

# australian marxist review

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## Theoretical journal of the Socialist Party of Australia

- ★ *On the Australian Labor Party*
- ★ *Building a revolutionary Party*
- ★ *World position of the Australian nation*
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# **Australian MARXIST Review**

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# On the Australian Labor Party

(The Central Committee meeting of June 9, 10 and 11 decided to publish the following statement on the role and character of the Australian Labor Party and the importance of developing united front activity between the SPA and ALP. Views and discussion invited).

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

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

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

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

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

The Labor Party is an important component of the Australian Labor movement. It emerged from the trade unions and the then existing forms of socialist and associated political bodies as the Australian workers recognised that they had to struggle for social advance by political,

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

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

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

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

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

Some sections of the ALP left seek to base themselves on a socialist outlook but any substantial, consistent and cohesive influence based on the scientific, socialist ideology of Marxism-Leninism is absent.

Lack of development of such understanding of scientific socialism is a fundamental limitation of the Labor Party. The Labor Party is a two class party not only in composition and political character but a party which, while holding substantial working class support, is

decisively dominated by variants of the ideology of the capitalist class.

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

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

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

It is also important to establish close relations with those members of the Labor Party who support policies with varying levels of socialist content. These members can be a consequences of capitalism's recurrent economic crises become more widely recognised.

### CONCLUSIONS

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

- ★ The Labor Party and its policies reflect dual class interests.
- ★ The ideology of the ALP is reformism, that is, bourgeois ideology in the ranks of the working class.
- ★ The ALP's working class links arise from the mixed origins of the ALP which include trade unions and some non-Marxist socialist groupings.
- ★ The membership of the ALP today includes many workers and it retains substantial support from the trade unions, many of which

are affiliated with it and there is constituted participation in the ALP of these organisations. Those facts plus factors of a traditional character result in substantial support for the ALP from working class forces.

- ★ That support is strengthened by ALP policies of reforms which, while not in any way threatening the continuation of the system of capitalism, reflect some of the interests of workers within that system.
- ★ The Platform of the ALP is not related to scientific socialist concepts. Some members of the ALP profess an adherence to Marxist concepts and advance views on socialism which are much more developed than those contained in the official Party Platform, but they do not extend their Marxist concepts to an understanding of the need for a Party separate from the parties of capitalism.
- ★ The policies of economic and social reform put forward by the ALP, Labor's generally progressive foreign policy for detente, expanded trade with the socialist countries, an end to the arms race and world peace together with support by sectors of the ALP for certain concepts of a socialist future for Australia provide a wide basis for unity of action between the ALP and the SPA.

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

★ ★ ★

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

# Building a revolutionary Party

by P. SYMON  
General Secretary,  
Socialist Party of Australia

**The historic task before us is to build the Socialist Party of Australia into a revolutionary Party of the working class and to prepare the necessary forces for socialist transformation in Australia. No socialist and communist can set any lesser objective without compromising our aims. The draft Political Resolution before our 3rd Congress aims to take the Party further along this path.**

It is important and necessary in such a resolution to correctly analyse the present national and international situation to provide the basis on which to project our work for today and tomorrow but it is not these aspects of the Political Resolution that concerns this article.

The present purpose is to discuss what must be done to strengthen the SPA as a revolutionary Party?

## **1. The leading role of the Party.**

We must substantiate the leading role of the Party. There is often verbal acceptance or assertion of this concept while in practice there is a subjugation or submergence of the Party's role. It becomes, in practice, secondary to the work of one or another broader public organisation and is relegated into the background.

The working class and the progressive and democratic forces create a great variety of organisations in their struggle against capitalism but not one of these organisations can replace the leading ideological and organisational role which can only be played by a political party.

All other organisations confine themselves to particular aspects of the struggle to satisfy the needs of the people.

On the other hand a political party does not content itself with limited aims but with overall class needs — in our case the class needs of the workers.

To quote Lenin: *"...in order that the bulk of a certain class may*

*learn to understand its interests and its position, in order that it may learn to pursue its own policies, requires precisely that the advanced elements of this class should be organised immediately and at all costs even if these elements at first constitute a negligible part of the class.”* (Lenin Collected Works Vol 19 p. 409)

We also have to determine the direction and content of the work of such a Party.

As long as the working class wages an economic struggle the bourgeoisie does not see any great danger to itself but when the working class organises **politically** and sets its course for the transformation of society the ruling class shows real concern.

To quote Lenin again: *“Only a political party of the working class, i.e., a Communist Party, is capable of uniting, educating and organising such a vanguard of the proletariat and the whole mass of the working people, a vanguard which is alone able to resist the inevitable petty-bourgeois vacillations of this mass, the inevitable traditions and relapses of trade-unionist narrowness of trade unionist prejudices amidst the proletariat, and to lead all the joint activities of the whole proletariat, i.e., to lead the proletariat politically and through it to lead all the masses of the working people.”* (Lenin Collected Works Vol 32 p. 246)

## **2. The Party as a working class party**

There is general acceptance of this concept and most Party members are of working class origin but there is often a gap between the acceptance of the objective and the necessary implementation of steps to make it a reality.

For the Party to lead masses of workers it must have very close connections with the workers — live their lives and struggles and be deeply concerned with everything that agitates the minds of the people.

Our Party membership is generally united around the Program and policies already adopted and this is a fundamental necessity. The next step is to step up our propagandist work and build our organisations. But where? The priority must be given to the establishment of the Party deep in the ranks of the working class. That means building the Party organisations in the factories, institutions and industries. Once this has been done the Party will be capable of leading the working class into action for its demands including far reaching demands which lead to the revolutionary transformation of society.

Let me make a differentiation here between masses led into action under trade union leadership and under **Party leadership**.

Trade unions will and do play a vital part in the mobilisation and

leadership of the working class but they cannot and do not replace the political leadership role which can only be fulfilled by a political party.

Lenin put this idea very clearly : *“Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers **only from without**, that is, only from outside the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers. The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships of **all classes and strata to the state and the government, the sphere of the interrelations between all classes.**”* (Lenin, *“What is to be Done”*).

### **3. The Party as a Marxist-Leninist party.**

It has often been said that the communist movement in Australia is very practical; also that the labour movement is a movement without books.

This is only too true. It really means that we have a Party and a labour movement that pays little heed to theory. There is a great deal of activity and we conduct many campaigns but if **at the same time** we do not spend time on analysis both before and after, we may advance wrong policies, adopt wrong tactics and have our priorities wrong.

Following every campaign there should be a check-up and a critical review of the experience. In this way we combine theory and practice and enrich our theory and understanding following each event.

Our Party program and resolutions have emphasised this priority task on many occasions but it must be admitted that we have not yet really changed the situation.

The draft Political Resolution raises the matter again. It says: *“The experience of many countries shows that socialism has been won and built only where the revolutionary social forces have been led by a Communist Party guided by the theory of scientific socialism.”*

The draft paraphrases Marx’s well-known saying that in the past philosophers have studied the world but the task is to change it. We say *“But to change the world it is necessary to know it and consequently study of all aspects of society is an important condition of success.”*

The ideological struggle has always been sharp but is assuming even more importance today and is becoming very intense.

We have to fight our way through a welter of forms and adaptations of idealist philosophy which is the class ideology of the bourgeoisie. Not only do we have to confront the direct assaults of the capitalist class

but the increasing attacks from the rear so to speak, from the Trotskyists, Maoists, Euro-communists, and so on.

Reformism is also a very strong ideological trend among the Australian working class. There are those who approach things from a subjective, pragmatic or eclectic point of view. Anarchism has an influence too.

We have to combat all of these wrong ideas and defeat them in ideological struggle. Each one of them acts as a diversion and would lead the working class to defeat or puts a break on its development.

#### **4. Strategy and tactics**

Although the question of strategy and tactics is not specifically dealt with in the draft political resolution, never-the-less, we must put the draft to a critical test in the pre-Congress discussion. We have to test the correctness of its overall approach; does it set out the right strategical tasks and propose the right tactics, does it have the right priorities and give the proper emphasis to the various activities and tasks?

Strategy relates to the most general tasks of a given historical period, the class forces necessary to fulfil these tasks, the question of allies, etc., while tactics refer to objectives and the methods and forms of struggle in the short term. Tactics are a part of strategy but are subordinate to it. Tactics may change a number of times according to the ebb and flow of the struggle even in pursuit of an unchanged strategical aim.

Sometimes strategy and tactics are mixed up and this leads to confusion.

We have to determine the main issues on the solution of which special efforts should be concentrated:

“One must be able at each particular moment to find the particular link in the chain which one must grasp with all one’s might in order to hold the whole chain and to prepare firmly for the transition to the next link.” (Lenin Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 274)

A Marxist-Leninist party must be a scientific party, understanding the objective laws of the development of society and especially having a knowledge of the laws of the class struggle. If we replace such an approach by subjective considerations and wishes, and chase after this or that current fad or merely improvise, we will fail.

The purpose of this article is, therefore, to encourage a critical and inquiring attitude which is not only necessary for the success of the

pre-Congress discussion but is a method which should be used at all times.

This approach is also necessary if we are to build our Party into a revolutionary Party capable of fulfilling its responsibilities.

There is very much more to be said about the Congress documents but these are some important points for consideration.

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*The 3rd Congress of the Socialist Party of Australia will be held in Sydney between September 29 and October 2.*

*The 3rd Congress will be a major event in the history of the SPA.*

*All members and supporters are invited to participate in discussion of the draft documents; to help mark the 3rd Congress as a major step forward by intensifying activity in support of SPA policies and helping build the Party.*

*More new members, new readers of our press, better attention to education, more efficient organisation and fulfilment of the Special Congress Fund of \$30,000 are activities in which all can play a part.*

# What is the world position of the Australian Nation?

PRE-CONGRESS DISCUSSION

by VIC WILLIAMS

**There are two different assessments of the world position of Australia in the Program of the Socialist Party of Australia adopted in 1975. Page 5 says:**

“Australia is herself a middle-sized imperialist power with considerable and growing overseas investments ... because of its advanced industry, food production and abundant natural power resources and the difficulties of its rivals holds the promise of becoming stronger. The concrete feature of Australian imperialism is the export of capital.”

Page 42 on National independence:

“At no time in its history has Australia been free from economic domination and exploitation ... the penetration of other aspects of Australian life flows from the economic dominance of overseas investors. There is persistent offensive against the best of Australia’s cultural life by a combination of local and overseas private monopoly and reactionary political organisations. In addition to the economic and cultural dominance go the political and military ties which secure the foreign interests. During the first forty years following Australia’s federation, Governments blindly followed the policies of British imperialism. After the Second World War Governments have pursued the “American Alliance.”

These different assessments can lead to different estimations of the main directions of struggle. Although on Page 5 the extensive investments from imperialist countries and the political and economic influence are recognised, the struggle outlined is against state-monopoly capitalism and is interrelated with the struggle of the people exploited by Australian neo-colonialism.

Page 42 give the struggle of the Australian working class, also reflected to some extent by the ALP, to include the aim of “real national independence of Australia free from foreign capitalist exploitation and subservience.”

“Problems of the Communist Movement” Progress Publishers 1975 page 253 defines countries of medium and low capitalist development and states that “most of these countries may be characterised as

states of dependent capitalism.

While being formally legally independent, they are financially, economically, militarily, politically and ideologically dependent on the international monopolies and comprise subordinate elements in the world capitalist system.” “From the standpoint of methodology the definition is extremely important because in its neo-colonialist policy international imperialism pursues not only purely economic but also strategic aims, one of which is to keep the states of dependent capitalism within the orbit of its socio-economic and military strategic domination ... since all these countries are in one way or another dependent on the imperialist states and international monopolies economically, financially and politically, one of their main contradictions is with imperialism. The revolutionary struggle ... acquires an anti-imperialist orientation ... In these countries then are distinctions in the combination of the anti-imperialist, democratic and socialist objectives, distinctions that are determined not only by the development level but also by the place a given country occupies in the capitalist system, by its historically-shaped links and even geographical location.”

Since the position of these countries can determine the first major objective, anti-imperialist, democratic or socialist, of the Marxist-Leninist parties in these countries, it is very important to carefully assess the particular and present position of the Australian nation.

The question, is Australia a middle-sized imperialist power, or a dependent country of medium capitalist development needs to be asked in several ways.

Has Australia an advanced industry or is it economically dependent? What is the direction it is taking?

Australian industry in 69 produced 30% of the GNP. By 72-73 it had dropped to 26%. In 69 it employed 28% of the workforce, but by 72-73 it was only 23%. The majority of workers are in light industry.

Manufactured goods accounted for 21% of exports in 73, 23% in 75. New Zealand takes a quarter of Australia's manufactured goods. About \$1500 million of the exports were iron and steel, non-ferrous metals, machinery including electrical goods and transport equipment. This was overbalanced by imports of these same items of \$3,360 millions. Australian industry is at such a level that in 74-75 industrial exports were \$2,300 millions, and industrial imports \$6,300 million. In 70-71 less than ½ per cent of the tonnage of ships in Australian overseas trade was Australian owned — a sharp reminder of lack of independence.

The pamphlet *Australia Uprooted* claimed there was a build up in the mining industry and a dismantling of the manufacturing industry. It gives no figures on this. Mining production, however, has gone from \$1,100 million in 69 to \$1,980 million in 73. *Australia Uprooted*, quoting Heavy Engineering Manufacturers Association Report 1976, shows that only 25% of Australian industrial plant is less than ten years old, compared with Japan 62%, West Germany 56%. The Australian expenditure on capital plant and equipment as part of GNP was only 10%, compared with Japan 37%, West Germany 26%.

Treasury Economic Paper No 1 May 72 showed that overseas investments in 70-71 were \$336 million in mining and oil exploration and only \$257 million in industry. *Australian Year Book 76-77* figures show the reason. While average wages in mining were \$7000 a year, value added per worker was \$31,000 a year, but in manufacturing the average wage was \$5,300 and value added was a little less than \$10,000 a year per worker. Treasury Economic Paper No 1 May 72 gives percentage control of manufacturing industries by overseas capital in 66-67. — Motor vehicles etc 88%, non-ferrous metals 84%, Oil minerals, 82%, industrial and heavy chemicals, acids 78%. Of the \$10,260 million of foreign capital invested in Australia between 47 and 71, 44% was British, 39% USA and Canadian. Total in 70-71 was \$1493 million compared with \$967 million raised in Australia. Australian industry is not advanced and is very considerably dependent on overseas capital. Australia is economically and financially dependent on imperialist powers.

Has Australia considerable and growing overseas investments? What of the promise of becoming stronger?

Treasury Economic Paper No 1 May 72 shows that Australian investments overseas from 47 to 71 totalled \$625 million, only 6% of foreign capital coming into Australia at the same time. A big increase from \$50 million in 68-69 to \$149 million in 69-70 was caused by CRA investment in Bougainville copper. Some of this would be British Conzinc Rio Tinto money reinvested and would possibly apply to some more of the \$625 millions. Lenin wrote

“Imperialism means the progressive mounting oppression of the nations of the world by a handful of great powers.” Britain has not passed over the reign of power to Australia in Fiji. Australian capital investments on that scale on their own without political power to carry out oppression scarcely justify the label of imperialism. Australian capital has acted more as a watchdog, a parasite, for the imperialists, and its overseas position is becoming relatively weaker.

The characterisation of a country of medium capitalist development

as a subordinate element in the world capitalist system, kept within the orbit of international imperialisms socio-economic and military-strategic domination applies to Australia. Australia is militarily tied by the ANZUS Pact and rivetted by the forty US bases on our soil. The Phillipines, struggling to limit and throw out the US bases, is more independent.

One of the main contradictions of Australia is with imperialism and this is sharpening because of the economic and military domination of imperialism and its military role and because of its geographical location.

Its revolutionary struggle therefore “acquires an anti-imperialist orientation.” This has been recognised in the programs of the Communist Parties of Greece, Mexico and Latin American countries developing along capitalist lines and who have put the anti-imperialist revolutions on their immediate agenda.

Problems of the Communist Movement in analysing the development of their revolutionary process sees a combination of socio-economic, political and national contradictions; the contradictions between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie; the contradiction from the existence of pre-capitalist systems, and lastly the contradictions between the majority of the peoples and imperialism, chiefly US imperialism.

“The later contradiction ... has turned from an external to an internal contradiction, and today forms the objective basis for determining the common features and major objectives of the revolutionary process. The contradiction between the majority of the Latin American people and US imperialism has today become the cardinal contradiction in that region.”

This applies to Australia to a considerable extent. Many Australians are working directly for foreign companies as well as for local capitalists; the struggle of the northern aborigines for land rights, for a pre-capitalist system is a contradiction high on the agenda, if only because of the uranium issue. The contradiction with US imperialism has become internal, through the influx of US capital, the US war bases on our soil and becoming clear to many through the CIA involvement in the 1975 coup.

I am of the opinion that the Socialist Party of Australia should work to draw the various streams of struggle towards an anti-imperialist objective. The campaign against US war bases in Australia is a focal point of anti-imperialist action. The struggle against foreign monopolies is part of anti-imperialist action, but if it is conceived in terms of economic struggle it does not necessarily become part of the political struggle. The article on UTAH Page 8 Socialist 28 June fails because of this weakness. It is surely the duty of a Marxist-Leninist newspaper to use every opportunity to politicise the mass struggles, and this article shows the political

limitations of the concept of anti-monopoly struggle. This is not to reject the aim of developing an anti-monopoly movement, but it needs to be seen in the context of a broader movement. The concept of an anti-monopoly struggle is correctly raised in major imperialist countries where there can be no anti-imperialist revolution where the steps are directly towards the socialist revolution. The anti-monopoly objective for Australia appears to be formulated in relation to the estimation of Australia as a middle-sized imperialism of growing power, but does not see Australia in relation to world imperialism and its likelihood of intervention.

Problems of the Communist Movement Page 258 says that “for many countries with a low or medium capitalist development one of the most acute methodological problems from both the theoretical and political angles is that the motive forces, character and content of the anti-imperialist democratic revolution and its relation to the socialist revolution.” On page 254 it says:

“This does not rule out the possibility of a direct socialist revolution ... he (Lenin) made it plain that the weak links in the imperialist system can be breached provided the objective socio-political prerequisites had reached a high level of maturity and there was a sharp aggravation of contradictions with the subjective factor of the revolution adequately attuned to the situation.”

At the present time and situation in Australia and in the world, however, I consider an anti-imperialist movement is the one that can draw together the greatest amount of forces, movements and people in Australia, against the narrowest and most vulnerable front of the enemy.

For that reason I think the Party should set an anti-imperialist movement as the first major objective.

★ ★ ★

*“Despite the offensive against the working people by the capitalist class and imperialism, the period is one of world transition from capitalism to socialism.”* — **from the draft political resolution for the 3rd Congress of the SPA.**

# Party organisation and action

by DON McDONALD

**The Socialist Party is based on a number of principles which makes it different from other political parties.**

It firstly bases itself on the theory of the united front. It is a unifying force, which bases itself on a class approach to all questions.

Secondly, it is internationalist in outlook, it takes an internationalist class approach to all questions throughout the world. It places great value on the achievements of the world working class movement in regard to bringing about socialist governments in numerous countries, which now constitute the Socialist world.

Thirdly, it is based on the industrial working class, although it places great emphasis on building alliances with the students, intellectuals, small business people and the farmers. It places special emphasis on the industrial proletariat because it is the best organised group within society, it is the most disciplined and the most suppressed and it holds the most power and is the force most capable of bringing about fundamental social change.

Fourthly it bases itself on the principle of democratic centralism in regard to its internal party organisation, which enables the widest and greatest amount of democratic discussion, but then is able to command one voice in the application of its policies, which is so vital in revolutionary and strike situations.

The basis of our strategy is a Marxist understanding of the social sciences of society, such as economics, philosophy, and history. Because we have a basic understanding of these sciences, we understand that the motive force behind the development of society is the productive forces, which itself is motivated by the class struggle itself. Because we are armed with the science of Marxism we are not only able to understand and interpret developments which take place in society, but we are more able to advance a strategy to deal with such developments. It is for this reason that a small Marxist party is able to exert enormous influence and leadership in the mass movement.

Marxism gives us the ability to avoid getting caught up in side issues. It enables us to identify the main enemy, because we adopt a class approach

and it enables us to advance unifying issues. It enables us to judge the level of the movement and avoid getting caught up in elitism, short-cut approaches, which deny the need to develop the mass united movement and it finally enables us to be able to not only help workers in realistic tactics to squeeze concessions out of the system, but to develop the ideological understanding of the cause of their problem and the need for socialism as the only ultimate solution.

Comrades, can we suggest that the working class can do without a party like this?

Has it not been pointed out that without a Marxist theory, based on Leninist norms of party organisation there can be no socialist revolution.

### WITHOUT A MARXIST PARTY

The working class would be leaderless, it would be reduced to spontaneous uprisings, only to be crushed until the next uprising.

The problem with out party is that it is not big enough. In many vital areas of the progressive movement our party is not heard because we have no activists and in others our voice is not loud enough.

Comrades, how many activists have we got in the Uranium Movement, The Right To Work Campaign, the AUS or the struggle against education cutbacks?

We have to tackle our weaknesses in an organised and disciplined way and develop a plan at all levels of our organisation, to strengthen our position.

A serious party like ours has to adopt a Marxist approach of applying criticism and self criticism of our work.

I therefore would like to suggest what I see are some of the problems and weaknesses of our work in building the party.

I therefore would like to suggest what I see are some of the problems and weaknesses of our work in building the party.

Firstly, there is a tendency to do excellent work in the trade union and other movements in building up good rally's, marches, conferences and so on, around the needs of the people, but then a failure to take advantage of this good work by not advancing the party.

Secondly, there is a tendency to see oneself as a spectator, rather than an activist.

Examples of this can be seen in the failure to sell *the Socialist*. At the last May Day our Comrades did a good job in grass roots work in building up good attendance, but on the day when all of the cream of the labour movement came together, we almost abandoned the sale of progressive literature to the Trotskyists, the CPA and the Maoists. Only a handful of members tried to draw those in attendance to the SPA by selling *the Socialist*.

The same thing happened with the Citizens for Democracy rally. While a lot of our members were sitting in the Town Hall, listening to the speeches, outside there was a horde of Trotskyist selling literature to the conscious people who attended.

The election rallies when the Whitlam Government was sacked and mass stop work meetings hold a similar story.

A great deal of the grass roots work in making these events successful is done by SPA members, but when the events take place, SPA members who attend tend to bury themselves in the crowd instead of canvassing for support and drawing the conscious elements to the SPA, not only by selling *the Socialist*, but by inviting them to our functions.

Another example is that many of our activities are only attended by our own members. In my view, this reflects either:

1. A failure to see these functions as **a means** to introduce new people or
2. A failure to understand **the need** to introduce new people or
3. The isolation of our members from people that can be influenced.

Many of our trade union comrades tend to only see the party as the means to assist them in their day to day problems to squeeze concessions out of the system.

Our trade union comrades do an excellent job in developing broad, militant, united struggles of the workers to win concessions, but there is a tendency to leave it at that. Not to be able to get beyond the point of taking up the problems in a militant successful way, not to get to the point of developing the ideological questions about the basic problems and the need for Socialist consciousness, even less time comrades, to develop the people they influence into socialist consciousness, expressed in an organisational way by way of party membership.

The time is right, all conditions are favourable for us to go on to the offensive to build our party.

Our policies are correct, the objective conditions are right, there are hundreds of progressive struggles taking place, such as the economic struggle, Citizens for Democracy, Uranium and Peace, Migrants, Welfare cutbacks, Government spending, unemployment etc. What we have to do comrades, is to integrate ourselves and identify ourselves with these struggles.

We have to be seen as the representatives and best fighters around the issues of these movements. We have to win their respect by example, in order to be able to influence them with Marxist concepts and policies.

We have to do a lot of work in our party to organise schools and discussions on the need to develop an understanding of the relationship between the mass movement and the party, on the relationship between militant reformism and revolutionary struggle, on the need and the way to advance socialist consciousness, on the need to use initiative and on the need to draw up detailed plans and set individual responsibility.

Our activists in the mass movement should be seen and known as SPA members wherever possible.

In conclusion, I would like to say that we cannot assume the leadership of the working class. We have to earn it. We have no guarantee that we will be the leadership when a revolutionary situation develops in Australia. Maybe it could be the Trotskyists, maybe the Maoists, maybe the Anarchists or the CPA, which of course, would lead to its defeat with untold sufferings and setbacks. Therefore we have a duty and a responsibility to build the organisation and influence of our party in membership, sales of *the Socialist*, finance and ideological clarity. To get beyond the point of being militant reformists, to correctly understand the relationship between the mass movement and the party, we have to realise that our party won't automatically be on top in a revolutionary situation. It won't automatically build itself. We have to get out and do it by using our own individual initiative. Every member should be encouraged to accept some commitment to help build our party.

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# Women and the 3rd SPA Congress

by INA HEIDTMAN, Secretary, SPA CC Women's Committee

**It is fundamental to the success of the women's movement for equality and emancipation that the working class, men and women together, determine the direction of the struggle and become the decisive leadership in that struggle.**

Recent years have seen a tremendous increase in the involvement of women, both nationally and internationally around their needs and the needs of the community in general.

This has been reflected in the growth and diversity of the women's movement and women's organisation. It is also reflected in attention to women's issues at many levels, including governmental level.

Progressive working class women and their organisation, working with the trade unions, trade union women's committees, as well as other women's organisations have made advances in the interests of women and their families, the protection of living standards, for peace, international understanding and solidarity. New and growing forces of women in the trade unions is evident. However, much more needs to be done. Greater numbers of working class women need to be drawn into struggle and activity. Nevertheless changes are taking place and social attitudes are being impacted.

This has been due to a number of reasons, not the least of which was the impact of the U.N. International Women's Year, 1975 and the U.N. Decade for Women for Equality, Development and Peace — 1976-85.

International Women's Year in Australia increased the momentum of women's greater involvement and activity.

The follow up work towards the U.N. Mid-Term Review Conference (Teheran 1980) and the U.N. Decade for Women in 1985, gives unlimited opportunities to women and the community to advance the cause and needs of women in line with the Mexico I.W.Y. Conference decisions and the U.N. World Plan of Action.

The World Plan sets guidelines for action within the Decade and calls for the setting of targets by governments, industry, trade unions and the community in general.

The Socialist Party of Australia will work towards the implementation of the World Plan of Action and use its influence to promote equality and full rights for women.

The S.P.A. has adopted its own Programme for Women which points to the advances needed for women within the present society and to the gains to be made in a Socialist Australia.

The S.P.A. has adopted its own Programme for Women which points to the advances needed for women within the present society and to the gains to be made in a Socialist Australia.

The S.P.A. believes that exploitation of women cannot be eliminated in present society because the foundations of capitalism are built on exploitation. The S.P.A. highlights the example and achievements of women in socialist societies.

## WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE

An important decision since International Women's Year has been the adoption of the A.C.T.U. Charter of Working Women's Rights. It is important that we use our influence wherever possible to ensure the implementation of this Charter. Women, who constitute over one third of the workforce, continue to suffer unequal wages, are in low paid job categories and lack opportunities in job advancement and training.

Social and economic barriers still exist which deny equality to women. Furthermore, women in the main continue to bear the burden of being both housewife and mother, even when working in the workforce.

Neither Governments nor industry fully recognise women's social and economic role in this society. The S.P.A. must expose this and work towards recognition. In its attacks on the working people, monopoly capital attempts to immobilise working women and divide men and women in their common struggle by promoting ideas which aim to keep women in an inferior role, maintaining monopoly domination over all.

The idea is promoted that married women are responsible for unemployment and that other sections of the people would be employed if married

women did not work in industry.

These ideas promoted by capitalism continue to stunt the growth in consciousness of both men and women and must be exposed and fought against. Among a section of these who are waging the struggle for women's liberation, the idea is advanced that this is a struggle for women only, rather than a joint struggle of all workers. They see the liberation of women as a sex war, not a class war.

It is the goal of the S.P.A. to initiate, organise and wage campaigns together with other progressive and democratic women's organisations, in particular working class women, to involve them in struggle for peace, improved living standards, the right to work, equal rates of pay and for full social, political and legal rights — and for socialism as referred to in the S.P.A. Women's Program.

As participants in the workforce, women not only gain an economic independence, unknown to them as housewives, they are introduced to trade unionism, the struggles of women, and working class politics. They are drawn in as conscious fighters in the struggle against exploitation and discrimination of monopoly capitalism. It is vital that all organisations of the labour movement join in one united struggle for the elimination of all inequality and discrimination against women as part of the general struggle for their liberation and for the winning of a Socialist Australia.

The Socialist Party of Australia commits itself to these aims in the interests of women and the working class.

The above statement is basically the submission of the CC Women's Committee for inclusion in the Main Political Document to Congress.

### **C.C. ENDORSES PROPOSALS**

In addition to the submission in the Main Political Document, the C.C. endorsed a recommendation by the S.P.A. Central Women's Committee that the current S.P.A. Program for Women should be amended, updated and some particular sections strengthened, at the 3rd S.P.A. Congress in October.

This has culminated in a series of workshops and seminars being held throughout Australia and attended by members and non members who have discussed:

SPA Program for women on...

- ★ Women in the struggle for peace.
- ★ Women in the mass movement.

- ★ Women in the trade unions.
- ★ Women in the class struggle.
- ★ Women in the struggle for a Socialist Australia.
- ★ The Women's Movement in relation to internationalism.

Some eight papers dealing with these subject matters have been prepared and studied over the period of the workshops.

The Women's Committee saw the development of the current workshops not only as part of pre-Congress preparation, but as a very important aspect of our theoretical studies.

### WHY AMEND THE PROGRAM?

It has been raised that the S.P.A. Programme for Women has only been in existence for a short space of time, and does it really need amending? However, the Women's Committee is of the opinion that International Women's Year saw a significant uplift in the women's movement in Australia — and there have been rapid developments in the women's movement since that time; the trade unions have adopted a Working Women's Charter — a Charter of demands for the economic, political and social rights of women; there have been numerous conferences and meetings of women (e.g. the recent Women and Labor Conference with over 1000 women participating) aimed at formulating policies for women; and most importantly, progressive women's organisations, including the trade union women's committees have made advances.

The workshops have discussed these and many other questions. In particular the need to include in our amended programme a section on involving women in the struggle against monopoly capitalism; to involve women in the struggle for peace and to develop immediate plans of action and at the same time project long term policies.

The discussion at the third and final N.S.W. workshop dealt specifically with these questions. Monopoly capitalism was seen as dominating every aspect of our life, and as the main opponent of women, as it is of the whole of the working class movement.

When we speak about the liberation of women, we speak about their liberation from exploitation by capitalist society and all that it implies for women can never be fully equal in capitalist society.

In fact as opening speaker, Freda Brown (Member of the C.C. and C.C. Women's Committee and President of W.I.D.F.) said "the subjugation of women is a prop of class society."

It helps impose class inequality and class exploitation on the working people generally, regardless of their sex or race.

While gains can be made and must be fought for, women, as is the case with the working class generally, will not fundamentally and finally solve their problems, not be free of exploitation until capitalist society is changed and replaced by a socialist society.

The section in the current program dealing with the family has been debated and it is felt this section needs re-writing.

## ROLE OF THE WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

A specific task of the Women's Committee is to be acutely aware of, and monitor the needs and action of women; to closely understand and analyse the forces of the broad women's movement; to bring forward policies and proposals for action based on this analysis; to participate in, and play a leading role in the movement of women and assist in the development of working class women and their leadership in struggle.

## THREE MAJOR PRIORITIES

Three major priorities are set by the Women's Committee:

- ★ To promote, initiate and develop the Party's policies on women, through booklets, statements, leaflets, I.W.D. Greeting Cards and Supplements, by articles in the Socialist and the Australian Marxist Review.
- ★ To participate in the development of work in the Broad Women's Movement. This equips us with knowledge of what women are thinking as the Broad Women's Movement reflects the feelings and demands of working class women and it is a vital source of potential membership for our Party. Some example of work in the area cover attendance recently by seven S.P.A. women at the Women and Labour Conference. Between 1000 and 2000 women participated and the policy of the S.P.A. was projected in a number of sessions of that Conference.

Close connections have been established in the ethnic community and improved and concrete attention is being paid to women in the trade unions.

The Women's Committee aims to participate in activities to ensure the implementation of the recently endorsed A.C.T.U. Charter for Working Women.

A major task is attention to education and cadre development. This covers education at all levels from the more experienced right through to prospective members.

The Women's Committee is confident that its Programme of activity, its direction of the workshops and seminars on the current Women's Programme has been an important contribution to its major responsibilities and to pre Congress preparations.

In this way the Women's Committee is playing an important active role in the general political life of our Party and specifically in relation to work amongst women.

The Women's Committee aims to interest women in socialism, draw them into the Party and ensure their consolidation in the struggle for a Socialist Australia and to obtain a better understanding of scientific socialism. A meeting of representatives from all states will draw together submissions in relation to alterations to the program and will bring to Congress an amended and updated programme.

The Women's Committee urges all Party organisations to place this amended document, together with the other Congress documents before their membership for serious consideration and study.

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*“It is fundamental to the success of the women's movement for equality and emancipation that the working class, men and women together, determine the direction of the struggle and become the decisive leadership in that struggle.”* **from the draft political resolution for 3rd Congress of SPA.**

# Unemployment and poverty

## — by-products of capitalism

by VAL BUTTERWORTH

**Looking back at the epoch of Primitive Communism wherein there were no classes, there was no poor, i.e., there was no group within the tribe living under harsher conditions than other members.**

Scarcity was shared, so was abundance (if any). If we look at a tribe of Australian Aborigines in their pre-white man era, no section of the tribe could be singled out and labelled — “these are our poor.” If the hunting was bad they all shared the consequent hunger. If it was good they all shared the ‘prosperity.’

We see a different picture emerging with the development of classes in society. In the epoch of Slavery we find the poverty of the slave — fed only enough to maintain life and fed only because a dead slave does no work. On the other hand we have the slave-owner who lived under the best conditions possible in that stage of society’s development.

Under the Feudal system, compare the lot of the agricultural serf with that of the feudal lord.

However the poor under Feudalism, were not severed from the means of production totally and they had a means of subsistence. Engels, in the introduction to his book — *The Condition of the Working class in England* — brings this point out clearly (P41). “True, he was a bad farmer and managed his land inefficiently, often obtaining but poor crops; nevertheless, he was no proletarian, he had a stake in the country, he was permanently settled, and stood one step higher in society than the English workman of to-day.”

To this stage we do not hear a mention of unemployment — indeed there was a plentiful supply of hard arduous toil, from daylight till dark.

With the rise of the Capitalist industrial system we see a distinct change in the position of the lower strata of society. The rising industrialists were able to lure huge numbers of the rural population to the towns and cities which were quickly growing around the industrial factories. The Capitalist was able to offer an inducement more attractive financially because an hour’s work in the mechanised factory would produce more value than an hour’s work on the potato patch.

The influx to the towns and cities went on apace. This is pointed out in *The Communist Manifesto* (P47) *Quote* “The Bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of the towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural...”

Engels (*Condition of the working class in England*) (P.45) describes “...the sudden multiplication of capital and national wealth; on the other hand, a still more rapid multiplication of the proletariat, the **destruction of all property-holding and of all security of employment for the working-class...**”

### IMPOVERISHMENT OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

A novel written about 1850 describes their conditions in “*Mary Barton, a tale of Manchester*” Mrs Gaskell writes:

“For three years past trade had been getting worse and worse, and the price of provisions higher and higher. This disparity between the amount of the earnings of the working classes, and the price of their food, occasioned in more cases than could well be imagined, disease and death. Whole families went through a gradual starvation.

“They only wanted a Dante to record their sufferings. And yet even his words would fall short of the awful truth; they could only present an outline of the tremendous facts of the destitution that surrounded thousands upon thousands in the terrible years 1839, 1840 and 1841.”

Here are a couple of extracts from Engels’ book — the chapter titled *The Great Towns*. London is the great town under scrutiny (P.64) *Quote* “Let us hear Mr. G. Alston preacher of St. Philips, Bethnal Green, on the condition of his parish. He said (in part) ‘I was rector near Huddersfield during the three years in which the mills were at their worst, but I have never seen such complete helplessness of the poor as since then in Bethnal Green.’”

“On the occasion of an inquest held Nov. 14th, 1843 upon the body of Ann Galway.....She lay dead beside her son upon a heap of feathers which were scattered over her almost naked body, there being neither sheet nor coverlet. The feathers stuck so fast over the whole body that the physician could not examine the corpse until it was cleansed, and then found it starved and scarred from the bites of vermin. Part of the floor of the room was torn up, and the hole used by the family as a privy.”

*The Communist Manifesto* points out, on P. 41 “Our epoch, the epoch

of the Bourgeoisie, wherein society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.” The Bourgeoisie owning the means of production i.e. the factories, machines, raw materials, transport, depots etc. and the class dispossessed of all means of production, having nothing left to sell but their labour-power, — the Proletariat.

In this extremely brief description of the proletariat it is easy to see their vulnerability to the inroads of poverty because if they do not find work i.e. if they become unemployed, poverty walks in the door.

Now let us examine a key question of current times — Why do some become unemployed and why do some never get started as employed (school leavers)?

### UNEMPLOYMENT — A CONSTANT THREAT

In the capitalist system there is a discrepancy in values between the wages paid to the workers and the value of the goods they produce — it becomes mathematically impossible for the workers to buy back the things they have made.

They can buy part thereof, but there will remain a modicum of unbuyable — of unsaleable goods.

This eventually leads to the recurring crises of capitalism — the crises of under-consumption (or over-production). Here is a chief cause of curtailment of the workforce; unemployment in other words.

Another feature of capitalism is the anarchy of production.

Capitalist production is quite unplanned as far as quantities of products are concerned and so we see factory yards full of rusting unsaleable cars, warehouses bulging with unsold refrigerators, T.V.'s etc. The whole scene pregnant with the possibility and the reality of factory and retail staff curtailment. Today, the dark threat of unemployment hangs over many workers.

### POVERTY IN AUSTRALIA

The Henderson Report published in 1975, was compiled for the Burgeois Government and drew “the poverty line so low that only the very poor were included. The spotlight fell mainly on the permanently unemployed, the aged, the “unemployable.” It was set at \$62.70 (only 56.5% of average earnings at the time) for a couple with two children!

Nevertheless it found that nearly 800,000 Australians lived on or below

the poverty line in 1973, and another 80,000 had incomes no more than 20% above that line.

### STRATIFICATION OF THE WORKING CLASS

The capitalist system fosters divisions and stratification in the working class, because it makes possible more thorough exploitation.

Employers use differences of sex, race and ethnic origin to pay lower wages and extract more surplus value.

The Aborigines suffer, I would say, most heavily by these tactics and the 'theory' that the Aboriginal race have a lower intelligence, genetically, than the white man is still being peddled. Once, whilst speaking to a Walgett car dealer, about Aborigines, I gleaned this piece of 'elevating' information, 'I gotta couple of 'em workin' for men, but none of them Abos has got any brains. Yer c'n tell by the shape of their 'eads.'

They would be, I would say, the lowest paid of the rural workers — except those in the shearing industry. Shearers are paid by the hundred sheep shorn and if an Aboriginal shearer shears the same number of sheep per day as a white shearer, he gets the same money, (thanks only to Union activity). However the rate of unemployment among the Aboriginal workers is extremely high, 60% in many country areas.

Occupying, perhaps the next rung of the ladder, come the European (southern) women workers. Then their menfolk and if you look at a group of these say — a Water Board gang — you will see that the foreman is generally Australian born and the rest of the gang Southern European migrants.

### IN CONCLUSION

In this latter part of the 20th. Century man has the technical ability, the know-how, to abolish want, unemployment and poverty from this planet and yet this economic system-Capitalism-has brought us poverty of the worst possible kind.

The ability to obtain warmth in cold weather can be denied. Remember the caveman in his cave, had a fire. The Stone Age Aborigine had his campfire.

Even the ability to obtain food is restrict. But perhaps the most tragic, the most soul-destroying, aspect of unemployment is the fact that man has been severed from the very thing that developed the human species and elevated it to its pinnacle position in the animal kingdom - WORK.

As Leontyev (Political Economy) says:

“Labour is the essential distinction between the primitive human society and the herd of apes from which it emerged as a result of a prolonged process of evolution.

Consequently labour is the foundation on which human society rests.”

Unemployment is not a problem in the Socialist countries — their problem is to find enough workers for the jobs available — to create all the goods the people want.

Capitalism, with its two hideous by-products, unemployment and poverty, has outlived its usefulness and must be pushed from the stage of history.

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*Main economic authorities, including such people in Australia, have announced that the capitalist economies will not return to the comparatively stable and high growth levels of the 1950s and 1960s. Some have pointed to the fact that the capitalist world economy is already facing a further downturn when the economic cycle should already be in the late recover or early boom stage. Thus a new cycle is developing before the existing cycle has “run its course” and a further period of economic decline has set in from a lower economic level than that which existed when the current crisis commenced. The prospect is for economic crisis to become a permanent feature of capitalist economies.*

**From draft Political resolution, SPA third congress.**

# Struggle for scientific socialism in Australia

- some historical notes covering  
the 1890s to 1970s -

by W.J. BROWN

**Study of the history of the complex struggle for the scientific socialist perspectives of Marx and Lenin within the Australian labor movement is a most important aspect of the ideological work of the Socialist Party of Australia.**

From the first emergence of Marxist concepts of socialism as against the Utopian socialist ideas which dominated the socialist sector of the Australian labor movement in the late 19th Century, this history is rich in significant lessons.

Study of and constant reference to these lessons is essential in order to draw on past experience for improved work in present and future activity and to assist in avoiding repetition of errors and short-comings of the past.

The struggle to bring consciousness of scientific socialist theory and practice to the Australian labor movement has already been rich and varied in range. This process has gone through different stages. Firstly, there was already mentioned stage of struggle to replace Utopian socialism with scientific socialism. This was developed as the works of Marx and Engels gradually became available in Australia in the late 19th century and the early years of the 20th century.

Arising from the lessons of defeat of the 1890 strikes against efforts by the capitalist class to make the workers bear the brunt of the world economic crisis, then in process, consciousness developed on the need to extend working class action from narrow trade unionism to the political arena.

This confirmed Marx's statement that while "Trade Unions work well as centres of resistance against the encroachment of capital, they fail partially from an injudicious use of their power. They fail generally from limiting themselves to a guerilla war against the effects of the system instead of simultaneously trying to change it..."

But the working class and its leaders of the time learned only part of the lesson. They turned to politics but not socialist politics.

With the foundation of the Australian Labor Party and election of labor representatives to Parliament, workers hopes ran high. However, disillusionment rapidly set in among that section of the labor movement which had envisioned the capitalist state coming under challenge from the combined force of Australian trade unions and Labor parliamentary representatives.

While formation of the Labor Party represented a big step forward in political as well as trade union struggle, it was soon clear that Labor's Parliamentary representatives, like many trade union leaders, stood for limiting the labor movement to seeking reforms within capitalism rather than working for the objective of socialism.

Two different lessons were drawn from this experience by different sections of the working class movement.

One was a strong sectarian reaction to the reformism of Labor's parliamentary representatives which developed the concept that the workers would be best served by industrial not political action. This trend saw the American-founded organisation of the IWW (International Workers of the World) come into being in Australia. This body based itself on anarcho-syndicalism, combining anarchist, anti-authoritarian attitudes with concentration on the "syndicalist" strength of the trade unions. A fundamental weakness of this trend was that it rejected political struggle to establish a state of the working class and its allies.

The other lesson was that what was needed was intensification of political struggle around the socialist objective. (The latter trend was expressed by a number of socialist groups and subsequently saw the coming together of various socialist bodies to form the Communist Party of Australia).

While many courageous militants formed part of the IWW, such leftist trends offered no real way forward for the working class.

The need for a such a party of scientific socialism was decisively sharpened by the dramatic events of the Great October Revolution in Russia in 1917.

A political thunderclap rang around the world. A great qualitative change had occurred in human history.

The working class and its allies led by a revolutionary party based on the teachings of Marx and Lenin had established the world's first socialist state.

As with other countries throughout the world, the 1917 revolution stirred wide discussion among socialists and socialist groupings in Australia. Moves to come together in a united Party were strengthened. A conference of left wing and socialist groups was convened by the Australian Socialist Party which had developed from the Socialist Federation of Australia. The Communist Party of Australia was founded on October 30, 1920.

The late general Secretary of the Communist Party of Australia, L.L. Sharkey correctly defined this event. "The formation of the Communist Party was one of the decisive revolutionary acts of the Australian working class. It was the outcome of the experience gleaned in the struggles and growth of the labor movement from 1890 to 1920."

Across almost five decades from 1920 into the mid-1960s, the CPA gave outstanding service to the best interests of the Australian working class and progressive people generally. Despite early inner-party ideological struggle against both right and left opportunist trends, the Party steadily matured and established a well-merited high standing, nationally and internationally, as a Party firmly based on the science of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

With consistent ideological work it made an important contribution to the basic need to bring socialist consciousness to a labor movement heavily saturated with the petty bourgeois reformist ideas of social democracy.

Internationally, the Communist Party, particularly in the years of the leadership of J. B. Miles and L. L. Sharkey, became highly regarded as a Party which while serving the basic interests of the Australian people shunned narrow nationalistic attitudes and took a consistently firm stand on the basic principles of proletarian internationalism.

From its earliest days, the CPA played a basic role in ideologically combatting the petty bourgeois reformist ideas which dominated the Australian Labor Party and radiated from that Party to exert a heavy reformist influence on the trade union and labor movement as a whole. But also from its earliest days the CPA warned against extremes.

Early files of the CPA press in the Mitchell library indicate that from its outset the CPA counselled against lapsing into left sectarian errors in combatting ALP reformist policies. How this error of leftism in combatting ALP reformism was recurrent in the CPA and how it was correctly combatted by the Miles-Sharkey leadership is a phase of CPA history

well worth special study. A clear lesson is that while the Labor Party reflects an obvious two-class position in functioning as a party that simultaneously purports to serve the immediate needs of the working class, from which it sprung, and the preservation of the capitalist system, in which it functions, it remains essential for any party of scientific socialism to preserve the maximum possible united front relations with such a party.

Leftism impatience with reformism is understandable among militant workers. But such impatience is inexcusable in any party claiming to have a mature, scientific political, tactical and ideological approach to the problem of winning the majority of the workers away from reformism to support for the socialist objective.

The ideological work of the old CPA for deeper understanding of the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin, the CPA's consistent work for united action against monopoly and for advance towards a Socialist Australia in a world of lasting peace will always stand to its high credit over its early years.

Any objective analysis of the history of the CPA across the 1920's and 1930's must give high credit to the outstanding role played by the CPA in the fight against capitalism's callous policy of unloading the burdens of the Great Depression onto the working people and in many other struggles on the economic front. Similarly, much credit must go to the CPA for the great contribution it made to solidarity action with the fight for democracy in Spain and the fundamental role it played in the "campaign against war and fascism."

In the 40's, in both the "phoney war" period when the CPA was declared illegal and in the subsequent "People's war" period when it is estimated the Party grew from 5,000 to 20,000 members, the overall record reflects great credit on the CPA leadership and membership of the period.

Similarly, in the post-war '40s the CPA showed itself capable of self-critically analysing both right and left opportunist errors and restoring a correct course based on the all-sided united front line set out in the famous Dimitrov Report to the 7th Congress of the Communist International. The united front then became a basic and guiding principle for the remaining years of Sharkey's period of leadership.

In the '50s, faced with security raids, phoney "spy plot" hysteria (all orchestrated against the grim background of the Cold War) the CPA conducted itself with a high level of political maturity, courage and dignity.

This barest of sketches of the first forty years of CPA history is compressed to meet the limiting confines of this article. Of course the CPA of these first four decades had its errors and shortcomings as with all revolutionary parties. These require analysis in a wider work. However, the above outline indicates that the basic reality of CPA history over these years must be objectively assessed as a positive record in which all who participated can have good reason for pride.

A most tragic aspect of the breakdown of the old CPA under the present leadership is the marked tendency developed by certain central CPA figures to denigrate the fine achievements in CPA history.

The SPA rejects the shameful Trotskyist slanders permitted by the present leaders which have attacked the period of leadership of the late L. Sharkey and J. B. Miles as a period of bureaucracy and largely negative result. To its shame, the present CPA leadership have marked themselves down in history as having permitted a leading Trotskyite (then promoted to the Tribune editorial staff) to publish in Tribune an article (on October 28, 1970) implying L. Sharkey had been guilty of class collaboration during World War II. This article went on to assert that the past of the CPA "weighs on its members and the whole movement." The article even charged the Party with "degeneration" and "what might be called objectively, crimes."

The real degeneration, the real departure from objectivity rests with the present CPA leadership. Objective study of CPA history, in fact, shows that under the present leaders in five short years from 1965 to 1970 the fine work, organisation and achievement of the CPA over five decades, had, in basic terms, been virtually destroyed.

Any study of the history of the CPA needs to take note of the remarkable fact that a specially commissioned draft "outline of the Post War History of the Communist Party of Australia" by E.A. Bacon was withdrawn. It has never been finalised.

This publication, date October, 1965 made the overall sound assessment that the CPA history in the post-war years was characterised by consistent struggle for the United Front in its national policies and solidarity with the Soviet Union, the other Socialist countries and the World Communist movement internationally. It was precisely this period when the Aarons' forces began to develop a line of denigration of the united front concept and to begin an increasingly extreme course of anti-Soviet criticism and negative attacks on the international communist movement and on the various progressive international bodies.

A basically important aspect in studying the decline of the CPA is to note that the Eureka Youth League was one of the first fraternal organisations to come under ideological attack. The EYL, later known as the Young Socialist League) was a Marxist-Leninist Youth organisation, politically sound with broad mass contact particularly in the trade union movement. Neo-Trotskyite, anti-Marxist Leninist penetration into the EYL opened the way for a break with the World Federation of Democratic Youth internationally and for degeneration and decline of the organisation nationally.

Study of the struggle for sound Communist theory and practice in Australia needs to cover all fields of Party endeavour.

In addition to basic study of ideological trends it is also of value to study the history of organisational work of the Party and the lessons it contains in the development of collective leadership as against individualism and tendencies to bureaucracy in leadership style. It has rightly been said that once the political line is clear the organisational measures to put it into effect are decisive. What has been learnt, the experience that has been acquired in developing a correct, Communist style of leadership based on the principles of criticism and self criticism and collective leadership need to be known and studied by each generation if errors and shortcomings of subjectivism and individualism are not to be repeated.

What happened to the once politically sound Communist Party of Australia is an important historical study in itself. The degeneration of the CPA; the central leadership's desertion of Marxist Leninist principles; its fostering of Maoist and Trotskyist concepts; its development of anti-Soviet and anti-international Communist movement attitudes was due to a number of complex factors. These included national, international, subjective and objective aspects. Each of these require analysis in current study and research classes on labor movement history.

Today, a fundamental ongoing study of the history of the struggle for the scientific principles of Marx, Engels and Lenin in Australia needs to encompass the history of the Socialist Party of Australia.

The SPA was founded on December 1971.

The step was taken to form a new party based firmly on scientific socialist principles only after patient and exhaustive efforts to preserve the Communist Party of Australia on the basis of such principles.

Repeated offers were made by the substantial opposition forces against the CPA leaders to secure some line or formula to preserve the old party. Among other proposals, these offers took the form of motions for establishment of "unity-seeking" commissions to calmly discuss and seek to resolve basic ideological differences. These were rejected outright.

The bureaucratic answer of the Aarons' leadership was to embark on a course that saw ten members of the Central Committee who stood for adherence to Marxist Leninist principles and solidarity with the international Communist movement removed from the Central Committee. This was followed by the harshest series of expulsion in CPA history which removed a number of leading opponents of Aarons' line from Party ranks.

Since foundation of the SPA in December, 1971 the SPA has grown in strength numerically and organisationally. Founded on a fundamentally correct ideological course, it has continued to strengthen its organisational work, to build the Party in all aspects.

Today, as the SPA nears its third Congress firmly united around its general ideological and political line, the Party can be proud of the fact that it has become widely recognised and influential as a political force of Marxist-Leninist scientific socialist principles within the Australian labor movement.

International recognition achieved by the SPA has been extensive and decisive. It has won wide recognition among parties leading the socialist countries and among a very large number of parties in the international communist and workers' movement generally.

Despite ideological differences with the Labor Party and its predominant reformist policies and differences with the CPA's mixed ideology of left and right opportunist trends the SPA has already marked itself as an organisation firmly based on a course of building the widest possible united front and the maximum areas of united action around all basic issues for advance of the Australian people's interests.

The SPA today stands as the continuer of all that was best in the old CPA during the years of fine, positive service it rendered the Australian working class and the people generally.

(Within restrictions of a single article the above brief outline presents some views on aspects to be covered in an overall historical analysis now being researched. Comment, suggestions appreciated. Send to W.J. Brown 392 Sussex St., Sydney, 2000).

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