make the "Socialist Alternative" to capitalism and how it could be worked for and achieved in Australian conditions a living issue for study, discussion and active policy consideration in the Australian labor movement.

#### **Note to contributors:**

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All contributions accepted. Ed.*

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