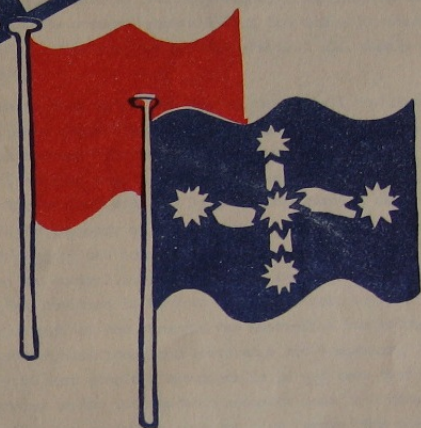


THE REBEL!

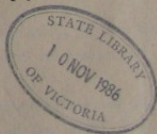
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August 1977



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red eureka movement

Preface

"The Rebel" has received a number of comments on the first issue, mostly verbal and we would like to thank readers for taking the time to offer criticisms and suggestions aimed at improving the publication.

We are starting a letters section in the "Rebel" to encourage readers to send in short comments and suggestions. All correspondence will be either published or answered privately (if the author is known). This is a matter of principle and the time required will simply have to be made available.

One criticism is that we did not live up to our call for lively material which gives direct practical leadership to struggle. We hope that writers can correct this failure in future. The tendency to write in a bad style (stemming from bad politics) must be vigorously fought. We must try to eradicate the jargonistic, sectarian style of writing and use the language of the Australian people. This is part of our campaign Against the idea that "Marxism-Leninism is too complicated for the Australian people and all they can understand is independence". Our position is that we wholeheartedly support and are an active part of the struggle for Australian independence and that Marxist-Leninist ideas and leadership are necessary to win it. In reply to some people's questions it is not true that we think that everyone in the independence movement must be a communist nor is it true that our policy is that the blue Eureka flag must be replaced by a red one. (We don't think the colour is important). What is important is that communists should openly and fearlessly advocate Marxist-Leninist ideas within the independence movement and we shall continue to do so.

Thanks also to the comrade who suggested that articles be double-spaced to make reading and note-making easier. Could people submitting articles in the form of typed stencils please take this into consideration?

The criticism of "The Rebel" has been very encouraging. Please keep it up in accordance with the quotation from Mao which we published in the last issue....

"Once started, a journal must be run conscientiously and well. This is the responsibility of the readers as well as the staff. It is very important for the readers to send in suggestions and write brief letters and articles indicating what they like and dislike, for this is the only way to make the journal a success." (Introducing the Chinese Worker; Selected Works, Vol 2)

The Red Eureka Movement also publishes "Study Notes". Both the "Rebel" and "Study Notes" can be obtained by writing to
R.E.M., c/- 22 Hoyts Crescent, Frankston, Vic. 3199

UNITE ON THE BASIS OF THE PARTY PROGRAM.

Martin Connell.

"Without a program it is impossible for the party to be more or less integral political organization, able always to hold a line through each and every turn of events. Without a tactical line, based on an evaluation of the current political moment and giving exact answers to the 'recursed problems' of the present, it is possible to have a small group of theoreticians, but not an operative political unit."

-V.I. Lenin 18/10/11.

The current General Programme of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) was published in final draft form in "Australian Communist" No. 71. It lays down the general line of the Party until the next Party Congress.

It is a communists duty to carry out the general line of the Party Programme in all his/her work and to jealously defend it against all attempts to negate it, water it down, alter it or sweep it under the carpet. The only body empowered to change any part of the Programme is the highest organ of the Party - the Party Congress.

THE IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE.

What is the immediate objective of the Party? Is it to "win independence from the two Super-powers"? Is it the "establishment of an Australian republic"?

The Party Programme gives the clear answer: "The first stage and the immediate objective is the complete independence of Australia from imperialism and the establishment of revolutionary anti-imperialist people's democratic dictatorship!"

This will not be achieved merely through "mass struggle" or other spontaneous concepts but can only be won by determined revolutionary struggle." (emphasis mine).

Quite clearly, what is at stake is not merely "defending and extending independence", or "profoundly extending independence", but a revolutionary seizure of power by one class from another class from another class. This is the immediate objective of the Party Programme.

THE UNITED FRONT.

"The main political task of the Party is the organization of the broadest united front of revolutionary classes to abolish the remnants of colonialism and to abolish imperialism to achieve national independence. Within the united front the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) maintains its independence and initiative; a policy of principled unity in struggle against the Australian people's enemies and principled independence in carrying out the Party's programme"

The question of principled unity and principled independence is crucial to the conduct of communists in their work in united fronts. Their task is always to fight for the implementation of the Party Programme and unity is conditional on the independence of the communists to do so.

Back in 1902, Lenin clearly pointed out in "What Is To Be Done?":

"...an essential condition for such an alliance (with the bourgeois democrats) must be the full opportunity for the Socialists to reveal to the

...contd.

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to the working class that its interests are diametrically opposed to the interests of the bourgeoisie." (F.L.P. edition p19)

The Party Programme states that the working class must lead the united front, and it is obvious that only a class conscious proletariat with socialist consciousness can actually lead the revolution to victory. Motions such as "no sectional class interest should be able to dominate the broad movement" obviously run counter to the Party Programme.

In "What Is To Be Done?", Lenin explained exactly what happens if communists fall for erroneous positions like this:

"...the Bernsteinian and 'critical' trend to which the majority of the 'Legal Marxists' turned, deprived the Socialists of this opportunity (outlined in the previous quotation) and corrupted socialist consciousness by vulgarizing Marxism by advocating the very theory that social antagonisms were being toned down, by declaring the idea of the social revolution and of the dictatorship of the proletariat to be absurd, by reducing the the working class movement and the class struggle to narrow trade unionism and to a 'realistic' struggle for petty, gradual reforms. This was tantamount to bourgeois democracy denying Socialism's right to independence and, consequently, of its right to existence; in practice it meant striving to convert the nascent working class movement into an appendage of the liberals."

(Ibid. pp 19-20 - emphasis mine)

It can be seen from this how important it is for communists to maintain the Party's independence and initiative, as demanded in the Programme.

A communist is a communist first and above all and he/she is certainly not a patriot or a democrat first and a communist second, third or fourth.

THE ENEMIES OF THE REVOLUTION

The General Programme states that the enemies of the revolution in its current anti-imperialist stage are "the imperialist bourgeoisie and their local collaborators who dominate Australia". The imperialist enemies are notably U.S. imperialism, British imperialism, Japanese imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism...

It clearly points out that "at the present time U.S. imperialism is the most aggressively entrenched but the menace of Soviet social imperialism grows".

Quite obviously, the main thrust of communists in implementing the General Programme is to dig out the "most aggressively entrenched" imperialist bourgeoisie while taking adequate measures to ensure that no other imperialist bourgeoisie becomes entrenched. Attempts to turn this main thrust on its head or to deny that U.S. imperialism is the "most aggressively entrenched" is an attack on the Party's Programme.

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WORLD STRUGGLE

"Fundamental to the programme of the Communist Party of Australia (M-L) is the policy of arming the people to effect and secure the expulsion of imperialism from Australia".

With these words, the General Programme charges communists with actively working for the arming of the people. This involves widespread agitation, education and also preparations. It is not just a phrase to be thrown in every once in a while amongst a whole list of slogans. It is "fundamental" to the Programme. It states that the peoples army must be "under the leadership of the Party..." It must be a politically conscious army with the Marxist-Leninist system of political commissars and Party cells in the basic units.

This concept of arming the people and building an army led directly by the Party should never be confused with petty-bourgeois terrorism and thuggery which, if carried out by the people claiming to be communists, only does the Party and the revolution harm.

THE WORLD REVOLUTION

"The Australian anti-imperialist democratic revolution forms part of the world proletarian socialist revolution."

What should be our attitude toward the peoples wars in East Timor, Britain, Palestine, Cuba, Scudore, Malaya, Philippines, Brazil and many other countries. What is our attitude towards the magnificent revolutionary struggles being led by the Marxist-Leninist Parties in Spain, Chile, Argentina, Portugal, Germany, East Germany, Poland, and elsewhere. What is the Party's relationship with the socialist countries of Albania and China?

The General Programme gives the answer:

"The Party unites with the genuine Marxist-Leninist parties and organisations all over the world, unites with the proletariat, the oppressed peoples and nations of the world and fights together with them to oppose the world domination schemes of U.S. imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism, to overthrow imperialism, modern revisionism and all reaction." There is no talk of "special relationships" here!

The Party Programme is a programme for action for all Australian communists. It must be applied resolutely, boldly, and in all areas. Attacks on it must be fought, no matter where they come from.

Draft Provisional General Programme Of Communist Party Of Australia M-L

The Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) is the political party of the Australian proletariat.

The Communist Party of Australia (M-L) takes Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought as the theoretical basis guiding its thinking.

The Communist Party of Australia (M-L) has as its ultimate aim the classless society of Communism. In order to achieve this aim the Party has a programme of continuing revolution by stages. The first stage and the immediate objective is the complete independence of Australia from imperialism and the establishment of revolutionary anti-imperialist people's democratic dictatorship. Winning independence from imperialism is an essential and first component of socialist revolution in Australia and that independence can only be won by determined revolutionary struggle. The anti-imperialist character of this dictatorship consists of national independence from imperialist domination. The democratic character of this dictatorship consists of genuine democracy in the people's ownership of the means of communication (press, radio, television, halls, streets, etc.) in the people's ownership of the key sections of industry and the means of distribution; in the expropriation and redistribution of the land of the foreign monopolies and their collaborators; in the expropriation of the means of production and distribution owned by the imperialists and their collaborators; in the strict supervision of the production and distribution of Australia's natural resources and in adequate living standards for all useful people.

This new democracy must be defended by a people's army and a people's militia. Fundamental to the programme of the Communist Party of Australia (M-L) is the policy of arming the people to effect and secure the expulsion of imperialism from Australia.

The Communist Party of Australia (M-L) has the task of integrating Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought with the actual conditions in Australia. The main political task of the Party is the organisation of the broadest united front of revolutionary classes to abolish the remnants of colonialism and to abolish imperialism to achieve national independence. Within the united front the Communist Party of Australia (M-L) maintains its independence and initiative; a policy of principled unity in struggle against the Australian people's enemies and principled independence in carry-

ing out the Party's programme. The united front isolates the Australian people's enemies (the imperialist bourgeoisie and their local collaborators who dominate Australia) and organises a people's army under the leadership of the Party to destroy them.

The proletariat is the leading force in this struggle, for it is the class most directly attached to the most advanced means of production, the largest, the best organised and the most oppressed, that is to say, the most thoroughly revolutionary force. Thus the Communist Party of Australia (M-L) strives to unite the working class, working farmers, the middle class, small businessmen, professional people and intellectuals and the patriotic bourgeoisie, to form a united front against imperialism, under the leadership of the working class.

This united front is directed against the imperialist and social-imperialist enemies of Australia. These enemies, notably U.S. imperialism, British imperialism, Japanese imperialism, and Soviet social imperialism aim to dominate and exploit Australia and the Australian people. British imperialism tries to retain its hold on Australia. Japanese imperialism competes with U.S. imperialism. Soviet social-imperialism is beginning its imperialist expansion into Australia. At the present time U.S. imperialism is the most aggressively entrenched, but the menace of Soviet social imperialism grows.

With this understanding of who are our friends and who are our enemies, the Party strives to establish a people's anti-imperialist democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the proletariat and based on the alliance of all strata of the working class and working farmers with democracy for the broad masses of the people opposed to imperialism, and dictatorship over the imperialist bourgeoisie and their local collaborators.

The Australian anti-imperialist democratic revolution forms part of the world proletarian socialist revolution. Without Marxism-Leninism to guide it, this revolution cannot succeed nor move on to the socialist stage.

The Communist Party of Australia (M-L) is composed of the advanced members of the proletariat. Aiming to be the core of leadership of the Australian people, and guided by and integrating Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought with Australian conditions, it is a vigorous vanguard organisation leading the proletariat and revolutionary people in the fight for national independence, people's democratic dictatorship, socialism and ultimately Communism.

By its reconstitution of the Australian Communist Party in 1964, the Communist Party of Australia (M-L) maintains the continuity of the Communist Party from its foundation in 1920. The Marxist-Leninist line of the Communist Party of Australia (M-L) has been strengthened by the struggle against revisionism and left opportunism which continues and will continue.

The Party unites with the genuine Marxist-Leninist Parties and organisations all over the world, unites with the proletariat, the oppressed peoples and nations of the world and fights together with them to oppose the

world domination schemes of U.S. imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism, to overthrow imperialism, modern revisionism and all reaction.

In accordance with its proletarian internationalist line the Communist Party of Australia (M-L) strives for united action of the Australian proletariat with the oppressed people of New Guinea and Oceania in their struggles for independence and freedom from imperialism.

The Party fights without let-up to abolish the system of exploitation of man by man over the globe so that all mankind will be emancipated.

Members of the Communist Party of Australia (M-L) must be honest, open and aboveboard; must study hard and practise Marxism-Leninism and not revisionism; must press for principled unity; must carefully distinguish friends from enemies and handle contradictions appropriately; must be irrefragable in their daily lives, integrating theory with practice and must maintain close ties with the masses and practise criticism and self-criticism. Members of the Communist Party of Australia (M-L) who dedicate their lives to the struggle for Communism, must be resolute, fear no sacrifice and surmount every difficulty to win victory.

WAGES AND UNEMPLOYMENT.

Recently, the Australian Government has come out openly that its economic policy is to achieve a reduction in the real wages of Australian workers. This policy is not new, but it is now official.

At the last national wage case, "plateau indexation" was introduced, which meant that everyone receiving more than the average weekly earnings was not awarded proportionate compensation for the increase in consumer prices. The real wages of these better paid workers (more than one-third of the total work force) were successfully reduced.

Of course this means that the average real wage has also been reduced. So if plateau indexation is applied again, a lower figure for average weekly earnings (in real terms) will be used and an even larger proportion of the work force will have their real wages cut.

If this process was repeated a few times, with a reasonably rapid rate of inflation, it would not be long before everyone was on the minimum wage. Note that it would not end up with everyone on the minimum, because the average level would be reduced each time.

But this is not rapid enough, so the Government has called on the Arbitration Commission to impose even more savage cuts in real wages. "Partial indexation" is proposed, which simply means a cut in real wages across the board. In order to make the Government appear "moderate", the employers demand a complete wage freeze - a even deeper cut across the board. These proposals would not only reduce everyone to the minimum wage much more rapidly, but would also reduce the minimum wage itself.

All this shows the utter treachery of supporting "wage indexation". Far from protecting real wages, it has opened the way to savage attacks on them. The ACTU has been reduced to merely arguing about how deep the cuts should be. Only the most nominal opposition to the principal of some cuts in real wages has been expressed. In reality they support a reduction in real wages and in the general standard of living.

This should not come as a great surprise. In Britain, the Labor Government, on the proposal of the Trades Union Congress (equivalent to ACTU) introduced an even more violent attack on real wages in August 1975. With consumer prices rising at 26% annually, the Labor Government introduced a law restricting pay rises to no more than £6, which was approximately 10% of average weekly earnings.

It was made illegal to grant pay increases greater than this amount. Private firms which did so were to be penalised by refusing permission to increase prices (so much for "price control"). Government enterprises (which are the largest employers in Britain as in Australia), were simply prohibited from granting increases larger than £6.

The official aim of this policy, supported by the trades' unions, was to achieve a cut of at least 10% in real wages. The purpose, again, officially declared and supported by the trades' unions, was to achieve an equivalent increase in company profits.

A pamphlet issued by the Government to all households said: "A great many people will have to suffer some cuts in living standards. The sacrifices called for will not be easy. But the rewards from rapid fall in inflation will help everybody, and open the way to a resumption of economic growth and a return to full employment. The Government believes that the nation - realising the grim alternatives - will accept the sacrifices and play its part in the fight against inflation with courage and determination."

Truly a wonderful "Labor" Government.

The role of the "militant" trade unions was to insist that the full £6 should be paid, since Government policy was that 'this was a 'maximum', and many employers wished to pay less.

The 'left wing' of the Labor Party supported this legislation, and also supported massive cuts in social welfare and other Government spending. They called this 'the Red Flame of Socialist Courage'.

Needless to say, Britain's economic problems have not been solved.

A year later we are only in the preliminary stages of this sort of thing, but the essence is the same. A softening up process has begun with wage indexation and "voluntary restraint". In Britain this was called the "social contract" or "social contract". Real wages fell and unemployment rose while this was going on, but it was only a preliminary to the much more savage attacks now in force.

The British trade unions were able to support the social contract and the £6 limit because most working people are willing to 'make sacrifices' temporarily in order to restore full employment and a resumption of economic growth later on.

No doubt Australian trade unions will be able to do the same.

But the policy has failed in Britain and it will fail here.

The then British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, explained the policy of wage restraint as follows:

"One man's pay rise is not only another man's price rise; it might also cost him his own job - or his neighbours job."

That's despite the fact that British wages and living standards have always been low and declining relative to European, Australian and other capitalist countries.

Exactly the same argument has been used in Australia, both by the former Labor Government and by the present Liberal-Country Party Government. It will be heard more and more.

The argument sounds perfectly plausible. If workers are cheaper, then the capitalists will buy more of them. If workers become expensive, then there will be unemployment.

This is perfectly true, and it is no use denying it. There really is a developing economic crisis in which companies are restricting employment because they are not making enough profits. No recovery from this is possible until companies are able to make more profits, and that also means not until real wages have been reduced. It is nonsense to speak, as the ACTU does, of a "consumer lead recovery". Capitalism is production for profit and you cannot increase profits by paying workers more so that they can buy more!

But although true, the argument is the wrong way round. Under capitalism it is not the level of wages that determines the level of unemployment, but the level of unemployment that determines the level of wages.

Labor power is a commodity like any other. Its price fluctuates around its value in accordance with the law of demand and supply.

If there is full employment and a strong demand for labor by businesses wishing to expand in order to make more profits, then wages will rise. This is not the result of capitalist generosity or a view of their high profits.

but a result of the increased competition for labor. If there is a slackening in the accumulation of capital, and a reduced demand for labor because it is unprofitable to employ workers, then unemployment will grow and wages (real wages) will fall. In appearance the rise in real wages depends on the militancy of workers in their trade union struggles. This is partly true to some extent.

But in essence the strength and weakness of workers and employers in wage disputes depends on the demand for and supply of labour. Trade unions are strong and militant when there is full employment and they are much weaker when unemployment is increasing. They cannot be otherwise within the capitalist system in which their function is to regulate the sale of labor power on the most favorable terms feasible.

Policies of "wage restraint", even when backed by legislation cannot fundamentally alter the situation. By disarming the trade unions, wages can be made a little lower than they would be otherwise.

But if there is not "enough" unemployment (supply of labor power), and "too much" accumulation (demand for labor power), then the employers will bid up wages (the price of labor power), whether the workers ask for more or not. Efforts to "stimulate the economy" mean increased accumulation, and will therefore tend to force up wages.

Although real wages have begun to decline in Australia, they have not declined "enough" for a "healthy" recovery of the capitalist economy. No decision of the Arbitration Commission and no treachery by the trade union leaders can ever make them decline enough (although they can certainly bring about some decline). Only a further increase in unemployment can do that.

Thus it is complete hypocrisy to speak of wage restraint as an alternative to unemployment. On the contrary unemployment is the only mechanism capitalism has to enforce reductions in real wages.

The aim of "wage restraint" or "wage indexation" is simply to soften people up and demoralise them so that they will accept increased unemployment, which will really enforce substantial reductions in real wages.

There are only two ways out of the capitalist economic crisis. One is to actually have the crisis, which would be worse than the last depression in the 1930's. Then real wages would certainly be forced down, surpluses capital would be destroyed and forces would be set in motion which would lead to a new boom... and a new crash (possibly aided by a war). So far all the major capitalist countries have been striving their utmost to avoid this situation. They know that the 1970s are not the 1930s, and capitalism might not survive another great depression. But every measure they take only serves to postpone the crisis and at the same time intensify it. The crisis of overproduction cannot be resolved until it has been allowed to actually break out.

The other way out is revolution.

There is no third way. The rich cannot be made to pay. They do not produce anything so they have nothing to pay with except the products of our labor. The rich must be overthrown.

ALAN WARD

WOMEN AND THE AUSTRALIAN REVOLUTION

There has been a lot of discussion recently centring around what role women's organisations should play in the Australian revolution, and whether, in fact, there is a need for a women's organisation.

Many comrades appear to have confused ideas about the work of Marxist-Leninists with women and within organisations of women. It has been said that there is currently no need to fight manifestations of sexism or to form a women's organisation, for these are divisive and will cause splits in the movement, and that women will achieve liberation by struggling with men for national independence. In addition, it has been argued that if there is an organisation of women it must confine itself to only mentioning independence for to mention socialism will alienate women. But these arguments are not Marxist-Leninist arguments!

Under capitalism women are very useful when kept in subjugation. Being isolated in the confines of the home and having few social contacts and little or no involvement in the workplace encourages political backwardness. (An example of this is that women sometimes successfully prevent their husbands from taking political action, e.g., strike action). But most importantly, however, women provide cheap labor for menial tasks which can be used at the capitalist's desire - if he needs their labor they are given jobs, but when they are no longer profitable to employ, women are retrenched back to their "rightful place" as wife and mother. For example, in times of war or labor shortages women are encouraged to work, childcare is arranged and the media pushes the idea that children will be well cared for and make greater psychological progress if in a group situation from an early age. But on the other hand, when women are required no longer in the workforce, everything possible is done to convince women that they are depriving their children of a sound psychological upbringing if they dare to seek employment, and thus childcare for their children. Whether in the home or at work, women are at the beck and call of the capitalists.

Where capitalism exists women cannot be the equal of men. Even under people's democracy and socialism women must continue to struggle for equality.

Capitalist society tries to perpetuate the cultural, ideological, moral and religious oppression of women for it serves their interests to have women seen as, and themselves believing that they are, useless "blobs" who are to be ordered around by the "boss" (be he husband or employer) and that they deserve the most menial, degrading work either in the home or the workplace. Working class women are therefore oppressed in a double way. Firstly, they are oppressed by "household slavery". Housework, being petty, repetitive and isolated from other people, does not lead to any social development of women, in fact, it has the negative effect of stifling their ability to struggle. Within the home women are generally also oppressed by their husbands who are the "lords and masters" while the women are simply there to serve. Secondly, working class women are oppressed because of their class. If a woman is at home and therefore dependent on her working class husband she has, for example, the problems of trying to "make ends meet" and provide basic food, clothing and education for the family from the low wages that he receives. But if women are working, then they are subjected to the open exploitation of the capitalists. When women work, however, experiences at the workplace show that the power of mass action. With this knowledge, many women try to work out a plan of action to free themselves, and all women, from both forms of oppression.

For the complete emancipation of women the whole basis of society must be changed so that power rests with the working class, and the household work must be socialised too. Public catering and laundry services, nurseries and childcare facilities must be established. Petty individual domestic services and therefore large scale, socialised housekeeping will be transformed into will become obvious that the remaining home tasks should be shared between men and women, for both will be working and contributing to

6
conditioning. The stage-typed roles of both men and women will change as attitudes are remoulded, and women will begin to win equality.

But how do we jump from capitalism to this new system where women have equality with men?

The struggle for women's emancipation MUST be linked with the principle *via* - proletarian dictatorship - for one without the other is impossible. (Lenin: "The proletariat cannot achieve complete liberty until it has won complete liberty for women.")

So women must struggle to overcome their oppression by struggling for socialism. To simply raise the slogan of "independence" is to offer women nothing and in fact may divert them from struggling for genuine independence and socialism. Independence, without a revolutionary change in the social structure offers nothing for the working class or for women. Capitalism is not challenged and the leading role of the working class is not mentioned. Independence is a step on the way to socialism and therefore must be fought for, but what this independence really is must be clearly explained. A pamphlet, "Continuing Revolution By Stages", published by the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) throws a lot of light on this question. It says: "The first stage of the Australian revolution is the anti-imperialist, national democratic stage which involves the unity in struggle of all Australian anti-imperialists led by the workers and aimed at expelling the imperialists, defeating the local collaborators with the imperialists, socialising their factories, mines, etc. taking over other key sections of the economy, establishing democracy with real content. This is the stage of people's democratic dictatorship. Through it, the struggle for complete socialism goes on and through that, the struggle for communism goes on..... We are dealing with class struggle against a definite enemy, aimed at stealing state political power from that enemy and establishing people's power."

Women are suffering under humiliations and degradations imposed by the bourgeoisie to keep them "under the thumb". There is a crying need to show women that Communists are aware of their oppression, that we hate it, that we'll encourage and help women do something about it.

Lenin says: "The party must have organs - working groups, commissions, committees, sections or whatever they may be called - with the specific purpose of rousing the broad masses of women, bringing them into contact with the Party and keeping them under its influence. This naturally requires that we carry out systematic work among the women. We must teach the awakened women, win them over for the proletarian class struggle under the leadership of the Communist Party, and equip them for it..... We must have our own group to work among them, special methods of agitation, special forms of organisation. This is not bourgeois individualism; it is a practical revolutionary expediency." (p. 110-111, "On The Emancipation Of Women"; emphasis mine)

Lenin is arguing for systematic work in an organised fashion to be carried out with women to ensure that women's struggles follow a Marxist-Leninist political line and therefore serves the advancement of the revolution. But has the Marxist-Leninist position been put to women in Australia in a systematic and organised way?

To begin with, despite the lip-service given to the place of women in the revolution, it often happens that women are repressed within the progressive movement. Often their opinions are not valued, they are relegated to menial jobs like typing and they are seen only as an actual or potential appendage of a man. Even where there is no such discrimination against women it is usually the case that women are allowed "to find their own level" instead of being actively encouraged to break out of capitalist sex-role conditioning and play their proper part. As well, women and men are intimidated by the "private club" atmosphere prevailing over many progressive organisations. (It is elementary but needs saying

that if someone now comes to a meeting the correct thing to do is to say hello and introduce him/hor to everyone else, instead of giving them a cold glance and ignoring them.)

Tolerance of sexist practices, attitudes, jokes and so on, on the grounds that after the revolution things will be different is as communistic as toleration of racism or fascism. This sort of liberalism sabotages the revolutionary movement and is correctly seen by ordinary people as sickening hypocrisy.

Marxism-Leninism has not been pushed in the women's movement in a systematic, organised way. Individuals have certainly tried to give correct revolutionary leadership, but have not been able to fight the organised revisionists and bourgeois feminists. The women's movement has therefore degenerated into a thoroughly bourgeois one. Marxist-Leninists have fallen into the revisionist trap of failure to struggle thereby allowing bourgeois domination of the women's movement simply because we did not take concerted action to fight for the correct political line, or even to become involved with women's organisations and women who were struggling over specific issues. We should be concerned with the well being of women and fight their exploitation and oppression rather than forgetting this vital section of the revolutionary forces.

Work within the women's movement is imperative. We should try to make it a vital and revolutionary movement rather than a bourgeois "social club" where revisionists idle away time and the desire to struggle. (Unity on the lowest common denominator is not principled unity.) Similarly, we must not fall into the revisionist trap of labelling women's organisations superfluous because they concentrate on women's problems, or that women should only participate in general organisations. These points of view hinder women in their struggle to acquire and defend their legitimate rights, turn attention away from the seizure of state power, and undermine socialism.

Organisation of women is not a spontaneous thing. Communists must give a lead so that correct leadership is given. If we leave women to be organised by bourgeois womens groups then we are working against the revolution. All Communists must, therefore, see it as their duty to rouse women to action, to work with women both in the general movement and in separate organisations, to draw a clear picture of how women can win liberation only through socialism, to lead women in struggle, to prepare for the revolution.

Susan Cook

Extract from History of the CPSU (B), Short Course. The First Part of Section Two of Chapter Five.

A powerful instrument used by the Bolsheviks Party to strengthen its organizations and to spread its influence among the masses was the Bolshevik daily newspaper Pravda (Truth), published in St. Petersburg. It was founded according to Lenin's instructions, on the initiative of Stalin, Olminsky and Polevaya. Pravda was a mass working class paper founded simultaneously with the new kind of the revolutionary movement. Its first issue appeared on April 22, 1912.

Previous to the appearance of Pravda, the Bolsheviks already had a weekly newspaper called Zvezda, intended for advanced workers. Zvezda played an important part at the time of the Lena events. It printed a number of trenchant political articles by Lenin and Stalin which mobilized the working class for the struggle. But in view of the rising revolutionary tide, a weekly newspaper no longer met the requirements of the Bolshevik Party. A daily mass political newspaper designed for the broadest sections of the workers was needed. Pravda was such a newspaper.

Pravda played an exceptionally important part at this period. It gained support for Bolshevism among masses of the working class. Because of incessant police persecution, fines, and confiscations of issues due to the publication of articles and letters not to the liking of the censor, Pravda could exist only with the active support of tens of thousands of advanced workers. Pravda was able to pay the huge fines only thanks to large collections made among the workers. Not infrequently, considerable portions of confiscated issues of Pravda nevertheless found their way into the hands of readers, because the more active workers would come to the printing shop at night and carry away bundles of newspapers.

The tsarist government suppressed Pravda eight times in the space of two and a half years; but each time, with the support of the workers, it reappeared under a new but similar name, e.g., Za Pravdu (For Truth), Put Pravdy (Path of Truth), Trubovaya Pravda (Labour Truth).

While the average circulation of Pravda was 40,000 copies per day, the circulation of Izvestiya (News), the Menshevik daily, did not exceed 15,000 or 16,000.

The workers regarded Pravda as their own newspaper; they had great confidence in it and were very responsive to its calls. Every copy was read by scores of workers, passing from hand to hand; it moulded their class consciousness, organized them, and summoned them to the struggle.

What did Pravda write about? Every issue contained dozens of letters from workers describing their life, the savage exploitation and the various forms of oppression and humiliation they suffered at the hands of the capitalist managers and foremen. These were trenchant and telling indictments of capitalist conditions. Pravda often reported cases of suicide of unemployed and starving workers who had lost hope of ever finding jobs again.

Pravda wrote of the needs and the demands of the workers of various factories and branches of industry, and told how the workers were fighting for their demands. About every issue contained reports of strikes at various factories. In 1912, and protracted strikes, the newspaper helped to organize collections among the workers of other factories and branches of industry for the support of the strikers.

Sometimes tens of thousands of rubles were collected for the strike funds, more than 70 or 80 kopeks per day. This fostered a spirit of proletarian solidarity among the workers and their consciousness of the unity of interests of all workers.

The workers reacted to every political event, to every victory or defeat, by sending to Pravda letters, greetings, protests, etc. In its articles Pravda dealt with the tasks of the working class movement from a consistent Bolshevik standpoint. A legally published newspaper could not call openly for the overthrow of tsardom. It had to resort to hints, which, however, the class-conscious workers understood very well, and which they explained to the masses. When, for example, Pravda wrote of the "full and uncurtailed demands of the Year Five,"

this meant the revolutionary slogans of the workers understood that the Bolsheviks, namely, the overthrow of tsardom, a democratic republic, the confiscation of the landed estates, and an 8 hour day.

Pravda organized the advanced workers on the eve of the elections to the Fourth Duma. It exposed the treacherous position of those who advocated an agreement with the liberal bourgeoisie, the advocates of the "Stolypin Labour Party" - the Mensheviks. Pravda called upon the workers to vote for those who advocated the "full and uncurtailed demands of the Year Five", that is the Bolsheviks. The elections were indirect, held in a series of stages: first meetings of workers elected delegates; then these delegates chose electors; and it was those electors who participated in the election of the workers' deputies to the Duma. On the day of the elections the electors Pravda published a list of Bolshevik candidates and recommended the workers to vote for this list. The list could not be published earlier without exposing those on the list to the danger of arrest.

Pravda helped to organize the mass actions of the proletariat. At the time of a big lock-out in St Petersburg in the spring of 1914, when it was obedient to call a mass strike, Pravda called upon the workers to resort to other forms of struggle, such as mass meetings in the factories and demonstrations in the streets. This could not be stated openly in the newspaper. But the call was understood by the class conscious workers when they read an article by Lenin bearing the modest title "Forms of the Working-Class Movement" and stating that at the given moment strikes should yield place to a higher form of the working-class movement - which meant a call to organize meetings and demonstrations.

In this way the illegal revolutionary activities of the Bolsheviks were combined with legal forms of agitation and organization of the masses of the workers through Pravda.

Pravda not only wrote of the life of the workers, their strikes and demonstrations, but also regularly described the life of the peasants, the famines from which they suffered, their exploitation by the feudal landlords. It described how as a result of the Stolypin "reform" the kulak farmers robbed the peasants of the best parts of their land. Pravda drew the attention of the class conscious workers to the widespread and burning discontent in the countryside. It taught the proletariat that the objectives of the Revolution of 1905 had not been attained, and that a new revolution was impending. It taught that in this revolution the proletariat must act as the real leader and guide of the people; and that in this revolution it would have so powerful an ally as the revolutionary peasantry.

The Mensheviks worked to get the proletariat to drop the idea of revolution, to stop thinking of the people, of the starvation of the peasants, of the domination of the Black-Hundred feudal landlords, and to fight only for "freedom of association"; to present "petitions" to this effect to the tsarist government. The Bolsheviks explained to the workers that this Menshevik gospel of renunciation of revolution, renunciation of an alliance with the peasantry, was being preached in the interests of the bourgeoisie, that the workers would most certainly defeat tsardom if they won over the peasantry as their ally, and that bad shepherds like the Mensheviks should be driven out as enemies of the revolution.

...Through workers connected with the countryside, Pravda found its way into the villages and roused the politically advanced peasants to a revolutionary struggle.

At the time Pravda was founded the illegal Social-Democrat organizations were entirely under the direction of the Bolsheviks. On the other hand, the legal forms of organization, such as the Duma groups, the press, the sick benefit societies, the trade unions, had not yet been fully wrested from the Mensheviks. The Bolsheviks had to wage a determined struggle to drive the Liquidators out of the legally existing organizations of the working class. Thanks to Pravda, this fight ended in victory.

Pravda stood in the centre of the struggle for the party principle, for the building up of a mass working-class revolutionary party. Pravda rallied the legally existing organizations around the illegal centres of the Bolshevik Party and directed the working class movement towards one definite aim - preparation for revolution.

Pravda had a vast number of worker correspondents. In one year alone it printed over eleven thousand letters from workers. But it was not only by letters that Pravda maintained contact with the working masses. Numbers of workers from the factories visited the editorial office every day. In the Pravda editorial office were concentrated large shares of the organizational work of the Party. Here

meetings were arranged with representatives of the Party; these reports were received of Party work in the mills and factories; and from here were transmitted the instructions of the St Petersburg Committee and the Central Committee of the Party.

As a result of the two and a half years of persistent struggle against the Liquidators for the building up of a mass revolutionary working-class party, by the summer of 1914 the Bolsheviks had succeeded in winning the support of four-fifths of the politically active workers of Russia for the Bolshevik Party and for the Pravda tactics. This was borne out, for instance, by the fact that out of a total number of 7,000 workers' groups which collected money for the labour press in 1914, 5,600 groups collected for the Bolshevik press, and only 1,400 groups for the Menshevik press. But, on the other hand, the Mensheviks had a large number of "rich friends" among the liberal bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intelligentsia who advanced over half the funds required for the maintenance of the Menshevik newspaper.

The Bolsheviks at that time were called "Pravdists". A whole generation of the revolutionary proletariat was reared by Pravda, the generation which subsequently made the October Socialist Revolution. Pravda was backed by tens and hundreds of thousands of workers. During the rise of the revolutionary movement (1912-14) the solid foundation was laid of a mass Bolshevik Party, a foundation which no persecution by tsardom could destroy during the imperialist war.

"The Pravda of 1912 was the laying of the cornerstone of the victory of Bolshevism in 1917" (Stalin)

VETERANS ARE NOT FOOL-PROOF. (Some notes on Plekhanov)

- Gavin McGann.

Georgi Valentinovich Plekhanov (1856-1918) is correctly regarded as the father of Russian Marxism.

He founded the first Russian Marxist group, the "Emancipation of Labour" group in April 1885; Frederick Engels wrote of Plekhanov's group in April 1885;

"First of all I repeat to you that I am proud to know that there is a party among the youth of Russia which frankly and without equivocation accepts the great economic and historical theories of Marx and has decisively broken with all the anarchists and more or less Slavophil traditions of its predecessors and Marx himself would have been equally proud of this had he lived a little longer. It is an advance which will be of great importance for the revolutionary development of Russia."

(Marx-Engels "Selected Correspondence" Progress Publishers. 1965 pp. 383-384)

At the time when Plekhanov formed the "Emancipation of Labour" group the most firmly entrenched and widespread revolutionary activity in Russia was that of the Narodniks (Populists) who were opponents of Marxism. Plekhanov himself had been a Narodnik before he embraced Marxism.

The first task of the "Emancipation of Labour" group was the dissemination of the basic teachings of Marx and Engels on scientific socialism. They translated into Russian works such as "The Communist Manifesto", "Wage-Labour and Capital" and "Socialism-Utopian and Scientific" printed them abroad and secretly circulated them inside Russia. This was an important and necessary task in developing Russian Marxism and in combatting the petty-bourgeois ideology of the Narodniks.

Plekhanov himself wrote a number of Marxist works which expounded the basic principles of Marxism and repudiated the Narodnik philosophy. Among these were "Socialism and the Political Struggle", "Our Differences" and "On the Development of the Monistic View of History". Engels was favourably impressed with "Our Differences" and Lenin noted that "On the Development of the Monistic View of History" (published in 1895) served to "rear a whole generation of Russian Marxists". (Quoted in "History of the C.P.S.U. (B)", p. 12.)

In a letter to some Bulgarian Marxists in June 1893, Engels spoke of socialists "who answer the tsarist proclamations with the socialist works of the Russian champions of the proletariat. It has given me great pleasure to see Plekhanov's works translated into Bulgarian." ("Selected Correspondence" p. 458)

By the turn of the century, it could be said of Plekhanov that he was a veteran Marxist leader who had made magnificent contributions to the development of Russian Marxism - contributions that could never be negated. It would have even been fairly accurate, although probably sycophantic to say that the name of G.V. Plekhanov was synonymous with revolution in Russia.

But unfortunately, the story of G.V. Plekhanov did not end on this revolutionary note. By the time of the 1905 revolution the father of Russian Marxism had become one of the principle revisionist leaders at the head of the Menshevik wing of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party who took the stand of the liberal bourgeoisie and opposed the leadership of the proletariat.

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while the Russian proletariat was engaged in an armed insurrection against the tsarist autocracy, Plekhanov stood on the sidelines condemning the workers for taking up arms "prematurely" and accusing the bolsheviks of frightening the bourgeoisie into the arms of the counter-revolution through their resolute actions.

Lenin replied to these arguments:
"In order that it may be consistently carried to its conclusion, our democratic revolution must rely on such forces as are capable of paralysing the inevitable inconsistency of the bourgeoisie, i.e. capable precisely of causing it to recoil from the revolution." (quoted in history of the C.S.S.U. (b) p.69. And he commented on Plekhanov's revisionism:

"The social-liberal, Cadet bourgeoisie is carrying both Bernstein and Plekhanov shoulder high, praising them to the skies, advertising them, reprinting their writings for the services they are rendering it in its struggle against the proletariat." (Collected Works, Vol.10, p471).

G.V.Plekhanov remained a Menshevik revisionist until his death in 1918. His many years of outstanding service to the Russian proletariat and Marxism is an historical fact which Lenin and Stalin frequently acknowledged. But a number of decades as a Marxist is certainly not any foolproof insurance policy against deserting Marxism at some later date. Attempts to put forward the idea that veterans are somehow infallible purely on the basis of their past contributions is certainly an idealist appeal to blind faith which should be rejected as such.

People who do put forward this idea try to present themselves as being loyal and keen to be defending the veteran concerned. They think that being a sycophant is the same as being a communist. In reality to support a comrade's political line regardless of whether it is right or wrong is liberalism and betrays both the revolutionary movement and the comrade concerned. Real loyalty to veteran revolutionaries is just like real loyalty to all your comrades. It requires that you honestly criticise their mistakes (as well as your own) while supporting their good points with the object of strengthening the revolutionary movement for which veteran communists especially have worked so hard.

If we can learn anything from the example of G.V.Plekhanov, the father of Russian Marxism, it must surely be that the only way to assess any policy is whether or not it furthers the interests of the proletariat, and not on the past record of the author of the policy.