
THE AUSTRALIAN COMMUNIST

128 MARCH/APRIL 1985

**Provisional General Programme
of the Communist Party of Australia (ML)**

**A journal for the discussion of Australian
problems in the light of Marxism-Leninism-Mao
Zedong Thought**

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NOTE TO READERS

It is suggested to readers that the four articles beginning on Page 7 be studied as a whole. They complement one another.

The four articles examine and re-affirm the fundamentals of Communism. They review accumulated Australian practice of striving to apply Marxist principles to Australian conditions. The position of individual leaders within the Communist movement is discussed. There is also

consideration of the formulation of the Communist Party's line and policy and of how to view errors made within the course of struggle.

Above all, the articles breathe optimism for revolutionary advance. "Capitalism determines that there must be socialist revolution", says one of the four articles. "Whether it is immediate or postponed, still the inexorable laws of capitalism guarantee the victory of socialism."

Provisional draft programme of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist)

Published below is The Provisional Draft of General Programme of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist). It incorporates changes made to the Provisional Draft following discussion and review by the recent Sixth National Party Congress. It forms a concise, authoritative statement of the Party's basic line, programme and organisational principles. The description of the document as a Provisional Draft highlights that it is kept under regular discussion.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT OF GENERAL PROGRAMME OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA (MARXIST-LENINIST)

1. AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY

The Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) strives to be the political party of the Australian workers. It aims to embody the highest ideals and hopes of the majority of Australians. It endeavours from the scientific standpoint of Marxism, to examine Australian and world society and participate in changing that society.

Present Australian society has its roots in the colonisation of Australia. This involved the attempts at extermination of the Aboriginal people.

The struggles of the convicts and working settlers, and the struggles of the black people for survival, initiated and flowed into national and independence struggles which continue today. The growth of production brought into being a rural and industrial working class, the struggles of which, over conditions of life and work and over democratic rights against the colonisers and developing capitalists, flowed into an overall struggle for national unity and economic and political independence.

Australia today has achieved national sovereignty, nominal and partial, but not total national independence, and formal but limited democratic rights. Though these are positive, they are limited by a continuing degree of dependence on big foreign powers, an enmeshing in the net of unequal financial and trading arrangements with big foreign powers, the control of key sectors of the economy (and partial control of many other sectors) by primarily foreign-owned corporations, and restrictions and erosion of civil liberties and the surveillance by the secret police of political and social movements "of interest".

Even these limited factors are threatened by developments in the world at present. There is appreciation and support of the demand of ordinary people for the right to live in peace. The struggle for peace must identify the source of immediate threat and advance correct slogans to meet the danger. Pacifism can only encourage aggression. Destructive though they are, the matter is far more complex than the possession of nuclear weapons.

The decisive imperialisms in the world are the two superpowers — Soviet social-imperialism and U.S. imperialism. Their contention and struggle overshadow all world events and greatly influence the situation within Australia.

U.S. imperialism holds a dominant position in Australia's key industries and continually restricts the development of Australia's sovereignty and independence.

Australia has developed its own monopoly capitalists, a weak national bourgeoisie and a comparatively big comprador bourgeoisie (comprador in the sense of throwing in its lot with big foreign powers). There is a division of loyalties among the comprador bourgeoisie. Some sections desire closer economic links with Soviet

social-imperialism, whilst others maintain and develop their connections with U.S. imperialism. Britain retains a strong but declining position, while Japanese imperialism pushes in. The existence of a whole comprador class, prepared to compromise with and sell out to the most powerful bidder, constitutes a grave and continuing menace to Australia's independence.

Amongst the classes and strata opposed to superpower contention and to U.S. domination of Australia and whose interests demand a democratic and independent Australia, the working class is the leading class because it is the most closely connected with the most advanced means of production, the most numerous and the most conscious and disciplined.

In the decisive industries in Australia, the process of production is already largely socialised but the products so socially produced are appropriated privately, basically by monopoly capitalists. Capitalism moves from crisis to crisis and periods of stable growth are the exception. It is an outmoded social system. Nevertheless, in the present Australian situation, a socialist revolution is not immediately possible.

In the light of all this, the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) sets itself general aims.

2. AIMS OF THE PARTY

The Party has an immediate programme and an ultimate programme.

IMMEDIATE PROGRAMME

In its immediate programme it seeks to promote unity with all those with whom there can be unity around the following demands:

1. The defence and extension of national sovereignty and independence;
2. The defence and extension of democratic rights;
3. The defence and improvement of living conditions, attention to the needs of pensioners and unemployed people, provision of adequate health services and education facilities;
4. The development of manufacturing industry and balanced primary production;
5. All-round and effective national defence, including people's armed forces, people's civil defence, coastal and air

defence, and related industries;

6. Defence and extension of Aboriginal land rights; resource rights and support for progressive demands of Aboriginal people;
7. Defence and extension of natural conservation and national heritage, together with rational use of resources;
8. Resistance to the domination of Australia by the U.S.A. and its interference in Australia;
9. United action against the subversion, aggression and world war plans of the two superpowers. There needs to be special explanation of the global danger of Soviet social-imperialism.

ULTIMATE PROGRAMME

The Party's ultimate aim is the classless society of Communism. This society realises the objective of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs".

The material and moral conditions for the higher stage of Communism are laid in the lower, previous stage of socialism. Socialist society is characterised politically by the rule of the working class and its allies, that is, the overwhelming majority over the tiny minority of previous exploiters. Economically it is characterised by rational and planned production for the public need. Its development is according to the principle "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work."

As preliminary to this the Party aims to unite all working and patriotic people, farmers, democrats, patriotic business people, etc., to realise an independent democratic Australia. Such an Australia will be characterised by democracy for all except a handful of comprador capitalists. There will be expropriation and redistribution of foreign-owned farmlands; nationalisation of key industries and finance; all round rights for the black people; equality of the sexes; adequate living standards for all; people's ownership of the press, radio, TV, halls, public meeting places, etc.

In the face of ruthless and violent suppression by means of armed force used by the imperialists and other reactionaries, and the necessity for defending people's democracy against aggression, interference and subversion, the working class and its party must be pre-

pared for all means of struggle. Thus the Party's aim includes the building of a real people's army to resist the fascist attacks of the imperialists and reactionaries and ultimately to form a component of people's state power, able to engage in construction as well as national defence.

ORGANISATIONAL PRINCIPLES AND RULES OF THE PARTY

The organisational principles of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) are based on the Party's continuing analysis of Australian society, along lines described above, and the rules must be considered in conjunction with this analysis.

In particular, full attention must be given to the fact that Australia is a bourgeois dictatorship concealed under the cloak of a democratic parliamentary monarchy. In reality, the democracy is a cover for suppression by the bourgeoisie through its state apparatus of the working class and all other toiling people.

The Party must be able to function under any circumstances and be able to maintain its work through rapid changes of conditions.

Attention must be given to the Party's class character, its national Australian patriotic character. It must insist upon the highest quality for its cadres.

The Party is a living organism and careful attention must be given to all experience and appropriate conclusions drawn so that changes may be made in good time.

RULES

1. The main organisational principle of the Party is democratic centralism. This means that the leading bodies of the Party arise in democratic consultation, the individual is subordinate to the organisation, the minority to the majority, and the entire Party to its leading bodies.
2. The National Party Congress is the supreme Party organisation. It takes place as a process of democratic consultation of all Party members. It sums up experience, sets policy and in democratic consultation of the members, elects the Central Committee of the Party.
3. The Central Committee is the leading body of the Party between congresses. It shall

elect a chairman and such other officers as appropriate. It shall convene a National Party Congress every four years or sooner if circumstances require.

4. Branches of the Party shall be organised under the supervision of the Central Committee, having regard to the actual and varied condition of their operation.
5. Party members and branches shall identify themselves with the masses of people, whether advanced, intermediate or backward, so as to serve the great cause of the Party's aims. They should strive to work out new and appropriate ways to conduct mass work, contribute to the collective life of the Party by summing up experience, and recruit new Party members appropriately.

MEMBERSHIP

7. Membership of the Party shall be open to a person who accepts and applies the programme, constitution and rules of the Party, is prepared to be organised in a manner approved by the Central Committee and pays such dues as are determined by the Central Committee.
8. Applications for membership shall be treated individually and approved, deferred or declined by the Central Committee.
9. Members must serve the interests of the working class and working people of Australia, subordinate private interests to those of the Party and people, strive to master and apply the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism, maintain study of Australian life using the stand and viewpoint of Marxism and remould their ideological outlook in the process of maintaining close ties with the masses, consulting with them so as to learn from them.
10. Members must observe Party discipline and carry out Party decisions conscientiously. They should practise principled criticism and self-criticism, be honest, open and above board in Party matters. They should use only correct Party channels in the discussion and handling of their work. Discipline in the Party arises from conviction of the correctness of Marxism-Leninism. It is not arbitrary. It is based on the under-

standing that correct service to the people can only arise if the Party develops a fully conscious discipline. The method of persuasion must take precedence in developing Party discipline. The Party reserves the right of expulsion in rare cases of incorrigible breach of Party discipline. Any proposal for expulsion must be endorsed by the Central Committee to be effective. A member who, for ideological reasons, becomes politically apathetic or at variance with the Party, may withdraw or be persuaded to withdraw. The Central Committee determines methods for resolution of membership problems. Party dues will be determined by the Central Committee. All Party funds belong to the Central Committee.

11. Party members have the right and duty to criticise Party organisations and make proposals to them; this extends to the right to report directly to the Central Committee.

If a member holds different views about the decisions or directives of the Party, he or she may reserve his or her views while carrying out the decisions conscientiously.

It is essential to create a political climate in which there are both centralism and democracy, both discipline and initiative, both unity of will and personal ease of mind.

Members of the Communist Party accept a lifetime commitment to the welfare of the Australian people and the great cause of Communism.

Four Articles —

Fundamental Principles of Communism

There are certain fundamental principles of Communism. They are principles that originally were revealed by Marx and Engels and developed by people like Lenin and Mao Zedong.

Materialist dialectics, which is the all-embracing description of the laws revealed by an examination of the evolution and development of nature and society constitutes the core of Marxism. Marx revealed the law of value and showed that under capitalism that law explained the exploitation of the workers. He revealed the nature of the state as an apparatus for the suppression of one class by another and that class struggle under capitalism had to be carried into the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat. The state is an organ of class violence and the capitalist class would almost certainly resort to violence to resist any changes of state power. Communism involved the organisation of the class struggle of the working class with the aim of winning state political power, the transfer of the means of production to the working class and its allies and the establishment of socialist economy in place of capitalist economy. There are other fundamental features of Communism and very much more detail involved. For present purposes, the statements above will suffice.

Since Marx wrote, society has greatly developed. Lenin explained the phenomenon of imperialism. Since the death of Lenin, there has been further great change. Others have enriched the laws revealed by Marx and Lenin. But no one has shown that those *fundamental* laws, principles, are wrong. Despite immense efforts to discredit them, they remain as truth. Truth is indestructible. All subsequent facts have *proved* the correctness of Marx's original *principles*. The immense and rich accumulation of detail since Marx and Lenin has confirmed, rounded out and enriched

Marx's principles. For example, the principle of exploitation remains the same in the era of the micro-chip as it was in the era of the steam engine. The state apparatus in principle remains the same under modern fascism or modern democracy as in Castlereagh's England of the early 19th century. In each example, however, the details and forms have changed. The change in detail and form has *confirmed* the principle. It has illustrated and enriched the principle.

As for the over-riding world outlook of materialist dialectics (revealed by Marx) of which the centre is the law of contradiction within the essence of things, it has received the most overwhelming confirmation as knowledge of society and nature has advanced. Again the detail of this confirmation has rounded out and enriched the principle.

The principle, the laws, offer the explanation and the only overall explanation of the development of capitalism into imperialism. They explain the emergence of more efficient means of production including that of the micro-chip. They explain the development of imperialism, the origin of war. They explain the development of science. By understanding them, the general lines of development in society and nature can be foreseen. By using these principles or laws it can be said with absolute certainty that capitalism will end and socialism will develop. It can be said with absolute certainty that while imperialism lasts there will be wars of one kind or another. It can be said with absolute certainty that while the capitalist system remains, exploitation of the working class will intensify. A great deal more can be said with absolute certainty.

What has been said deals with general social and natural laws. The details cannot be spoken of with the same certainty. For example, the details

of particular capitalisms are different from one country to another. But what is certain is that in each there is a class which owns and controls the means of production and a class which does not own and control the means of production but is dependent on those owners. With that goes a repressive state apparatus to enforce the ownership of the owning class and the dependence of the non-owning class. In other words, there is a particular capitalism and a particular state in each country. What is common to all is the essence of the exploitation and the essence of the state apparatus.

It is necessary to restate all the general principles of Communism, to restudy them. They have had a history both of correct understanding and incorrect understanding, of partially correct understanding and partially incorrect understanding. In consequence, there has been confusion between principles, laws, on the one hand and the details, facts from which the laws, principles, are derived and which details and facts obey the laws, principles.

It is absolutely correct to say that the principles of Marxism-Leninism remain correct and it is true to say that not every *word* of the classics of Marxism is correct. The discoverers of the principles required to analyse many facts. The principles showed that there was a class struggle and that class struggle had to be extended to the overthrow of the exploiting class and the establishment of the dictatorship of the working class. The exact how and details of the process must be illuminated by the general principle but the general principle did not show exactly how each detail or fact of the process required to be handled. What was correct in one circumstance may be totally incorrect in another. Therefore in every single exposition of Marxism, care must be taken to distinguish between principle and detail. The principle is universally true, the detail is of transitory importance and at best illustrative of the principle. Marx, for example, studied the detail of the Paris Commune (he had advised the Parisian workers against it but when it occurred hailed it). From the detail, he deduced the need for the working class to destroy the capitalist state machine; the workers could not simply take it over. Marxism is not a lifeless dogma, not a final, finished and ready-made immutable doctrine but a living guide to action. (Lenin). If it were a dogma and every word of Marx true, then we

would be stuck with his words before the Commune that it was wrong for the workers to rise or we would be stuck with his words after the uprising that the workers stormed heaven. Instead what emerged was an explanation of the facts and distillation of the principle. Marxism is a revolutionary doctrine. The exact detailed experience of the Paris Commune was never likely to be repeated but the lessons from it remained a guide to action.

There is much also that can be said on every facet of human and natural development and the light shed on them by Marxism. It is necessary to restate general principles because today there is great distortion of Marxism.

There is distortion by assertions or actions based on the view that every word of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Zedong is correct. There are distortions that the principles, laws, revealed by these men are not relevant, are out of date and so on.

The socialist revolution in China, for example, in principle obeyed and could only obey the general laws shown by Marx to exist. But the details of it could not obey every word that these men had said or written. What the Chinese Communists did was to use the guidance provided by the *general* laws of Marxism in handling the details of China. The general principles showed with absolute certainty that there would be socialism in China and in the general sense they showed how. In the particular conditions, it was a very different matter. Thus, too, in the building of socialism the general principles were clear; the how in *the particular circumstances* was not at all clear. Lenin showed that Marx refused to speculate on the form socialism and socialist change would take although Marx showed with certainty the inevitability of socialism. Marx only elaborated on such matters after actual experience. Thus after the actual experience, the trial and error of the Paris Commune, Marx went a little further than he had gone before. What had happened was the confirmation and enriching of a general principle that he had already revealed. Marx was no utopian; he did not arbitrarily dream up socialism nor how to achieve it. He saw its general outline and the general principle of how to attain it and build it. The details needed to be worked out under the general *guidance* of these principles.

In some circles there is, for example, an attack on the Chinese Communists. It is said they are departing from Marxism. This is said from the point of view of seeing Marxism as a final ready-made dogma. It is not our function to examine the details of China's socialist development nor present policies. Actually only the Chinese Communists can fully do that. But the matter *can* be approached in principle. The principles of people's ownership of the means of production, of the dictatorship of the proletariat are inviolable. Provided that is adhered to, it is absolutely in accordance with Marxism to engage in experimentation. Not Marx nor Engels nor Lenin nor Mao Zedong ever attempted to describe in detail the form of socialism. To do so would be absolutely wrong. It is a fact that very little indeed was written by any of these men about socialism. Engel's concluding section of *Anti-Duhring* was published as a separate booklet entitled *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*. Nowhere in that booklet does Engels attempt to describe the detail of socialism. In fact his criticism of the utopian socialists, whom he acknowledged as great men, was that they arbitrarily imagined the form socialism should and would take. Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* was written in the 16th century. It visualised the ideal society. It was imaginary. It imagined a society from which the worst evils of then society were abolished. Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* was similar. The utopians about whom Engels wrote — Saint Simon, Fourier and Robert Owen — visualised a society from which the ills of capitalism had been abolished. Engels refrained from any similar exercise but showed the general scientific basis for socialism and only its generality derived from his examination of capitalism. He showed that in principle socialism would abolish the evils of capitalism. If the Chinese Communists, or anyone else, looked in *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* for the solution of detailed questions, then they would look in vain. They would not look in vain for the scientific basis on which socialism rested. What goes for Engels goes for Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Zedong.

History entered into this matter. The Russian Socialist Revolution occurred in late 1917. Socialism commenced to be built in Russia. Lenin lived only a little more than six years after the socialist revolution. Even in that

six years he said the form of socialism would vary and, for example, after socialism in an advanced capitalist country had been built, Russian socialism would be backward. This was because Russia was a backward country. The Russian people owned the means of production and owned the state. They had to find out about the building of socialism by experience. There was much trial and error. The Russian Revolution and building of socialism, were guided by the general principles of Marxism. Those general principles said little or nothing about the detail. As time went on, and Russia successfully built socialism, then due to a number of factors the details of its experience came to be regarded in some Communist circles as universal. This was quite wrong. In addition, people's understanding of that experience varied. A system of thought that tested everything by the universality of Russian details, and even impressions of it, arose. It was really a denial of Marxism to do this. A similar attitude developed towards Chinese socialism. This, too, was wrong.

Both revolutions occurred in accordance with laws revealed by Marxism, guided those revolutions and the revolutions confirmed and enriched the principle. The details stood on a different footing. Thus to condemn China over the contract system, over opening up to the world, over changing the Communes, as departing from Marxism is quite incorrect. It is based on a dogmatism which developed in the past in a set of particular circumstances. If it were said and proved, that China had abandoned the guidance of Marxism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the socialist road and the leadership of the Communist Party, then that is quite different. It goes to principle. However, the Chinese Communists assert the contrary and there is nothing in the details to prove that they are wrong. On the contrary.

On the other side, is the attack on Marxism from the right. This asserts that Communism is no longer relevant, it is out of date and so on. Under this assertion, arguments for the dissolution of Communist Parties are advanced. It is said that in modern democracies Communism has no place. Socialism can be brought about by parliamentary legislation, "restructuring" society and so on.

What of all this? It is not necessary or desirable to nominate parties, groups or indiv-

iduals, who espouse such ideas. It is difficult to know, for example, where and how the term Euro-Communism arose. But in capitalist presentation it means the parliamentary reform of capitalism which results in the "restructuring" of capitalism.

Abuse and name calling never solved any problem. Rational analysis and debate, on the other hand, clarify fundamental principle. Communist principle and experience show that revolution is the replacement of the rule of one class by the rule of another. Under capitalism, it involves the replacement of capitalist class rule by working class (and its allies) rule with people's ownership of the means of production. The rule of the dictatorship of the proletariat is in principle, (not necessarily in name), the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is possible that such a change can occur peacefully but it is very highly unlikely. The capitalist class is very highly unlikely to surrender peacefully. History affords no example of it. There is no example either of a fundamental reform within capitalism for the benefit of the exploited people. There is no example of the peaceful restructuring of capitalism. Capitalism and the capitalist state, evolve according to what Marx called immanent laws within the economy of capitalism. They arise from its very nature. Reforms of a limited character can be won within those laws but they do not alter the laws. The laws themselves can only be ended in revolution. To suggest otherwise is the revision of Marxism.

Revision of Marxism arises from the very conditions of capitalism. Historically, capitalism was able to produce privileged sections of workers who wanted its permanence or who were not impelled to change it. Political parties arose on that basis. The capitalist class's dominance of ideology and politics infected the people. Amongst Marxists these pressures also existed.

These are effects of capitalism. Those effects resulted in the denial of the fundamental laws of capitalism and the development of political parties which in one way or another gave effect to that denial. Thus parties connected with the workers arose which parties adapted the workers to capitalism. Exponents of the revision or denial of Marxism have been bitterly denounced and excoriated. This has been done in the classics of Marxism and by virtually all those who regard themselves as Marxists. The

bitterness of some of these denunciations is capable of explanation from history. But there is a question whether many of those who revised Marx were conscious traitors. In one sense it doesn't matter whether or not they were conscious because the damage done was and is objective. However there is still a question of how to deal with it.

Certainly many of the people who expound and follow such ideas genuinely believe in the correctness of those ideas. This is even more so among those who are influenced by such ideas. What then will cause them to see that the ideas are wrong? If abuse or unreasoned criticism is put forward, then often the result is exactly opposite to that which it should be, namely, the winning over of the people who are misled. Moreover experience in social life above all teaches these people, experience that capitalism cannot be radically restructured. Often the experience requires to be repeated many times before the correct lesson is drawn. Methods of the past of abuse, breaking of relations, splits, schisms, really assist the capitalist class. In some circumstances, as history shows, splits inevitably arise. Still the problem calls for reconsideration. There is no doubt that ideologically there is a huge gap between Marxism and revisionism. They are the antithesis of each other. This must be said. But the question remains how to cure the position. It is analagous to the position that arose when Lenin pointed out that a form of revisionism (opportunism) was the main social prop of capitalism. This is a correct statement. If the social-democratic parties, the socialist parties, were revolutionary and adhered to Marxism, then capitalism would rapidly be overthrown. Lenin's statement was used to justify the proposition, at least in Australia, that therefore the main blow should be struck against the Labor Party. Such an attitude is to confuse principle with tactics. It is tactically quite wrong to deal the "main blow" against a party which has thousands and thousands of genuine working class adherents. Circumstances may arise in a great revolutionary upheaval (or other events) where such a tactic would be correct. So with Euro-Communism and other forms of the revision of Marx. They are ideologically and politically wrong. But that does not preclude friendly relations with their exponents. Simply to have hostile or no relations means the sever-

ance of contact and possibility of influence with thousands. Moreover the exchange itself of ideas is beneficial to each.

The purity and integrity of Marxism must be upheld. Within genuine Communist Parties (that is, Communist Parties which genuinely strive to adhere to the principles of Marxism) there needs to be unrelenting struggle for Marxism. That involves the struggle for correct tactics and correct relations between all those who have influence in the working class and among progressive people. There is a profound distinction between the mass work of the Communist Party and the internal life of the Communist Party.

A similar attitude is required to those who have dogmatic left views. It serves little purpose

simply to abuse them. Experience again is the great teacher. Abuse on either side does not help.

In addition, as pointed out elsewhere, there is a wide unity on very important questions among a great diversity of groups. This unity should be cherished and nurtured.

Positive exposition of the views of all can assist in the clearing up of ideas. If properly expounded and practised Marxism is sure to be victorious. The existence of opportunism, revisionism, dogmatism, is an inevitable part of capitalism. If they didn't exist, then it wouldn't be capitalism. The great problem is how effectively the Communists can combat them and win the people to Communism.

Revolutionary Optimism Springs from the Working Class Movement

Lenin's classic *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* was written to reassert the fundamental propositions of the world outlook of Marxism. It is a book of supreme optimism. It was written during a lull in the Russian revolutionary movement and in a period when the tsarist reaction appeared to be in the ascendant. Lenin explained that the moods of pessimism among Russian radicals had caused spurious views to be passed off in the name of Communism. With merciless language Lenin assailed the opponents of Marxism.

In the process, he outlined the fundamental principles of materialist dialectics and reviewed scientific and social developments between the death of Engels and the time of writing *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (1908). He showed how these developments had confirmed and developed the fundamental principles discovered and elucidated by Marx and Engels. With amazing knowledge and perspicacity he demonstrated, for example, that the development of physics from understanding the molecule to understanding the atom and still further the components of the atom — protons and neutrons and even further — far from “abolishing” materialism, confirmed matter and its movement as fundamental in the origin and development of the world. He examined and refuted the various “schools” of Communism that had grown up.

There are very important lessons for all Communists in this. Lenin revealed scientific truth. What he asserted was not his opinion but objective truth. Communism is objective truth. The truth is derived from facts, and only from facts. “Seek truth from facts”, was how Mao Zedong put it. That is, generalisations, courses of action, principles, can only be derived from facts and from nothing else.

In current circumstances various “schools” of Communism have arisen. Groups and Parties exist each of which claims to be Marxist. There is extensive fragmentation of the “Communist” movement throughout the capitalist world. In some quarters there is deep pessimism as to the

possibilities of the achievement of socialism. Some who either accepted the correctness of Marxism or thought they accepted that correctness have lost their faith in it. Sometimes there is bitter dispute between rival “Communists” either individually or as groups or Parties.

There must be a reason for all this. And views about the reason must be canvassed and examined so that maximum principled unity can be achieved and maximum unity on given questions. A Communist Party correctly acting on Marxist principles, is essential for the winning of socialism. (This article proceeds on this bold assertion, in a previous issue of this journal the reasons to justify this assertion were advanced).

Capitalism calls into being a working class. That working class is objectively the most advanced class in society. It is the most cohesive and disciplined. It is attached to the most advanced means of production. It does not of itself have Communist consciousness. That is a process of gradual development and the enlightenment that comes from Marxism. Although there is competition among the individual workers for jobs, wages, advancement, etc., the community of interest of the workers against their exploitation, unifies them. The processes of capitalism have the tendency to throw more and more people into the working class and to unite that class more. This is an absolute tendency; it is derived from the actual mechanism of capitalist exploitation. It does not follow that at a given time it proceeds with machine-like precision. This qualification is made here because one of the errors of Communists has been to “convert” principles into facts, to confuse the principle with the facts, to “impose” principles on facts, to turn facts into “principles”.

Modern capitalism is undergoing quite significant changes. It is often said by commentators that it is undergoing a second or third industrial revolution. This refers to the tremendous advances in technology with the advent of computers and the like. It would be a grave mistake to believe that at any time in its history capitalism was static. It is not, never was, and

never will be, static. What is constant in it is the principle, the ownership of the means of production by one class and the non-ownership of the means of production by the working class which is dependent upon the owners of the means of production. Around that there are significant detailed differences between one capitalism and another and within each capitalism there is constant change. On a world scale imperialism has arisen. It is an absolute principle (law) of imperialism that there is and will be uneven development — one imperialism arises and falls, to be replaced by another with the tendency for the great imperialisms to get fewer and fewer. This generalisation is derived from facts.

The Industrial Revolution of the 19th century saw the advent of steam power which gave rise to a whole process of change in the making of commodities. Its development confirmed the class analysis revealed by Marx and Engels and other thinkers. It changed the content of the oppressed class. It enlarged the number of workers, their cohesiveness and discipline. It provided the material, the facts, upon which the principles of scientific socialism are founded. It is not the purpose here to go into the European upheavals of the mid-19th century, the Paris Commune, nor upheavals in Australia such as Eureka and the 1890's strikes. Suffice it to refer to Lenin's statement that he is not a Marxist who simply accepts as a fact the class struggle (many thinkers other than Marx revealed the facts of that struggle), only he who accepts that class struggle and projects it into the struggle for the achievement of the dictatorship of the proletariat is a Marxist. A Marxist is one who extends the acceptance of the class struggle to the acceptance of the dictatorship of the proletariat. (*Lenin State and Revolution*).

Changes in capitalism meant the development of imperialism, the occurrence of world wars, the division of the whole world among the dominant imperialisms. Today that whole process has seen the emergence of two dominant imperialist powers — the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union. This shows an enormous process of social changes.

Within the capitalist countries constant competition among the capitalists with the tendency of the rate of the profit to fall,

compels continuous improvement in the means of production. Nothing stands still. Imperialist rivalry is part of the compulsion. The cry for more and more advanced technology resounds and grows. It echoes around the world. Always the new technology is in the hands of the existing owners of the means of production. In other words, the new technology is part of the means of production. Those means of production remain in the hands of the capitalists who employ workers. In new conditions some of the skilled workers are more than hitherto mental workers. They discover and advance new processes. The work of those who operate robots and computerised technology alters, for example, from the old manufacture and operation of the steam engine. Computerised automatic production is different from older forms of mechanisation and automation. Still the fact of capitalist ownership and working class non-ownership exists. There are changes among the capitalists and changes among the working class. Those changes are important but they do not alter the social position of the contending classes. The fundamental criterion or question remains: what is the relation of the respective classes to the means of production? It is true that on the one hand a band of highly skilled workers arises and on the other hand the need of skill for a larger body of workers diminishes. Thus there is the basis for capitalist continued cultivation of an "elite" within the working class and abandonment of standards of education required for the lesser workers.

To take it up again, the tendency of capitalism is to throw more and more people into the working class. This tendency, as Marx and Engels showed in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, is to strip the old professions of their halo. The medical man, the lawyer, the clergyman, are more and more adapted to capitalism and serve the great multinationals. And however much an "elite" of workers is cultivated, that elite is still part of the working class.

The effect of all this is not at all to alter the essential objective character of the working class. It remains the exploited class. But it is to bring about changes in its content. On the one side it opens further ways for the capitalist to nurture and exploit division among the workers, on the other hand it provides the basis for

uniting the working class in still stronger bonds. The worker who works mentally as in the development and operation of computers is no less a worker than the worker who hews coal or smelts iron or participates in making machinery. The bank clerk, the insurance clerk, who is now a slave to computers, is indeed identified far more closely with the "traditional" ideas of workers. Lines of demarcation, exploited by the capitalists in order to weaken the workers as a whole, became smudged. There is a constant process of change, of division and unity, of dissolution and evolution of sections of the workforce.

Because of the growth of multinationals and monopolies in general, more and more of the small proprietors of shops, smaller plants, etc., are ruined. They are cast into the working class. A similar process goes on amongst farmers where largescale farming, the monopolisation of processing of farm products, dispossesses the small "inefficient" farmer and processor.

Relations *among* the workers change. The traditional spearheads of the struggle of the workers such as seamen, wharfies, miners have an outlook different from that of the new technologists. Within the sea-going industry, the mining industry, the process of production changes. Again, it is necessary to repeat, it does not alter the basic criterion of relationship of the classes to the means of production.

In present circumstances then there are changes going on *within* the working class. It is almost inevitable that ideas which reflect what are seen by the various participants and groups as competing interests will emerge and express themselves. This is the reflection of the process of change that is proceeding objectively. For a time, the technologist is reluctant to identify with the old industrial working class. The old industrial working class is suspicious of the technologist. There *is* always competition among workers. Marx showed this with brilliant clarity in *Capital* but still the overwhelming tendency of capitalism is to unify the whole working class. In a period of great change within the means of production and therefore within the working class, it is scarcely surprising that a diversity of groups, Parties and individuals who purport in one way or another to espouse the Communist cause of the working class, arise. Nor is it

surprising that they compete with each other. The whole process is aggravated, if that is the correct word, by the competition between employed and unemployed, the number of the latter being increased by the very process that has been described.

Thus there is an objective basis for division amongst the workers and amongst those who seek to represent them. This is not to assert that it can be said with mathematical precision, or often with anything like precision, that this or that given material or economic interest motivates a particular group, individual or Party. It cannot be simplified in that way. Nonetheless objective divisions will be reflected subjectively unless there is great strength in adherence to Marxism.

Not for a moment can it be overlooked that the capitalist class both consciously and semi-consciously, promotes division among the working class. It therefore welcomes a diversity of groups, Parties and individuals who and which purport to be Communist. The great striving of capitalism is to make everything in its own image. This striving includes particularly, the working class. Here its main weapons are official trade union structures and parliamentary political parties which *assume* the name and interests of the workers. This phenomenon exists in all capitalist countries; its form varies. It is the chief social barrier to the revolutionisation of the working class. Here the error should not be made of identifying such union structures and parliamentary parties as the bodies against which the main blow should be struck. Their existence and hold on the working class must be taken into full tactical account. Here also it is not the purpose to discuss the details of this problem. The subject for the moment is the "Communist" division in the working class and moods of pessimism.

The thesis here is that there is an objective explanation of divisions in the "Communist" movement. There are also significant influences of history, which no doubt had their own objective basis, but which feed new objective bases besides having a certain life of their own.

Within Communist Parties, no matter how strong in Marxism, there *are* contradictions. This is simply observed fact. If it were not so then the Communist Party would be outside the

domain of materialist dialectics. Nothing can be outside that domain. There is a critical question of how to handle these contradictions. The question cannot be simplified into the old rigid "two line struggle" that had its vogue in times gone by. Handling of contradiction within a Communist Party is a question very different from handling contradictions between the people and enemies of the people. Still the main contradiction within Communist Parties is that between bourgeois ideology and proletarian ideology. The pressure of the bourgeoisie to mould everything into its own image must and does affect the Communist Party and its members. Within the Communist Parties, this has manifested itself and continues to manifest itself. It manifests itself all the time. Some succumb to it and desert the revolutionary cause. Others translate what is probably a contradiction resolvable within the Party into irreconcilable contradiction. There are various instances of such things in the Communist Party of Australia. In circumstances of apparent strength and durability of capitalism or in circumstances of repression or other crisis, liquidationist tendencies have expressed themselves acutely at various times. In Australia, assertions that the nature of capitalism had changed were made in the 'fifties. In the splits of the 'sixties, similar considerations applied. In the current period this can be seen. Those who have this view give up the struggle for emancipation of the working class. They succumb to the pressure of capitalism. They seek amorphous organisations that have no precise aim or organisational principle. Such organisations are to "replace" the Communist Party. Sometimes the growing mass action with its loose organisational forms is conceived as the revolutionary spearhead. Communists welcome the growing mass movement with its loose organisational forms but they see the need for a Marxist-Leninist Communist Party as critical to the achievement of socialism.

There can be no doubt that the present is a period of reconsidering, reforming and rebuilding Communist Parties. After the Russian 1917 Revolution Communist Parties grew up in the capitalist countries. They achieved considerable success. They appeared to be reasonably consolidated. In Australia this was so even though various inner Party struggles occurred. Within

apparent consolidation and stability, however lay instability. From the mid-'fifties that instability asserted itself. A series of splits occurred.

One aspect of what happened was that an excessive rigidity within the Communist Party developed. It is not difficult to understand why this occurred. It lay in an objective situation where the Communists and the Soviet Union were under siege by capitalism. While it was asserted correctly that Marxism is not a dogma but a guide to action, the fact was that Marxism, or more accurately the Party leadership's conception of Marxism, became a dogma. It was very difficult to depart from the "line". Instead of the facts of Australia and Australian politics being put in the first place and the truth sought from them, arbitrary interpretations of Marxism had far too much influence. Rigid adherence to pronouncements from the Soviet Party (and others), replaced Marxist consideration of Australian problems. International controversy developed. It spilled into the Australian Communist Party not only because of the international controversy but because of factors internal to the Communist Party to some of which reference has already been made. These events were facts.

In the reconsideration and restructuring of Communism in Australia, different points of view emerged. Some of these also took the forms of "immutable" rigid dogma. The old influences on *methods of thought* lingered on. Thus claims to wisdom exclusive to the holders, were and are a common feature. Reluctance to think anew, to accept the need to investigate or reinvestigate facts, ought to be quite alien to Communists. But this reluctance has assumed a fairly firm grip in Australian Communist history. It is sometimes said that Marxism is creative. That is true provided the sense in which it is used is understood. Sometimes "creative Marxism" is used to "create" something that is not Marxism at all. If, however, creative Marxism means the consideration of *all* facts free from preconceived ideas in the light of Marxism, then the use of the term is correct. The various groups, Parties and individuals who and which have come into existence and seek socialism, really require to consider Marxism truly as a guide to action.

The wider "revolutionary" movement, that is, accepting for purposes of discussion as

"revolutionary", all the individuals and groups and Parties who and which in one way or another espouse socialism, requires consideration. Earlier in this article it was demonstrated that there is an objective basis for division and diversity. A serious problem within both the revolutionary movement in the wider sense and in the narrower sense is how to achieve a unified movement. The objective unity imposed by capitalism on the working class demands a subjective unity in the revolutionary forces. It demands full understanding by a Marxist Communist Party. The fact of the diversity must be reckoned with in order to reach a unified position. It is simply suicidal, and fratricidal for competing groups, individuals and Parties to abuse each other. The enemy is not within the working class, the enemy is outside the working class. It is correct that that enemy has influence within the working class. That influence cannot be destroyed by name-calling or gratuitous abuse. It may well be that Marx, Engels and Lenin are taken as justifying the type of condemnation that often goes on in Australia. Marx, Engels and Lenin fought vigorously for the supremacy of materialist dialectics (Communism) in days when that supremacy was not clear. To follow their particular method of disputation is not now appropriate. The supremacy, the dominance, the correctness of Marxist ideology as proletarian ideology, has been established. "Trotskyism" in Australia illustrates the point. There is no need to be pre-occupied with the historical dispute over Trotsky and Stalin. Both of them are long dead. But Trotskyism came to be a term of abuse heaped on anyone who departed from the "line". Its original meaning came to mean nothing. Great campaigns were waged in the 'thirties against Trotskyism. They were carried to gross excess. The influence of this lives on. So there is a tendency for some to condemn as "Trotskyists" (Trots) people quite devoted to socialism who perhaps even use Trotsky's name or in one way or another depart from some preconceived revolutionary idea. It is true that there are ultra-revolutionaries. They are commonly branded as Trots. Lenin dealt with the question of left-wing "Communism". Here he recognised the genuine striving for genuine Communism of the left Communists, including the ultra-revolutionaries. He dealt with the problem sympathetic-

ally and patiently. His aim was persuasion, explanation, positive exposition. An analysis similar to this can be made of both left and right groups, Parties and individuals within the Australian revolutionary movement (using the term in its wider sense). There is little profit for anyone but the capitalists in enmity and internecine strife within the movement.

None of this can justify a sloppy liberalism on Communism. That is not the question. Communism must be expounded positively and trends alien to it must be examined and refuted. Australian Communists in this view must defend and expound the need for a Communist Party which is disciplined in Marxism, upholds the all-round validity of the world outlook of Marxism with the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat in the establishment of socialism. Acceptance of that means that the Communist Party does positively expound fundamentals of Marxism and of course works out and explains politics and tactics in the achievement of the ultimate goal of a socialist and Communist Australia. Moreover it does involve revealing, for example, the incorrectness of amorphous "organisation", denial of applicability or validity of Marxism. In this, there is a way of going about the job. Contrary to past practices, it does not mean loose branding of individuals, groups or Parties which appear to or do deviate from Marxism. It is much better to proceed from the basis that such groups, individuals and Parties really seek to serve the people. Much can be learned from the way in which Lenin handled similar matters in *'Leftwing' Communism: An Infantile Disorder*. Mao Zedong espoused the principles of approach in his essay *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People*. Much can be learned too from his *On Practice, On Contradiction, Reform Our Study, Rectify the Party's Style of Work, Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing* and others; they were concerned with the positive exposition of Communist principle and combating views that adversely affected Communist principle.

For the Communist Party it stands to reason that multiplication of friends and minimisation of enemies is essential. If there is enmity and exchange of abuse between the diversity of groups, individuals and Parties within Australia and the Communist Party partici-

pates or simply does nothing to strive for unity, then from the narrowest standpoint the Communist Party is failing to do its duty of recognising the objective fact of the unifying process of capitalism on the working class and acting upon that. This necessarily involves the people who serve the working class. Put in another way, it means the Communist Party is cutting off contact with significant sections of people who are very valuable. Similar consideration apply to the groups, individuals and Parties concerned. If towards each other they maintain enmity (closed-doorism) then they are denying themselves the opportunity of contact with others. They are cutting themselves off. If ideas are correct then those ideas will prevail over incorrect ideas. There is absolutely no need to fear the clash of ideas. Nor is there any need to "enforce" ideas with abuse or violence. In the rational exchange of ideas the truth emerges more clearly. On political and tactical matters, far better performance is achieved if competing or other ideas are exchanged. There are very often various ways of going about a political task. The ideas here expressed can be illustrated readily. On a May Day, for example, in Australia, almost every group, Party or individual with workingclass connections publishes material. Many different ideas are expressed. Does it do any harm to study them all and learn from them both in a positive and negative sense? On the contrary. Proscriptions, prohibitions, banning, scorn, abuse, book burning, never destroyed an idea. Either it is positive, partly positive; negative, partly negative or a combination of all. If it is negative and important then an appropriate way can be found to correct it. If it is positive, then it can be used. Emotional personal reactions, either positive or negative, should play no part in important political considerations. Hatreds, feuds, personal feelings, really should be put on one side in the search for truth and service to the people.

Just as this is not an advocacy of sloppy liberalism, so it is not an argument for merging (identification) of the Communist Party with the mass movement. Short reference to this matter was made above. In present circumstances it has a specific relevance. There are some who say that the Communist Party is not now relevant and what is relevant is the mass movement around such matters as banning nuclear

weapons and uranium mining, land rights for the black people, environmental questions and others. Therefore the argument goes, or at least the logic of such an approach means, "forget about the Communist Party and Communism and concentrate on these mass movements". Another form of the argument is to create a broad "umbrella" movement that covers them all. This, however, confuses two different questions. Just as there is objective basis for the diversity of groups, individuals and Parties so there is objective basis for movements against nuclear weapons and uranium, land rights for the black people and other such questions. These latter also arise from capitalism. Their subjective direction comes from man. The Communist Party itself is in a similar position. But there are fundamentally important considerations involved in the relations between the components of the movement that arises from the effects of capitalism. Communists most definitely welcome the mass movements in Australia. They enthusiastically support and participate in them. These movements have limited aims. That in itself is good. It brings together large numbers of people who try to achieve a particular objective. Often they are successful. The movements are both large and small. They come into being over nationwide issues (e.g. nuclear questions and land rights) or on State or local or other issues. This is an Australia-wide phenomenon of vast importance. Without such stirring and activity of the people, those people would be but playthings manipulated by the multinational and local monopoly capitalists. Of all things, it has been said people are the most precious. So the Australian workers, working and other patriotic people are the most precious Australian asset. Furthermore, it is they who will ultimately make Australia's socialist revolution. There can be no doubt about the importance of the people and their various mass movements.

The Communist Party is in a sense a narrower body than this and in another sense a far wider body. It is not intended to be presumptuous or patronising to accept the analysis that the Communist Party provides overall guidance to the whole movement because the Communist Party acts on a correct analysis of capitalism and its inevitable end in socialism. Its aim is to draw all the threads of people's struggle together, to give them scientific

guidance towards the ultimate achievement of socialism. Marxism shows the development of capitalism and its end. The process is both automatic and not automatic. It is both independent of the will of man and dependent on the will of man. The will of man arises from the very objective circumstances. The Communist Party is the body of people who understand the overall process, participates in it, bring socialist enlightenment to it and when the *people* are ready, participates in and leads socialist change. So the wide all-embracing outlook of the Communist Party stands both in comparison and contrast with mass movements of the kinds described. In no way does (nor can) the Communist Party "manipulate" mass movements. The participation of Communists and Communist Party interests are effective only if the Communist Party and its members act appropriately in the interests of the people.

There are still further matters to be considered. Just as there can be no tolerance of sloppy liberalism in approach by a Communist Party, so there can be no denial that a few, very few, scoundrels emerge in the workingclass movement. Some individuals, groups and Parties emerge with the purpose of deliberately serving the enemy. Far from this being denied, it must be said. Australian history has provided examples. Within the Communist Party itself a few scoundrels have been revealed. A few, no doubt, are still concealed. A clear recognition of this is required. Therefore care must be exercised in distinguishing friends from enemies. In correcting the error where all contending groups were considered as enemies, the mistake should not be made of overlooking actual enemies. This requires vigilance. But in the handling of enemies there should be no overlooking that honest people are sometimes influenced by these enemies.

In relations between groups, individuals and Parties with workingclass connections, different consideration will apply from one to the other. There are those close to Marxism who sooner or later will join the Communist Party. There are others who have lost faith in Marxism or who do not accept it in any way but nevertheless seek to serve the people. Virtually all the groups, individuals and Parties in Australia agree on certain main questions such as the struggle for peace, the defence of democratic rights,

raising of living standards. Such views are held not only by the groups, individuals and Parties in question but by wide sections of the people. There should be no difficulty then among such groups, individuals and Parties in agreeing on those questions. Key Marxist questions such as adherence to Marxism itself with the principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat, stand on a different footing. The Communist Party cannot compromise on this. It must adhere strictly to it. But it does not make the adherence of other groups, individuals and Parties to such principles a condition of participation with those groups, individuals and Parties in mass struggle over the type of issue mentioned. In addition, it can certainly exchange views on fundamental questions. Disagreement on fundamental questions should not become the main questions. Positive exposition publicly and from Communists to others, of the overall views of Communism are also essential.

All this calls for maximum revolutionary integrity within the Communist Party. It requires constant striving for mastery of Marxism. It requires Marxist reconsideration and consideration of methods of thought of Communism in Australia. In other words, it means all-round strengthening of the Communist Party and its mass connections.

It is only a Communist Party that maintains its revolutionary integrity that can have the flexibility that is required in the correct handling of relations with the groups, individuals and Parties written about and correct relations with the people. Provided it is correctly understood, it is correct to speak of inflexibility of principle with infinite flexibility of tactics. An essential task of Communists in Australia is to build up and strengthen the Communist Party and at the same time to strive to participate actively in unifying the Australian workers, working and other patriotic people.

Included in such a consideration is the Labor Party. Within the Labor Party a process of disillusionment, dissolution and pessimism is growing. Amongst those in the ALP who seek socialism there is division and bitterness. This is reflected among the people. The view expressed here must embrace Labor Party people. It is simply not sufficient to think that the question is disposed of by saying the Labor Party is a party of capitalism. It is. This must be said and

it must be explained. But that solves very little in the way of involving Labor Party adherents who believe in mass struggle and many also in socialism in the type of consideration involved in what is said here. One of the most important perspectives in Australian politics is the actual and potential leftward turn of large numbers of people influenced by the Labor Party. Failure to recognise this and act in maximum unity would be a grave error.

There is absolutely no room for pessimism in or about the revolutionary movement. Capitalism determines that there must be socialist revolution. Whether it is immediate or postponed, still the inexorable laws of capitalism guarantee the victory of socialism. If the social laws of capitalism are understood then there are no grounds for pessimism. Impatience is natural.

But it is impossible artificially, arbitrarily, to speed up the process. On the other hand the correct working of a Marxist Communist Party as a whole and individual Communists should not be confused with the principles of Communism. Those principles remain correct and inviolable. The errors of the Party and Communists can and are corrected in the process of struggle. Existence of division and moods of pessimism are no new thing. They have occurred in the past. They have always been overcome. Given correct work there is no reason to believe that present divisions and pessimism will not be overcome. Given correct short term and long term programmes that correctly serve the people and serve relations between them, there is no doubt at all that the Communist Party will lead the Australian people. There will be a socialist Australia.

Thoughts on the Role of an Individual Communist Leader

Every class throws up groups of authoritative leaders. The working class requires the Communist Party as its leader. Communist Party members are representative of the workers. Often Communist Party members are leaders of workers before those members join the Communist Party.

By and large, Communists command respect from the people. This is so even though some people deplore the "Communism" of a Communist. In the eyes of such people and for want of a better way of putting it, Communists are "good" persons who serve the people. The Communist Party is the collective whole of its members. It derives great strength from its organisation which assumes a quality far higher than the aggregate of individual Communists who constitute its membership. Strength lies in organisation. Communist Party organisation turns on definite principles, the best known of which is democratic centralism. Democratic centralism simply means a quality of democracy and centralism higher than in ordinary organisations. Around adherence to Marxism it allows the utmost freedom of discussion and opinion, recognises authority of majority decisions and authority of decisions of higher committees which committees have been elected by the members.

What critics of democratic centralism really object to is Marxism. The critics are really making their attack on Marxism. But the Communist Party has no existence other than in Marxism because Marxism is the weapon for revealing the truth; it reveals the universal laws which govern the development of society. The Communist Party requires all its members to be active in the struggle for socialism. Here the emphasis is on "active". Passivity and inactivity have no place in the Communist Party. It is not an amorphous body with some vague programme. It is an active body pledged to Marxism and has a definite programme, the ultimate aim of which is socialism.

Within that, leadership evolves. Those who become leaders do so because in actual struggle

their leadership qualities become recognised. Leaders cannot survive unless they maintain activity. Marxism shows that society continually changes; nothing stands still. The Communist Party which reflects, interprets and acts upon ever-changing events, itself continually changes. Thus a Communist leader must almost as naturally as drawing breath, be abreast of changing political events. That goes for the Party as a Party and for all individual Communists.

The history of Communism and Communist Parties calls for an examination of the role of the individual leader in a Communist Party. At the time of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the term "cult of the individual" arose around Stalin. There was no scientific analysis of what was meant nor has there been such an analysis.

Marxists recognise what has been called the role of the individual in history. In broad terms this simply means that history is made by people as a whole. Within the people arise particular individuals who accurately represent the real interests of those people and are capable of leadership of them in accordance with objective developments. This recognises that the will of man is an important factor in social development. It has been called man's dynamic role. People make history but they do so within the limits determined by objective criteria, namely, the way in which people get a living. There is an interaction of the means of production and of man's will. In a letter to J. Bloch (September 21, 1890) Engels said: "We make our own history, but in the first place under very definite pre-suppositions and conditions. Among these the economic ones are finally decisive. But the political etc. ones and indeed even the traditions which haunt human minds, also play a part, although not the decisive one".

What bourgeois history writers wrote is debunked. Their idea was that history was made by "great" individuals. Bourgeois history therefore was a history of "great" men, kings and princes, generals and admirals and an accumulat-

ion of facts collected at random. Social reasons for the arising of "great" men and social reasons for the facts were not examined. Thus "great" men assumed a role in history that set them apart from other men, apart and above. Such men stood out as the makers of history. From the cradle to the grave this type of approach, of "learning", was the only type of approach. It was part of the social milieu. Education proceeded on that basis. Contemporary capitalist politics carries similar ideas. Prime Ministers, Cabinet figures, generals, admirals, economists, professors, all appear as making contemporary history. Very little analysis of fundamental social determinants or influences is ever done. Examples can be taken from great literary figures. In English literature "giants" have appeared. Classics are recognised. The giants themselves were giants, men of great ability, but why they appeared at definite times is rarely analysed. In their writings, generally speaking, the concentration is on the doings of the hero or heroine and those around them. Rarely is emphasis (often even existence) given to the common people. All this is explicable enough. The point to be made however is how it fitted in with the political and social environment in emphasising the role of great men. It was all part of a single whole. From a Marxist standpoint it is explained in terms of reflecting what actually happened in society. In slavery, the slave-owner only had rights (in classical Greek democracy the slave in law had no existence — only the slave owner had democracy). The slave owner "organised" production and controlled the lives of the slaves. In feudalism, where the means of getting a living had changed from slavery, the feudal baron and ultimately the feudal king was dominant. In capitalism, where again the method of getting a living had changed, the capitalist was the "organiser", the controller, of people. In the bourgeoisie's struggle against the feudal barons and king, the bourgeoisie had been compelled to rely on the serfs and lesser people. The French revolution's "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" expressed this graphically. The people were introduced to "democracy". Equality before the law embraced the same notion. All men were equal before the law but the real content of that idea was bourgeois right with nominal but really truncated and distorted rights for the people. Capitalism by its nature

essentially concentrated on the individual capitalist.

The whole of social development which precedes socialism therefore evolved as very strongly pushing to the fore the ruling classes and individual representatives of those ruling classes. This has been a part of the all-pervading ruling class ideology in each given social epoch. It did not arise because some individual or group of individuals thought it out: it arose out of the social relations which developed at particular stages in the method of getting a living.

The role of the individual in history therefore requires consideration. From a bourgeois standpoint the individual capitalist is all important. From a Marxist standpoint it is important but explicable only in social terms and those social terms reveal that history is really made by the people.

Communism as a scientific outlook, arose in the middle of last century. It arose by reason of social changes. It was not an accident. Of course the dynamic will of people played an essential part in it. People emerged who were able accurately to sum up social development and show where it was going. It would have been impossible in an earlier epoch because the facts from which it was deduced had not accumulated. Equally it was objectively necessary because capitalism had developed into an impasse similar to that which had developed in slavery and feudalism. The social fabric of each was acting as a barrier to the development of the means of getting a living. Marx and Engels are the men who most outstandingly saw, understood and explained what had happened and was to happen.

The Communist movement as a world-wide organised movement assumed fairly clear organised shape in the 'twenties of the present century. Communist Parties developed in many countries. The individual Communists in various countries came together to form Parties. They developed. Some developed and disintegrated. The birth pangs and labour in birth were difficult. In their very nature these Parties arose in a capitalist environment. It can be said that it was scarcely avoidable that the all-pervading capitalist ideology around them would be reflected within them and within the minds of the individual Communists who constituted

their membership. This included the idea of individual great men making history without really analysing the social basis in which the "great man" operated. Thus the natural tendency of preceding social epochs to ascribe history making power to individuals was reflected in Communist Parties. This was so even though Communism meant the most complete and radical rupture from ideas of the past. The competition among capitalists for economic advancement was bitter. One capitalist does ruin many others. This too finds this reflection in bitter competition for political advancement. This also found reflection within Communist Parties.

Thus the struggle for Marxism within Communist Parties is influenced by bourgeois ideas. Where this is understood, Marxism offers the weapons to combat what is bad about it and to use what is good about it. Where it is not understood or understood imperfectly it opens the way for abuse. The surest basis for correction of this influence of capitalism is understanding within the Communist Party of the materialist conception of history and on that basis the role of the individual in history and the making of history by the people. The Communists individually must understand all this.

The early history of Communism, that is, from mid-19th century to 1920 is a struggle for the supremacy of Marxism as *the* ideology of the working class. It was a bitter struggle in which there emerged overall a great battle between bourgeois ideology and proletarian ideology. It assumed a diversity of forms. These included the combating of Marxism in the name of Marxism. In the struggle, individuals emerged who championed Marxism and others who championed opposition in one form or another, to Marxism. (This is speaking of the struggle within the working class). Marx, Engels and later Lenin emerged as champions of working class ideology. Each was a very strong man ideologically. It is correct that they are recognised as outstanding individuals. Nothing should detract from that. But none of them was a God and none of them was without errors. Each recognised his own errors and denied superhuman qualities. Nor did any of them consciously give his name to the system of thought that now bears their names. No one of them developed his ideas in a vacuum. Each asserted that his ideas were ideas derived

from history and contemporary society. Each repudiated misuse of his name. Around each of them was a band of people who either had similar ideas or contrary ideas in the conflict with which his own scientific ideas were clarified and strengthened. Even more important each was a close observer of the people and participant in people's struggle. Marx and Engels were extremely close observers of the English and European working class (and all actions by all people and all sections of people including "great" individuals). Lenin was similar in Russia and Europe. In the development of their ideas, then, each of these men drew on others and on the people as a whole. Without that there would not have been Marxism-Leninism. They were not people who arose out of the blue, derived ideas from abstract "pure" thinking and who in their God-given "genius" expounded scientific socialism.

Due however, at least substantially to the capitalist influences to which reference has been made, Marx, Engels and Lenin came to be given the status of demi-Gods and their words the force of holy writ. Each of them combated such conceptions. Still the adverse process continued.

What did mark Marx, Engels and Lenin off from contemporaries who had similar ideas was that Marx, Engels and Lenin were men of outstanding ability. Each had the capacity to think in wide terms. Their ideas were comprehensive and reflected reality more comprehensively and accurately than their contemporaries. There is nothing contradictory in this. It is simply fact that the abilities of people vary. To recognise variations, including qualitative variations, is in accordance with Marxism. There is no conflict among people because of differing capacities; their interests against capitalism are common to them. The correct harnessing of their respective abilities against a common enemy is an essential part of the work of a Communist Party. What is wrong is the harnessing of differing abilities to serve personal interests or to erect one or two into the position of a demi-God. By implication, to do that, is to deny the role of the people in making history and to accept bourgeois notions of the role of the individual in history.

Within Communist Parties, the central leader, often the General or First Secretary, came to be seen as *the* last word on Communism within a particular country. It is correct to

respect a leader but the basis of that respect must be understood; otherwise distortions are bound to arise. It became a part of the ideological-political outlook of the Communist International to erect the leaders (or a single leader) of Communist Parties into a demi-God position. Campaigns were waged along these lines. Stalin, particularly in the latter stages of his life, was an exponent of this although nominally he denied it. But it set a bad example for the international Communist movement. Around it all developed the cultivation of the worship of the words of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin himself, without recognition of the correct approach to the role of the individual in history and conversely the role of the people and Party in the making of history.

Within the Australian Communist movement this type of approach took root. Campaigns were waged to establish the leading role of the General-Secretary. His words were invested virtually with the force of holy writ, often even casual words. Thus words of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and the general secretary were all "holy writ" added to which foreign general secretaries' words were often holy writ. In effect, a whole pernicious piece of bourgeois ideology found a niche in the Communist Party. It had the odd feature that those who lived and were influenced by it, affirmed the very contrary. In correcting an error, however, (in all things) truth must be sought from facts.

When Stalin was condemned under the label "cult of the individual", those who condemned him condemned also themselves. They had been associated with Stalin for a long time. Very often they were the ones who had extolled Stalin in the most extravagant terms. Really, however, the essence of a very serious error was "corrected" under the brand "cult of the individual". Stalin in fact made a very good contribution to the cause of working and oppressed humanity. It is reasonable to examine the positive and negative features of his contribution. But he did not make either a positive or negative contribution in a vacuum or alone. Around Stalin were a group of other leaders and the Soviet people. His ideas did not drop from the sky. They were derived from the people and from those other leaders who reported to him their ideas and so on. Stalin's ability was not

that of Marx, Engels and Lenin and therefore he made errors greater than these men.

The "cult of the individual" label put on him does not adequately deal with the matter. It really involved an attack on the fundamentals of Marxism themselves. It came to be associated with criminal activity attributed to Stalin and cast little light on the real problem involved. It did not contribute to analysing and solving correctly the question of the correct role of a leader in a Communist Party. It provided simply a label the use of which was sufficient to "dispose" of debate on a serious question.

Within the Communist Party in Australia, problems similar to those around Stalin had arisen. They had not been analysed. The words of a Party leader should be influential in considering a problem. Of themselves they do not dispose of the question nor are they necessarily correct because a leader uttered them. What can be said is that a person is commonly accepted as a leader because experience has shown that he is commonly correct and if wrong acknowledges it. In any event everyone's views must be respected. Views are tested against past experience and the light they shed on the future.

There needs to be systematic examination of the question of Party leadership. There are questions derived from history that need examination and there are positive questions that need examination. The tendency persists for an individual leader's words even on casual matters or casual words to be taken as holy writ. They are sometimes used to "clinch" an argument. This is similar to the use of words of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin or Mao being used to "clinch" an argument. It is quite wrong. The words of a Party leader and of the classic figures of Communism should be treated with respect. Various considerations apply. For example, the circumstances in which they were said or written, whether or not they deal with a principle or with the detail of some event and various others. But the error lies in investing the individual concerned with virtually supernatural qualities and denial of the role of the people and the Party as a whole in the making of ideas. The mere fact that Marx said something does not make it correct simply because Marx said it. It calls for much more than that. Marx's analysis of the mechanism of capitalist exploitation and profit is correct. It is supported by all the

material he used and corroborated by subsequent facts. On the other hand, the programme (not the principles) he (and Engels) advanced in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* is manifestly out of date and inappropriate today. This example can be multiplied and applied to any one else.

A difficulty about all this (and referred to earlier) is that commonly in words what is said here is agreed with, in reality it is not followed. The *undue* recognition of individuals does not necessarily cease with leaders. A similar phenomenon arises with individuals who, for example, come to be regarded as great "theoreticians". Sometimes their words become holy writ. It is with essence with which there must be concern.

Involved, too, is criticism and self-criticism. "Criticism" is commonly identified with attack, hostile criticism, as it were. Criticism involves the critical, analytical formulation of policy and appreciation (understanding) of the work of the Communist Party and Communists. Past policies, current policies and future policies must come under critical scrutiny. It cannot be that a Party or Party leader always has been and is correct. It simply is not so. Parties and individual Communists have correctly made even 180° turns. So criticism and self-criticism is the means by which a Party and individual Communists arrive at correct policies.

The distinction too between leaders and Party members needs to be considered. As has been said above, individuals do vary in ability. That is simple fact. Assertions that only a handful can become or be Marxist-Leninists need to be approached with caution. All Communists, and workers beyond the Party, can get a grip of Marxism. It is not something mystical given to a few outstanding individuals to understand. On the contrary, the worker in industry has daily, even minute by minute, lessons in exploitation. Introduced to Marx's explanation of it, he can grasp the essence of it. The idea that Marxism is a mystery open only to a few to understand derives from bourgeois ideas of the role of the individual in history and the non-role of the people. Far from accepting the proposition that it is only open to a few to understand Marxism, Communists should propagate its truth and urge and work for its mass study. There can and should be grip of it by all Party members and beyond the Party. Bourgeois control of

education and ideology creates difficulty. But in truth Marxism is easier to understand than bourgeois "learning". The initial break from bourgeois ideology must be fought for. It is true some will have a deeper understanding of Marxism than others; understanding will vary. But there is no place for elitism. Elitists simply do not properly understand the role of the people and individuals in making history.

The most "authoritative" leader derives his understanding from experience. In the nature of human beings his own experience is limited. He relies on his own experience, on the experience of Party members, on the people's experience. It could occur in no way other than this. Any separation then of a leader is bound to lead to errors.

It has been said that the final responsibility for a Party error rests with the Party leader. This too is a statement that needs to be taken critically. The accepted notion of Party leader means that the Party leader personifies the Party, he or she crystallises the Party wisdom. In this sense an error is his or hers but at the same time the Party's. If the leader misuses his or her authority to achieve a policy that is wrong then he or she is more responsible for the error but even then other leading Communists and the Party have a responsibility. They should be in the position to correct errors. It tends to feed elitist ideas to put forward the ultimate responsibility of a leader and to deny the role of the whole Party and people.

Naturally there is enormous responsibility on a leader, on the collective of leaders, on the Party as a whole. At all times, each must strive to get policy just right. Interaction between all components of the Party should be such that there is co-ordinated search for and formulation of correct policy. This does not mean ultra-democracy. Ultra-democracy means that effective day to day fighting policy can be hamstrung. Imposition of leadership decisions against the will of the Party or a substantial part of it, also frustrates effective policy and action. If the overall ideology and policy of the Party is correct then in accordance with that general correctness, specific action and policy flow quite naturally. A single Party member or single Party leader, can put it into action in the particular sphere in which it is required. Where, however, what seems correct to a Party leader or member

but involves a departure from a previous line then care should be taken to have, if possible, as wide consultation as possible within the Party. Ultra-dependence on sanction of leaders stifles all initiative. The Party should work as a co-operative whole but with independent responsibility and initiative. Ease of mind and liveliness have been rightly said to sum up internal party atmosphere. Ideas of democracy too have in the past been far too formal. Informal discussions, formal meetings, elections, all have their place. They are all directed at the need to maintain the Party at all times as an effective fighting political organisation.

Just as bourgeois historians have thoroughly distorted the role of individuals in history and that has been reflected in the Communist Party, so too have other alien influences. Capitalism means bitter competition. Each capitalist strives to get on. His getting on is at the expense of others. Ambition, ruthlessness, conspiracy, sharp practice, all play a part in it. These evil influences also penetrate the Party. Personal ambition should have no part in Party life. Party members are motivated by the desire to serve the people in the struggle for socialism. They should be prepared to step up or down, to serve anywhere and in any position on which the Party decides. Personal ambition, anxiety to "get on", to use Party membership for personal advancement, should have no place in the Party's life. Forming groups to further a personal or group interest, is characteristic of the bourgeois political parties. It has no place in the life of the Communist Party. Ambition does affect some Party members. Some develop ambition to be leaders. There is a great difference between ambition and recognition of one's ability to serve. Provided the latter is Communist inspired and recognised by the Party and not simply one's own individual judgement, it is quite healthy. No Party leader should put on airs or abuse his authority or influence. Communist respect to other Communists involves respect for leaders. But flattery, hero-worship, are things that can lead to trouble. The traits of a leadership are reflected throughout the Party and the Party in turn is greatly influenced by leaders. Therefore freedom from bourgeois influences as

far as possible can eliminate influences of ambition, flattery, factionalism, hero-worship and so on. The trouble with such things is they can easily lead to diversion of the Party's revolutionary service to the people and to disintegration. It is not a question of disagreeing for the sake of disagreeing and "demonstrating" democracy. It is a question of consciously supporting, amending or opposing a policy. No leadership, no Party, can make policy from a vacuum. All policy depends on the experience of all the Party and all the people. There will be leaders with standing and authority and they will be effective only if they recognise the Marxist analysis of the role of the individual in history.

Lenin fought a very stern battle for a particular form of Party organisation. The principles of that remain true not merely because Lenin said it. The fact that Lenin said it does make it worthy of great respect. It doesn't make it correct. It requires consideration and testing. It would be absurd to apply in Australian conditions every word of Lenin in his classics on the formation and form of the Party. Moreover, experience has enriched and enlarged Lenin's ideas. In any event, principles are principles. They are a guide. Words cannot be used arbitrarily to impose on different conditions some of his ideas.

The rigidity given to leadership "authority" in the history of the Communist Party in Australia should be corrected. We are opposed to nihilism, the denial of any Party and Party principle. We stand for the strongest possible Communist Party - ideologically, politically and organisationally on the general principles worked out and recognised in Marxism. Arbitrary use of terms like "cult of individual" only help discussion if they are correctly analysed. Khrushchov did great damage to concepts of the Communist Party and to the position of leaders. What he did has far-reaching lessons.

The "cult of 'leader'" simply because he is a leader, comes from capitalism. The working class strives for its own unity and is unified by the processes of capitalism. It is natural that its leadership is a collective leadership. It is collective leadership that must be responsibly cultivated.

On Zig Zags

At the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist)'s public meeting in Melbourne on November 11, 1984, the question of zig zags and somersaults in policy was raised. It was put in the form of a reproach and repudiation. But zig zag and somersaults in policy raise very important questions for political and ideological consideration.

In the history of the Communist Party in Australia (and probably for that matter anywhere else) there have been many, many zig zags and even somersaults in policy. Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Zedong quite frequently referred to mistakes each of them had made and referred to changes in policy they had initiated or participated in. Lenin and Mao Zedong explicitly referred to the difficulty in avoiding the making of mistakes.

The particular Australian criticism, made at the public meeting, concerned several questions. They included changes in attitude to the Labor Party, to Soviet, Chinese and U.S. policies at particular times and to socialist revolution.

Australian Communist history abounds in confusion over the correct attitude to the Labor Party. The extremes of views run from strident condemnation of the Labor Party to virtual Communist identification with it. Each extreme and policies between the extremes, have been followed from time to time over the period of existence of the Communist Party. In the last 50 years, there have been inconsistencies and zig zags, even somersaults, on this matter. Motives, as Lenin said, are important in considering the relations among Communists who have made errors but they are not important when the error does harm to the people. In this case, aspects both of inner and extra-Party consideration must be taken into account.

The struggle for a correct Communist view is a difficult struggle. It arises from actual conditions. A policy is tested in practice. Strident denunciation of the Labor Party cut the Communists off from contact with broad sections of the people — people who in the end must and will participate in socialist revolution. Those

broad sections of people believed, (and believe) the Labor Party is a progressive party that will alleviate the hardships of the people; in the belief of some, will introduce socialism in Australia. It was held at one period in Australian Communist Party history that the "main blow" must be dealt against the Labor Party. Examination of experience showed that this was a wrong view not because the Labor Party was not a party of capitalism (as we believe it is) but because the broad sections of people referred to saw it as *their* party. In correction of the error, the Communists said it is necessary to respect the people's attitude, to take it into full account. Nothing should be done to isolate the Communists from the people. At the same time it must be said frankly that in the Communist view the Labor Party evolved in Australia as a capitalist party. It has administered capitalism and will continue to administer capitalism. That is our basic attitude and analysis. However that is one thing; how to achieve mass understanding and realisation of it amongst the people, is an entirely different thing. The latter requires patient, persistent, painstaking work which takes full account of people's belief in the Labor Party. It requires very well thought out and well supported criticism of the Labor Party rather than the bald "pack of bastards", "main blow", type of material of some periods in the past.

On the other hand, identification with the Labor Party which has occurred from time to time, means that the Communist Party is deceiving Australian people about the Labor Party. Great skill is required in striking just the correct note at a particular time. The note will be different in different circumstances. It can be said that there is a certain strategic concept of the Labor Party as a party of capitalism, but many vitally important tactical questions are involved in realising that strategy.

Those who at a particular time followed a wrong policy or wrong tactics, of course made an error and a serious error. Only a fool would deny it. But there are errors and errors. If from the making of errors correct policy emerges,

then the making of the error is still a bad thing but a certain good comes from it. Lenin adapted a Russian story and said that when the proletariat makes an error it is like saying $2 + 2 = 5$ but when the bourgeoisie makes an error it is like saying $2 + 2 =$ a box of candles. There is no person who has not made an error except the person who does nothing. Errors must be avoided. There can be no plea for the making of errors but there can be no plea for doing nothing so as to avoid the making of errors.

In this regard, one great and serious error is the false denial of making errors. If an error is made, it should be honestly recognised, analysed and corrected. In inner Party discussion the facts of the error must be recognised and discussed. Here, questions of motives of individual leaders and members are important. If a Communist Party leader or member dishonestly promoted erroneous policy or dishonestly denied that there had been erroneous policy, then that Communist must be dealt with as dishonest. It happens rarely. Relations among the Communists must be those of frankness and ease of mind. In the case of the Labor Party, it is safe to say there is no single Communist Party leader or member in the last several decades, indeed from the foundation of the Party, who has not made and participated in errors about the Labor Party. What is the point of departure of genuine Communists is the striving for correct policy and that includes the frank acknowledging of errors. However, it is not only an inner Party matter. It is a particular Communist Party responsibility to be completely frank with the people. Thus errors must be publicly acknowledged and explained. There is no shame in this. Indeed, it commands respect from the people who see so often the lying and covering up of the conventional political parties. Communist honesty stands in striking contrast to that. Acknowledgment of error does not mean continual breast-beating. It means honesty when asked about error and after Party and public recognition of it.

It is very difficult to see problems in all their sides. Things become clear often only after facts unfold. At a given time a Communist Party must formulate its policy. In doing so, it is limited by its own shortcomings in Marxism and its own shortcomings in investigating all the facts. It must do its best. It cannot wait for perfection in Marxism (Communists will never

cease striving to attain that) nor perfection in investigating all the facts. Thus there are always the seeds, at least, of error. Trial and error, summing up and honesty are all involved in achieving policy as nearly correct as possible. As strength in Marxism accumulates and the capacity to investigate facts strengthens, then policy is more likely to be correct.

Undue dwelling on errors can divert the process of finding correct policy. Statements or accusations of zig zagging, and "somersaulting" in the sense of semi-criminal conduct, seem to proceed from the assumption that those who make the statements or accusations were and are free of error. That is a denial of Marxism.

Much has been said and written about Australian Communist (M-L) attitude to the Soviet Union, China and the U.S.A. Here, too, errors have been made. There has been wrong emphasis from time to time. There have been seeming somersaults. In *Reflections on Communism in Australia*, E.F. Hill examined the particular error of Communist identification with the twists and turns of Soviet policy. It was an error, a serious error. It has its historical reasons. But it should never be denied as having been an error. Still, constant reiteration and pre-occupation with it can divert the Communists from search for correct policy. To deny the error when questioned or when the matter is raised, is deception of the Party and the people. Involved in examining the error is all the Communist history internally and internationally since the Russian socialist revolution. Communists did give wholehearted support to socialism in the Soviet Union. That was correct. What was incorrect was the slavish following of Soviet pronouncements and the intricacies of internal Soviet policies and particularly Soviet Party pronouncements on other Parties. It compromised the independence of the Communist Party of Australia and obscured the job of achieving correct Australian Communist policy. When it became clear that the Soviet Party leadership had abandoned Marxist principle, Australian Marxists repudiated that Soviet Party leadership. Reproached with their previous adherence to the Soviet Union and Party, Australian Marxists did not attempt to conceal their previous position. They acknowledged it and said they had made an error. Reflection led to more analysis of the error. That still goes on.

Hill's book, previously referred to, shows something of the process some 30 years after the mid 'fifties (when Soviet Party desertion became discernible). A *process* of thought, analysis, summing up is involved. To be exclusively *pre-occupied* with such an error, serious as the error is and was, can only divert the Party and obscure its job. Recognition and analysis of it are part of the struggle for correct work. When Chairman Mao praised those who had recognised the desertion of Khrushchov, it was said to him this was largely a case of being wise after the event. He said that commonly it was possible only to be *wise after* the event. It was often only then that sufficient facts had accumulated to make a correct stand. Beforehand, Communists must do the best they can in making correct policy. Again Chairman Mao pointed out that if after 10 years from today we look at a conversation or article of today, aspects of it will seem childish. This is because facts unfold or are revealed that cast new light on the situation then discussed. In Australia after a big political or other struggle, it is common to say that we must wait till the dust settles to make a proper assessment. In human experience, everyone knows that events of yesterday can be seen more clearly today.

In the case of China, we support the struggle for socialism. We regard as Marxist the principle of Communist Party leadership, the dictatorship of the proletariat, adherence to Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought and the socialist road. The main principle of China's policy we agree with. In the past, we made errors of identification with particular events, personalities and so on where the facts could not be known by us and were not really our concern. Errors were made about details in the lines and policies of individual Chinese Party leaders. Again it compromised Australian Communist independence in assessing Australia's position. At no time was it sought by the Chinese Communists nor encouraged by them. Australian Communists acknowledge this error. To make it a sort of constant confessional would divert us from our tasks in Australia. It is said that Australian Communists somersaulted from support for Chairman Mao and the Gang of Four into support for Deng Xiaoping. It is perfectly true that we were warm in our praise of Chairman Mao. We still are and regard his writings as a

great classic contribution to the development of Marxism. As to his errors on various matters in China, that is for the Chinese Communists. That he made errors, we have his own acknowledgment. It is said correctly, that we condemned Liu Shaohchi, Deng Xiaoping and others as revisionists. We did do that. In doing so, we made the error of pronouncing without having the facts and in slavish following of what were seen as correct Chinese Party decisions. Moreover, such statements were in conflict with previous statements we had made about them. Different aspects of facts unfold at different times. Further facts unfold. The situation changes. Communists mature. We must be honest and state within and without the Party what is right and what is wrong and our attitude both in the past and future. Again to be preoccupied to the extent of diversion does not assist Communism in Australia.

On the struggle between the superpowers, it is said we over-emphasised the danger of the Soviet Union. It is correct that at one stage too much attention was paid to this. A one-sided view was taken. Alongside this went a tactical easing of campaigning against U.S. imperialism in face of aggressive Soviet expansion. It was and is part of a process. In the case of the Soviet Union, there is no doubt that a lot of emphasis was and is needed. Its socialist background, and its association particularly with the name of Lenin, meant, and still means, there is confusion about its expansionism. That calls for much attention. As with all errors, care must be taken in their correction; it is too easy to go from one extreme to the other. The Soviet Union did at one stage more energetically than now, try internal economic penetration of Australia. It is still trying. Our tactical moves on U.S. imperialism arose from an error of estimate of the respective positions of the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union towards Australia. Particularly now their equality as expansionists can be seen more clearly. We should never lose sight of the danger of war and the alignment of the various powers. Our present view is that the U.S.A. is the dominant imperialism in Australia and must be strenuously fought. The overall world expansionist is the Soviet Union. The struggle must be against the two. Obviously in Australia's case immediate questions such as Australian control of all bases and consideration of their proper use

(and many other questions) are directed against the U.S. imperialists.

Again honesty is called for. Illustrative of this is the position of the late General Secretary of the Communist Party of Australia, Sharkey. Sharkey made a contribution to Communism in Australia. However, in the international dispute in the Communist movement he made a series of dishonest statements about the Australian Communist Party's previous policies. He falsely denied that the Australian party had adopted a Marxist view similar to that of the Chinese Party. He falsely denied other errors. He made such statements in the Party and publicly. It was a tragedy for him as a Communist. It did great damage to his Party and to him, as its leader, and personally. Frank recognition of what he apparently thought had been an error and reasons for it, would have been far more in accord with Communist principle. This fundamental error of false denial of errors isolated him in the Party and among the people. Complete honesty within and without the Party is involved in revolutionary integrity.

Another matter is the nature and phases of socialist revolution in Australia. In the past there is scarcely a Communist in Australia who did not subscribe to the view that Australia was an imperialist country, junior though it may have been. This is wrong. Lenin showed the criteria of imperialism. in *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin set them out as:

- "(1) The concentration of production and capital developed to such a stage that it creates 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 'finance capital', of a financial oligarchy.
- "(3) The export of capital, which has become extremely important, as distinguished from the export of commodities.
- "(4) The formation of international capitalist monopolies which share the world among themselves.
- "(5) The territorial division of the whole world among the greatest capitalist powers is completed.

"Imperialism is capitalism in that stage of development in which the domination of monopolies and finance capital has established itself; in which the export of capital has

acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun; in which the partition of all the territories of the globe among the great capitalist powers has been completed."

Australia is a capitalist country which evolved from a British colony (colonies). It has significant colonial legacies in the legal constitutional sense, in the economic sense and in the ideological-political sense. Britain's dominance of Australia has given way to U.S. dominance. Because of a wrong assessment of Australia as imperialist and a failure to see colonial remnants, the idea arose of direct transition to socialism in Australia. Much was written and talked about on this question. Again there has been much trial and error. Our present view is that it is an *ultimate* aim to have a socialist Australia. That requires the conquest of political power led by the working class and the winning of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Preliminary phases are dictated by the facts. They involve the winning of thorough-going independence and sovereignty. The winning of that thorough-going independence and sovereignty must go through various phases. An example of Australian ownership (instead of U.S. ownership) of bases, has been referred to. The culmination of this struggle is complete break from imperialist domination. What is involved is a process — one people's victory (as on bases) leading to another. They merge. They are not in watertight compartments. All this affects the relations between all Australian people. Not a huge number at present accept our ultimate aim of socialism. But a far larger number accept independence and sovereignty. Experience of the people is a vital component in revolutionary understanding. Of course there are many, many other considerations but for the moment they can be put on one side.

If it is said that the Communist Party (M-L) and its leaders have had wrong views in the past on such questions or have had different views and changed them, then of course that is true. It is no crime and there is no shame in it provided there is honesty in acknowledging error and striving harder to avoid future error. Today the Communist Party of Australia (M-L) holds and expresses certain political views. There must be confidence in those views which have been formed only after careful considerat-

ion. It is certain that some of them will turn out not to be so correct although everything is done to achieve correctness. Experience and new facts will lead to modification or even radical changes or even somersaults. Everything is in motion. Things change. That includes Communist policy.

There is no point in simply abusing people who question the Communist Party. To do that only intensifies antagonisms. It is very important to avoid being diverted from the struggle to find

correct Communist policy. Therefore a Communist Party cannot spend a disproportionate time in discussing and mulling over errors. While recognising that capitalism moves on, that movement presents new struggles and problems. A Communist Party must get on with the job of serving the people. Part of that is to unite with people on matters on which there can be unity and not put in the forefront matters on which there are division and bitterness. Frank discussion between groups, individuals and Parties with working class connections, with the idea of reaching maximum unity on immediate questions must be encouraged. Ultimate questions take longer to sort out.

Ken Miller's life inspires generations of Australian Communists

Each year the *Australian Communist* marks the April 2 birthday of Ken Miller who died in 1963. This is done because he was a fine example of how a Communist should try to work and live. He inspired the generations of Australian Communists who knew him personally. His life is also an inspiration to the younger generations of Australian Communists.

Miller was a product of the depression of the 1930s. Like others of that period he sought after an explanation, a solution, to the terrible suffering of the Australian people at that time. He found it in Marxism.

From there his life was dedicated to developing a deep understanding of Marxism-Leninism and of seeking to apply it in practice. Those who knew Miller often speak of how vast his grip of Marxism became. He was always active in reading, writing, in thinking about the problems of the Australian people and in practical activity. He took Marxism as the overall system of ideas that it is and combined it with deep study of Australian economy, politics, history, literature, art and other areas.

Miller was a modest man who could mix easily with all types of people. He was widely known and deeply respected by people from many walks of life. His work encompassed many fields. He fought actively against appeasement of the fascists in the pre-World War II days and in many struggles of national significance. He was especially active in his neighbourhood of Richmond (Melbourne).

Miller understood that Communist work is not all big events but is often (even for long periods, usually) concerned with the seemingly painstaking and small. Correct Communist work may often seem remote from Communism. Through it all Miller maintained the optimism and grandness of Marxist vision. He saw ahead and was able to probe sharply into the essence of events and change. He based his life on ordinary people. He listened and learned from them. He served them.

The purpose of remembering Ken Miller each year is not to make a god out of him. Naturally he had his faults like everybody. Nor in remembering him is it suggested that every Communist must "measure up" to him or necessarily model themselves on the details of his life.

What is important is to seek out the Communist spirit in which he lived and struggled.

Ken Miller's work is still vivid in the memory of many Australian Communists. It is preserved in his many writings. His articles and pamphlets are an example of a fine Communist style of writing. Their language is simple and straightforward. They are filled with the fruits of investigation. Fact, analysis and argument are woven together to powerfully bring out the truth. They pierce through the fog and provide the people with clear pointers for action. More should be done to collect together and study the work of Ken Miller. His memory is ever green.

Read

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A Marxist-Leninist Publication.