



Theoretical journal  
of the Socialist  
Party of Australia

# Australian Marxist Review

- ★ *Lenin and petty bourgeois ideology*
- ★ *Wages — a critical review*
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# **Australian Marxist Review**

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112th anniversary of Lenin's birth

# Lenin and the struggle against petty bourgeois ideology

by Alan Miller

**On April 22 this year, communists and other progressives celebrated the 112th anniversary of the birth of Lenin, outstanding theoretician and organiser of the international communist movement and leader of the socialist revolution in Russia.**

Lenin's work was so rich and varied that to try and cover all aspects in a short article would be impossible. I will be content with one aspect, but a highly significant one – Lenin's opposition to the right and "left" expressions of petty bourgeois ideology.

Lenin advanced three slogans for the epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism. They were:

"Abolition of classes; dictatorship of the proletariat for the purposes of achieving that aim; the ruthless exposure of petty bourgeois democratic prejudices concerning freedom and equality and ruthless war on those prejudices." (*Collected Works*, Vol 31 p 392).

The fact that he raised the struggle against petty bourgeois democratic prejudices alongside the other two slogans clearly shows the importance Lenin placed on that struggle.

When Lenin made his oft-repeated criticism of petty bourgeois concepts of democracy he was dealing with an approach which supports the retention of capitalism in essence while prattling about a vague and abstract just society. Marxist-Leninists are democrats in a different and deeper sense. They are for working class power which expands democracy as has never been known before on the basis of ending capitalist rights of exploitation.

The social base for petty bourgeois ideology is provided by the middle classes linked with small-scale economy and those strata associated with the

technical, administrative and intellectual activity of monopoly capitalism.

Caught in the middle of the struggle between the two main contending classes in capitalist society — the proletariat and bourgeoisie — these “centre” sections of society are noted for their moodiness and waverings. Lenin expresses this as follows:

“This wavering flows in two ‘streams’: petty bourgeois reformism i.e., servility to the bourgeoisie covered by a cloak of sentimental democratic and ‘social’ democratic phrases and fatuous wishes; and petty bourgeois revolutionism — menacing, blustering and boastful in words: but a mere bubble of disunity, disruption and brainlessness in deeds.”  
*(Collected Works. Vol 33 p 21).*

Although the social origin of petty bourgeois ideology is made up of the middle classes and strata of society, the working class is wide open to adopt such ideas, particularly when the influence of the Marxist-Leninist ideology of the working class is weak. This situation applies to Australia. Reformism, as expressed through the Australian Labor Party, has the main influence while “revolutionism” as expressed by “radical” parties, such as the Trotskyist parties, holds a minority influence.

Lenin conducted an uncompromising struggle against reformism. This can be clearly seen in the following statement:

“Hence, preparation for the dictatorship of the proletariat calls, not only for an intensification of the struggle against reformist and ‘centrist’ tendencies, but also for a change in the character of that struggle. The struggle cannot be restricted to explaining the erroneousness of these tendencies: it must be unswervingly and ruthlessly expose any leader of the working class who reveals such tendencies, for otherwise the proletariat cannot know who it will march with into decisive struggle against the bourgeoisie.... Any inconsistency or weakness in exposing those who show themselves to be reformist or ‘centrist’ means directly increasing the danger of the power of the proletariat being overthrown by the bourgeoisie which tomorrow will utilise for the counter-revolution that which short-sighted people today see merely as ‘theoretical difference.’”

*(Theses on the fundamental tasks of the Second Congress of the Communist International. Collected Works. Vol 31 pp 184-201).*

Lenin was just as uncompromising in his struggle against what he called “revolutionism”. Recall the following words:

“It is not yet sufficiently known abroad that Bolshevism grew up, took shape, and became steed in the long years of struggle against petty bourgeois revolutionism which smacks of, or borrows something from, anarchism, and which falls short in everything essential of the conditions and requirements of a consistently proletarian class struggle.... Anarchism was often a sort of punishment for the opportunist sins of the working class movement. The two monstrosities were mutually complementary.” *(Leftwing communism, an infantile disorder).*

While right and “left” expressions of petty bourgeois ideology have their differences, they also have much in common. They are opposed to Marxism-

Leninism, the Marxist-Leninist party, the dictatorship of the proletariat, working class internationalism, and are anti-Soviet. Both, in essence, stand for the retention of capitalism. Reformism, with its emphasis on parliament, and revolutionism, with its individualistic action, reject organised working class struggle. Both reject the democratic centralist concept of organisation, claiming the right to factions and unfettered democracy.

The right and "left" expressions of petty bourgeois ideology are sometimes found within one party and even within one individual. Trotsky, for example, had his right and "left" sides.

The rightist aspect was expressed with Trotsky's support for the Mensheviks in their struggle for a loose low standard party as against the Bolshevik concept of a quality democratic centralist party, a struggle which flowed from the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party in 1903.

The "left" aspect of Trotsky was expressed by his opposition to the Brest Litovsk peace treaty with German imperialism under specific circumstances. Trotsky was for the "permanent revolution" and against Lenin's proposition of building socialism in one country, a proposition which took into account the uneven social development throughout the world, and required Brest Litovsk to give the young Soviet republic a chance to consolidate working class power.

Both Trotsky's right and "left" positions served the cause of anti-communism.

The same can be said of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). In the late sixties in the CPA there developed a theory that the scientific and technological revolution, virtually was going to eliminate the industrial working class, and produce a new generation of intellectuals who would be the spearhead of social change. Such changes would be conducted in a "fair" and "reasonable" way befitting intellectuals so that even counter-revolutionary parties would have full political rights under a system the CPA chose to call socialism. This was a social democratic fatuous wish, to use Lenin's language.

In more recent years, a trend of thinking has developed in the CPA which joins the radical anti-technology chorus. This is the "windmill" mentality of the alternative lifestyle which replaces the slogan "down with capitalism" with "escape from capitalism." Behind the revolutionary pose lies the brainlessness about which Lenin spoke.

The very swing from welcoming the reformist benefits of the scientific and technological revolution to expressing anarchist horror at that revolution is an expression of the instability of the petty bourgeoisie.

There are other examples of the "left" and right "moods" of the CPA. One recalls the CPA view that Trotskyism is a "genuine revolutionary" trend and then the rightwing attacks upon working class power in Czechoslovakia in the late sixties and, more recently, the same attacks on socialist Poland.

Sometimes there is a situation where reformism and revolutionism act simultaneously. Orlando Millas, Political Commission member of the

Communist Party of Chile gives an example in connection with the events which led to the defeat of the progressive forces and the establishment of the junta in Chile.

“The split in a united and mobilising leadership became a factor for defeat. Opportunism spread in two interconnected trends. The ultra-leftists, denying the revolutionary character of the process under way, tried to impose their own notions of its development and strove, in effect, to disrupt it from within. On the other hand, the reformists over-rated the peaceful aspects of the process and made a fetish of undemocratic institutions (of the old regime. A.M.), that were out of keeping with the new and more important tasks brought to the fore by life.... these two varieties of opportunism constantly backed each other, being prompted by their bias against the communists.” (*Stages of the struggle. World Marxist Review* February 1977 p 58).

Reformism has deep historical roots in the Australian labour movement, expressed in trade union politics which found organisational expression in the formation of the Labor Party late last century and has continued to dominate ever since.

However, the ultra-left movements which have sprung up periodically are examples of the point Lenin made: “Anarchism was often a sort of punishment for the opportunist sins of the working class movement.”

The shortcomings of both the reformism of the Labor Party and the anarcho-syndicalism of the International Workers of the World added to the profound effect of the Russian Revolution, including the contribution made by Lenin, were factors which led to the formation of the Communist Party of Australia.

However, a feature of the Australian communist movement has been the swings from right to left opportunism and back again, indicating the strength of both streams of petty bourgeois ideology in the Marxist-Leninist movement, just as they have affected the general labour movement.

It seems that the communist movement has yet to master that which Lenin taught in relation to combatting petty bourgeois ideology with the ideology of the proletariat, based on dialectical materialism.

The Fourth Congress of the Socialist Party set about to tackle this long-standing problem. Congress said:

“It is necessary to oppose both expressions of opportunism. It is not a question of ‘balance’ between these two errors but of overcoming the ideological weakness which gives rise to both. To “left” and right opportunism we oppose a proper application of Marxism-Leninism.”

What better way to commemorate Lenin’s birthday than to set about to apply this important decision of the Fourth Congress and to conduct a “ruthless exposure of petty bourgeois democratic prejudices” and a “ruthless war on those prejudices” whether they be of a right or “left” variety.

Then the Socialist Party will be better equipped to bring scientific socialism to the working class which, left to the pragmatism of the labour movement, will continue to wear the reformist and “revolutionist” chains binding the workers to the capitalist system.

# A critical review of wages and related issues

by J McPhillips

**The May 14th national wage case decision of the Full Bench of the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission confronts the ACTU with some immediate problems. The Commission by its decision rejected completely the claim by the ACTU for a wage increase for a section of workers based upon \$25 per week for tradesmen and those on tradesmen's rate with proportionate increases for those on rates above and below a tradesman together with a mid-year (June-July) increase of \$14.**

As a result of its decision the Commission has deprived over 1 million workers of any increase in wages immediately and for the future, until such time as the circumstances change and further steps are taken on wage matters.

The most immediate issue confronting the ACTU is to obtain for the workers affected by the decision the increased rates which the decision denied them.

But, perhaps, more importantly is the fact that the Commission decision confronts the trade union movement as a whole with the need to reassess its wages policy following the Commission decision and in the light of a number of steps taken since the end of wage indexation in the middle of last year and, in particular, since the ACTU Congress in September last year.

The ACTU claim was based upon the emergence of what it called a "community standard" of wages resulting from increases obtained in a large number of awards and agreements covering a substantial body of workers in the period since the middle of last year when wage indexation was abolished.

The "community standard" pointed to by the ACTU in support of its wage claim was that which resulted from settlement of the Metal Industry Award in December last year.

The employers argued against any increase. They pointed to the fact that

there had been a variety of rates of pay established and that there was not in fact a single community standard.

This point of view was supported also by the Commonwealth Government and some other State Governments.

The Arbitration Commission rejected the ACTU argument and it too, pointed to the fact that the increases obtained in the period under review covered a variety of amounts and that, in fact, the metal trades pattern had not been a standard.

The Commission also pointed to the fact that the increases had been granted on a variety of grounds and this too denied the existence of a single community standard of wage rate increases.

Both the Commonwealth Government and the employers urged the Commission not to grant the claim but to allow the process maintained up to date of the unions seeking increases industry by industry, award by award, to continue.

The employers proposed that this process should continue until what they called "the dust is settled" and then another look should be taken at the question of wage rates. In connection with this proposal they estimated that "the dust would be settled" by August or September this year.

The Commission decision, despite some pretence to the contrary, in fact adopted the employers proposal and in addition to rejecting both wage claims, that is, an increase now and a mid-year adjustment, also decided to convene a conference on the 17th August this year.

Some interesting and revealing figures contained in the judgement show the following:

- ★ Those who have had increases in pay equal nearly 75 per cent of all employees.  
Thus 25 per cent of all employees have not received any increase in pay and they were the ones who were to obtain the benefit from the ACTU claim.
- ★ Those who have received an increase of \$20 or more equalled approximately 42 per cent of all employees.  
That means that 58 per cent of all employees have received increases of less than \$20 and that would include the 25 per cent who have received no increase at all.
- ★ Of those who received an increase, that is, 75 per cent of all employees, 88 per cent of them received increases of \$20 or more.
- ★ Those who had increases of \$20 or more and are due to receive a mid-term adjustment equal only 22.6 per cent of all employees.  
This means that approximately 78 per cent of employees did not receive the full metal trades standard.

The main results of the Commission's decision include:

- ★ A large body of workers (over 1 million), who have received no increase in pay since the middle of last year, are required to continue to meet living costs on wage rates they were receiving in the middle of last year. Since this time the official measure of price movements, the Consumer Price Index (CPI), shows that prices have increased by no less than 10.2 per cent up to the end of March this year.
- ★ Another body of workers, that is, those who did receive an increase of less than \$20 will be required to make ends meet on a wage higher than they were receiving in the middle of last year but nowhere near reflecting price increases. That process of making ends meet on constantly eroding wages will now apply also to the overwhelming majority of workers, approximately 78 per cent of them, because they will not receive any adjustment in the middle of this year. By this time the CPI for another quarter will show a further increase in prices. Having in mind that there will not be even a discussion of the matter at official level until the August conference called by the Arbitration Commission the prospect of constant and further erosion of wages throughout the whole of this year is now a near certainty.

These circumstances obviously require urgent action by the ACTU.

A pattern for this was contained in the arguments advanced by representatives of the Commonwealth Government and the private employers. One of these representatives argued in effect, that those who have not taken action to win a wage increase should not get what was obtained by those who did take action.

Another of those representatives said that if there was to be a flow-on of the metal trades settlement pattern then it should be on the basis of case by case consideration.

These views must surely spur the ACTU into action on behalf of those who have received nothing.

However, there is need for the ACTU and the trade union movement in all its constituent parts and the workers themselves to do much more than just try to catch up with what some sections of the working class have already obtained.

There is need for a thorough-going examination and reassessment of the unions' approach to the question of wage assessment.

The Arbitration Commission has called on all of the participants in this case to "re-examine their positions."

To a considerable extent the outcome of this national wage case is the almost inevitable result of the wages policy decision of the September 1981 Congress of the ACTU and its implementation by the individual unions. The Congress called for action to seek wage increases award by award, and occupation by occupation.

This decision constituted a process of “catch and kill your own.” That is exactly what the individual unions did and each proceeded to obtain wage increases on whatever grounds they could conjure up, of whatever amounts they could squeeze out of the employers. The result was that everyone proceeded their own way irrespective of anybody else.

There was a form of nationwide activity in relation to wages. There was some form of co-ordination of this by the ACTU but it fell a long way short of a truly national wages campaign conducted with the full force of the organised working class movement in support of specific and commonly accepted wage demands.

The circumstances created by that policy on wage increases and the outcome of the actions taken by the unions in accordance with it resulted in the ACTU’s case being the most confused, the most restricted and the poorest based wage case yet advanced by the trade unions.

These and other factors need careful examination and a reassessment by the workers and their trade unions.

Amongst the additional factors requiring examination and assessment are the following:

- ★ Although the relative value of the increases in money wages in this recent period is not as great as was the case in the 1974-75 period the recent increases were, none-the-less, substantial. That fact must be associated with the knowledge that very few of those increases were the subject of contested arbitration. They were overwhelmingly the result of agreements between the employers concerned and the unions concerned and their submission to the arbitration bodies was little more than a routine process to have the agreements converted into a legally binding form.
- ★ Furthermore the extent of various forms of industrial action adopted by the unions in support of the claims were very limited.
- ★ The wage hearing and earlier events showed clearly that both the Commonwealth Government and the private employers, two anti-working class forces in our society, supported the “catch and kill your own” methods followed for obtaining wage increases and vigorously opposed the re-institution of any form of a national wage policy by the unions.
- ★ The major pattern which emerged from these processes and was contained in the settlement of the Metal Industry and Building Industry Awards included, as a decisive factor, an agreement by the unions that no further wage claims would be made for the duration of the agreement, which was fixed at twelve months even though certain loopholes were incorporated into these awards.
- ★ This latter factor was highlighted in the national wage decision as an over-ridingly important element in the recent wage claim

decision reflecting a limitation on wage movements and what is called industrial stability, that is, a strict limitation on the possibility of conflict between employers and workers.

Irrespective of the intentions on the part of the union representatives involved in the negotiations, arising out of which a "no claims" period was established, the fact of the matter is they contributed to creating a set of circumstances which in today's situation facilitated processes of collaboration between governments, union and employers which is aimed at encircling and restricting the trade unions in their contest with employers.

The Commission's wage decision has a special significance in that it also contributes to creating the circumstances facilitating industrial peace which so heavily favours employers.

It is in the light of these circumstances that there must be careful evaluation of the proposals made and steps taken in support of tripartite conferences between governments, employers and union for joint examination and consideration of economic problems and proposals for a so-called "social contract" between the Labor Party (when in government) and the trade unions.

The big issue is that workers are being called upon to accept restrictions and sacrifices which simply hamstringing them during a difficult economic period and place on them the main burdens.

There is also a danger that these matters will be settled at top level with very little information filtering through to the workers at grass roots level, without the involvement of the workers and an outcome which presents them with accomplished facts.

There is an urgent need for the forces of the left in the working class movement to develop a common approach to all of these issues and to contest with the utmost vigour every step which leads to the development of class collaboration.

# Impressions of the Tenth World Trade Union Congress

by Steve Gibson

**This important and indeed, historic event, took place from 10th-15th February 1982. Its importance stems from the fact that it provided a forum for the largest and most representative gathering of trade unionists from all parts of the world to exchange views and discuss action designed to unite and mobilise the international union movement around issues of common concern.**

For the first time in its 37 years of existence, the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) held its congress outside of the European continent. The venue chosen was Havana, Cuba.

The significance of this became immediately apparent to the twelve person Australian delegation, when the great revolutionary leader and statesman, Fidel Castro addressed the congress at its inaugural session. The commanding presence of this internationally renowned and experienced communist, coupled with a moving and colourful display of youthful friendship and solidarity by hundreds of Cuban children effectively created the atmosphere for what was to become a most successful congress.

Fidel Castro's speech embodied a strong call to the working class of the world to seek out to the highest possible level, areas of united activity in the interests of the achievement of national liberation, social justice and freedom from tyranny, while refusing to allow matters on which there exists serious disagreement, to divert the main task of attaining and maintaining a high level of unity.

In the course of his speech, he highlighted the urgent need for solidarity with the peoples of the South American and Caribbean nations who are faced with ever-mounting aggression from the US administration, which takes the various forms of political and economic blackmail, foreign policy adventurism and a constant barrage of sophisticated anti-working class and pro-imperialist propaganda.

He delivered a stinging indictment of Reagan's mad obsession with the US military build-up and the anti-Soviet basis for this suicidal policy. In speaking of Cuba's pleasure at being chosen to host the 10th World Trade Union Congress,

he drew attention to the socialist understanding and mutual commitment to the welfare of the Cuban people which characterises the relationship between the workers, their trade unions and their government.

The congress plenary sessions ran continuously and concurrently with the workshop discussions devoted to drawing up documents on the four themes to be presented to congress for adoption.

The themes chosen for workshop or commission debate were:

- ★ The main Congress document (Trade unions and the challenges of the 1980s)
- ★ Peace and disarmament
- ★ Development
- ★ Transnational corporations.

Delegates were kept very busy, between the continuous plenary sessions, the various commissions and in the case of the Australian and New Zealand delegations, a number of discussions arranged with fraternal delegations. It is worth mentioning at this point that the New Zealand four person delegation, was led by the Secretary of the New Zealand Federation of Labour the other three members being from the NZ FOL executive. This emphasis by the NZ FOL on the importance of participation at top level, contrasts, unfortunately, with the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) response, which was one of declining with thanks an invitation to be represented. It is pleasing to report, however, that three State Trades & Labour Councils (Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia) sent their assistant secretaries.

The Australian and New Zealand delegations combined when participating in discussions with other delegations. This procedure worked well and saved time for all concerned.

All of our talks were valuable but if one stands out in my mind it was the three hour session with a delegation from Poland. We were able to find out at first hand some of the background to the events which brought Poland to the brink of civil war, with all of its inherent possible international consequences.

The Polish delegates were in Havana directly representing their own unions which are and have been affiliated with the WFTU since its inception. They pointed this out, because it was important to dispel any thought that they were representing the Branch Unions Confederation thereby creating the impression that it is only Solidarity's operations which are suspended. In fact, the state of martial law currently precludes the three pre-existing groups from carrying out official organised activity. The three groups referred to were:

- (a) Branch Trade Unions Confederation
- (b) Solidarity
- (c) Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions.

In addition to providing us with some valuable information on the structure and activities of Solidarity, a very relevant and important factor emerged. Our Polish comrades told us that in the month or so leading up to the declaration of martial law, Solidarity's reputation and influence amongst the workers was rapidly declining. It had been decided by Solidarity leaders that an all out bid

for power should take place before their stocks fell so low as to make such a bid impossible. December 17th was to be the day when Solidarity's real counter-revolutionary aims would have been revealed, as they openly confronted the government and the officially recognised Branch Trade Unions.

The government, therefore, had no alternative to take the course of action it decided on and the state of martial law was declared four days before Solidarity's plans could be put into effect, thus averting almost certain civil war.

Our fraternal comrades made it clear that nobody in Poland is happy about martial law, but there is a growing realisation of the necessity for it, given that the protection and consolidation of the people's socialist society, while drawing on the experience and lessons of the past decade, is the issue of paramount concern. They expressed confidence that there is now a new spirit of determination becoming evident amongst the workers as they discuss means of rebuilding the trade union movement by creating a unifying program of action with the dual and indivisible purposes of building socialist society and at the same time progressively improving workers' living standards.

It was particularly interesting to note the reports to the Havana Congress on the work done in the four years since the 1978 Prague Congress in attempting to resolve the serious rift, evident in 1978, between the CGT of France and the WFTU. The CGT delegation informed congress that substantial progress has been made in coming to grips with the problems, which reflected deep-seated political convictions. Much remains to be done before a complete unity of approach prevails and talks will continue following the 10th Congress in a spirit of genuine desire to present to the 11th Congress an even more favourable report.

In all of the reports, speeches and documents from the congress, the twin related questions of disarmament and development shone clearly through. There existed a very high level of understanding of the nature of the armaments race and those who must bear the ultimate responsibility. The relationship between the rapacious activities of the transnational corporations and the US imperialist global military strategy dominated most contributions.

Solidarity expressions with the revolutionary people of Cuba and firm declarations of support for the peoples of Latin America, whether struggling to protect their hard won gains or still fighting to achieve liberation were features of almost every address.

The congress unanimously approved practically every resolution and statement, with a section of the SOHYO (Japan) delegation abstaining from voting on one of the solidarity resolutions dealing with the Polish workers.

Prior to the formal congress sittings, a meeting was held of delegates from the Asian and Oceania region to ratify discussions made at the preparatory committee meetings for the forthcoming Trade Union Unity Conference of Asia and Oceania, which is planned for 1983. The most recent committee meeting was held in Delhi and the Committee for International Trade Union Unity of Australia was represented by National Convenor, Pat Clancy.

The conference is to be held in the latter half of 1983. Three regional seminars are proposed for later this year as part of the preparation for the 1983 conference

The growing strategic importance of our region is illustrated graphically by US moves to involve the countries of Asia and Oceania in its regional and global military expansion. This makes this conference one of major importance to the workers living in the area.

The experience gained by the delegates fortunate enough to be part of the recent Cuban Congress with all of its impressive and memorable aspects makes us well placed to actively support and encourage the all important work of developing a new spirit and practice of trade union unity and mutual support in the Asian and Pacific regions where the challenges of the 1980s are no less real and pressing than in other parts of the globe.

# The resources boom fizzles out

by R Ferguson

**The much heralded resources boom which was to lead Australia out of the economic recession and on the road to recovery during the decade of the eighties is fast fizzling out.**

Evidence of this downturn is appearing virtually daily in the financial section of the national newspapers. In Queensland alone, building projects worth \$1.2 billion, many of which were connected with mineral development, have been abandoned and this figure does not include projects valued at less than \$500,000. Nor does it include the number of developments postponed or placed in the "too hard basket" which is normally the first step taken by the developer when uncertain about following through with a commitment.

The finance section of the *Courier Mail* (23/3/82) under the heading "\$1.2 billion crash in building projects" reports that an analysis conducted by the Australian Federation of Construction Contractors indicates that of planned development for Queensland, projects worth \$15.9 billion are expected to go ahead during the next five years but undertakings worth \$28.9 billion are likely to be scrapped.

In the same article the Executive Officer of Queensland Chamber of Mines, Mr Pinnock, is reported as saying that in the last 18 months feasibility studies have been carried out but no actual commitments have been made. The climate is becoming more and more unfavourable for such moves. He states, "There is no doubt that in the near future there will be an even more evident slowdown of projects or deferrals."

These revealing facts, together with the latest unemployment figures released by the Bureau of Statistics which gives Queensland unemployment at 73,700 or 7.1 per cent of the workforce, show that all is not well with the economy of the Sunshine State.

The cause of this downturn lies within the capitalist system itself and, therefore, cannot be confined or isolated to one state. The position is similar if not worse in the other states.

Clutha Development, NSW's leading coal exporter, is reported in the *Financial Review* (31/3/82) as saying that 1982 will be a "dwindling year" and reported

that while coal production increased in 1981, the export of its coal fell by 14 per cent. The report reflected a similar position throughout NSW, with coal production increasing by 10 per cent to well over 60 million tonnes while exports increased by only 300,000 tonnes to just over 23 million tonnes. Currently there is in excess of 12 million tonnes of coal stockpiled throughout NSW.

The export of Australian coal has relied heavily on the Japanese market and, in particular, the Japanese steel mills (coking coal). Japan having very little coal of its own and an economy strongly based on manufacturing and steel production relied on Australia's mineral development for its much needed raw materials. In addition to coal their needs included iron ore and pig iron for steel making, and alumina for the production of aluminium. In return for the supply of these resources Australia opened its market to Japanese manufactured goods particularly automotive and electrical products.

This trade arrangement encouraged Japanese business houses to heavily invest in joint ventures for the development of Australian resources. This became part of the Fraser Government's monetarist policies for an "investment led recovery."

During the middle seventies the major industrialised capitalist countries, including Australia, moved deeper into the economic crisis which we are now experiencing. The spokesmen of capitalism rejected the conclusion of Marxists that capitalist cyclical economic crises are inevitable and that the "general crisis" of the whole system is deepening. They insisted that Japan's economic growth rate would continue.

This economic myth has now been shattered and the Japanese economy, as with the rest of the developed capitalist countries, is now in decline.

Two articles appearing in the *Financial Review* by Michael Byrnes under the headings "Japan's economic powerhouse runs short of steam" (15/4/82) and "Japan's decline casts shadow over \$5 billion in Aust. Projects" (16/4/82) report in great detail the serious decline in the Japanese economy and the effect on the Australian resources projects, with an expectation that joint development programs worth over \$5,000 million will be shelved or abandoned.

One of the major factors for the reappraisal by the Japanese has been the collapse of world oil prices. Compared with the end of 1980 the latest world spot price for Arabian light crude has dropped from almost \$US43 to \$US28.50 a barrel and one Japanese trading house Marubeni Corporation anticipates a further fall to \$US25 a barrel.

As a result the many Australian non-oil energy resource projects that the Japanese were interested in are no longer as attractive as they were some two years ago when OPEC prices were "sky high."

However, this is only one factor. Overall the Japanese economy is now facing the same ill-effects as the rest of the capitalist world. On March 15th the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that in the last three months of 1981 the Japanese economy declined at an annual minus rate of 3.5 per cent. The *Financial Review* also reports that the Japanese Prime Minister, Mr Suzuki, has forecast that the official 1982 growth target of 5.2 per cent will have to be revised to 3 or 4 per cent. The article reports that Japanese exports have been falling off since the end of 1981. In January 1982 Japan had a trade deficit of \$US1.854 million.

Exports of Japanese steel, a product of vital importance for the Australian iron ore and coking coal industries, as at the end of 1981 were at the lowest level in nine years.

As a direct consequence of this downturn in the Japanese economy, major projects such as the Export Gas Plant on the North West Shelf (\$1,500 million), Hail Creek Coal Mine (\$600 million), Port Wilson Petrochemical, Victoria (\$500 million) have either been deferred or abandoned. In addition the \$500 million plus Lochinvar Aluminium Smelter project in NSW Hunter Valley is unlikely to proceed and the proposed NSW coal liquification plant has been suspended.

In all, projects worth of \$5 billion have either been abandoned or deferred indefinitely.

The effect that these decision will have on the Australian economy, now in deep recession, will cause further hardships for the working class and their families.

Predictably the blame for this recession has been shifted to the shoulders of the working class by the capitalist apologists. They blame wage increases, shorter working hours and industrial disputes. They ignore the fundamental fact that the Australian economy is part of the world capitalist system and has inherent in it all capitalism's contradictions and antagonisms. This is the real reasons why the investment led recovery and the resources boom which was to fuel the recovery is now fizzling out.

# **Marxism-Leninism in the World Struggle Against Opportunism**

By Gus Hall  
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**This is an abridgement of a speech given by Gus Hall  
to a Political Affairs Forum on February, 28, 1982  
in New York City.**

In the interest of clarity and documentation, I will quote different sources, especially statements of the leading bodies of the Italian Communist Party, issued December 30, 1981 and the Communist Party of Spain, issued January 9, 1982.

## **Historic Perspective**

In the great struggles for human progress no responsible, serious, revolutionary party — in the words of a popular American song — ever “promised you a rose garden.” Certainly not a political-ideological rose garden, without thorns and weeds. Especially in the struggle for the greatest qualitative social advance — to socialism and communism.

In every national rose garden there are always some plants you are sure will grow and produce beautiful red roses but which, instead of blooming, fade and die. That’s life and nature. But it is also politics.

All serious gardeners should keep in mind that thorns and weeds are bothersome. But they do not destroy rose gardens any more than the political and ideological weeds destroy, weaken or reverse the world revolutionary process.

In the international rose garden, today’s healthy, hardy, full-blooming, blue-ribbon roses are real socialism, Marxism-Leninism, the international working class and the movements for national liberation.

The world revolutionary process is irreversible and indestructible because there are inner laws of objective developments. And these immutable laws

provide the incentive, mould the political forces, create the momentum, set the direction and steer the course by which human society advances to ever higher levels.

Those of us who are fighters for socialism are on board the new, rising socio-economic plane, powered by working class forces, by the laws of objective developments, and guided by the science of Marxism-Leninism. For us, the difficulties, obstacles and the effects of setbacks are limited by the upward, forward momentum of the world revolutionary process. Each setback has within it the seeds of overcoming it.

It is from this perspective that I would now like to discuss statements and positions contained in the documents issued by some leading cadre of a few Communist Parties.

### **Big Lie — Meeting of Like Minds**

The recent statements by some of the leading cadre of the Italian and Spanish Communist Parties explicitly and implicitly contain just about every fabrication, mystification, distortion and vile slander that the reactionary forces have been spreading against socialism, and especially the Soviet Union for over 60 years.

For example, amazing as it may seem to some, there is no basic difference between the statements by US Secretary of State Alexander Haig — “the Soviet Union shows clear signs of historic decline” and Zbigniew Brzezinski — “the socialist system has become antiquated” — and the Italian Party statement — “The phase of development ushered in by the October Revolution has lost its momentum.”

The vile slander that the October Revolution has “lost its momentum” and that the Soviet Union is in “historic decline” is nothing but a meeting of like anti-Soviet minds.

What is the difference in intent between Alexander Haig’s contention that “the economies of Moscow’s East European allies are in various stages of decline” and the Italian leaders’ position that “(the system) holds in check the economic, technological and cultural dynamics of these socialist countries”?

There is no difference between Comrade Berlinguer’s “it is necessary to go beyond the criticism of individual mistakes and look for the errors in the system” and Haig’s, “the Communist system itself is in trouble.”

There is a striking similarity between the Italian Communist Party’s Political Bureau statement that “the socialist-oriented countries are now faced with retrogressive processes” and Reagan’s statement that “communism is an aberration” and Brzezinski’s “the socialist bloc is starting to disintegrate.”

Is this not a meeting of similar minds?

And certainly there is no disagreement between the many statements by Reagan, Kissinger, Weinberger and Haig and the Italian Party's statement that real socialism "has a system which permits no real democratic participation, neither in production nor in the political field. All democratic discussion within the Parties have been eliminated."

Add to these the corresponding Spanish Party statement that "the Soviet political model.... created the phenomenon that all democratic discussion within the Party has been eliminated" and you can clearly see that these leading Communists have fallen into the swamp with the most reactionary, rabid anti-Soviet and anti-socialist slander campaign ever launched.

### **The Big Lie about Poland**

To prove this charge let me quote from the attacks on the Soviet Union and socialism contained in the Italian Communist Party's statement. The following is the position of the Italian leadership on the Polish crisis, using it as a pretext for a vicious attack on the Soviet Union and on socialism.

In Poland, the Soviet pressure to maintain the same model at all costs.... played an important role in implanting the military junta....

The crisis.... in Poland.... can not be attributed to the manoeuvres of reactionary forces hostile to socialism....

The crisis.... can not be explained without putting in the centre of any critical analysis the political regime in Poland.

In other words, it is socialism, not anti-socialism, that is to blame for the Polish crisis!

And further:

The negative influence exercised by the USSR and other countries of the Warsaw Pact in the crisis was great. Heavy pressure was imposed, impermissible interference.

Reagan and Haig have used identical words.

These malicious attacks are based on the Big Lie, including the lies about a non-existing "Soviet menace," a "Soviet threat" and "the export of revolution,"

There is no difference between the falsifications in the Italian and Spanish Parties' statements and the Big Lie that the Soviet Union is in the business of "exporting revolution," of "imposing its single Soviet model" on other countries.

Are we not at this very moment faced with the same slander in relation to

the struggles for national liberation in El Salvador and Nicaragua and the mounting threats against Cuba coming from US imperialism?

### **What is Socialist Democracy?**

In the remarks by Comrades Berlinguer and Carillo, the word "democracy" is abused in both letter and spirit. The word is inserted every couple of lines, as if it is being used for purposes of decoration and embellishment. It is used to give the false impression that democracy does not exist in the socialist countries, and to show that Marxism-Leninism is in fact a theoretical obstacle to the development of democracy in a socialist society. Of course the truth is the very opposite. The social essence of Marxism-Leninism is to free humanity from all forms of oppression. It is the guiding science in the struggle for real democracy.

Any honest, objective observer would quickly recognise the truth about the nature of socialist democracy. It is a live, dynamic, advanced and ever growing representative system reflecting the progress in the building of real socialism. Right from the word "go," socialism has been more democratic than anything capitalism ever had to offer.

Socialist democracy is a continually developing process. It consciously and consistently moves in the direction of involving greater and greater numbers of people in all management and decision-making processes. It is real people's power.

In the Soviet Union, one out of every four citizens over 18 years of age is involved in decision-making governing bodies.

A visit to any Soviet factory will convince even an honest sceptic that Soviet workers are truly in charge. On the other hand, a visit to any US industrial plant will show that American workers are without power or influence and have absolutely no real decision-making role in the production process.

Under the very best circumstances, bourgeois democracy is 80 percent frills and illusory embellishments, with very little substance in real people's political or economic power.

Socialist democracy has discarded much of the meaningless trappings and replaced them with organs of real people's power with the right and the responsibility to govern and make decisions in every area of life.

Socialism is a new concept, a new ideal. Each step forward breaks new ground. Communists are pioneering trail blazers, discovering a brand new world. And precisely because socialism is always breaking new grounds, of necessity there is always present an element of trial and error, of trying and testing. Of course there are mistakes and weaknesses. It could not be otherwise in the real world.

## **Role of Socialist Trade Unions**

When Comrade Carillo argues that “the demand for independent labour unions and freedom of expression are needs we consider basic to socialist regimes,” he is intentionally trying to mislead. The obvious inference is that the countries of real socialism do not meet these basic needs. On the contrary, it is precisely these needs that socialism has fulfilled and continues to fulfill.

Independent trade unions? Yes. But not unions with ulterior counter-revolutionary motives, irresponsible unions destructive of the workers’ interests in building a better life.

In a capitalist society the class interests of the workers and the bosses are in sharp contradiction. Therefore, whatever differences arise between say the managers and workers must be resolved in the daily class struggle.

In a socialist society, the management of industrial plants and enterprises, the personnel of governing bodies, the members and leaders of the Communist Party and the members and leaders of trade unions are all part of one class, with the same, common class interests. The role of trade unions, therefore, is very different in a socialist society. And they should be. The differences that arise between managers and workers in a socialist factory can be resolved within the socialist system itself.

### **“Plague on Both Houses”**

The depth of opportunistic retrogression is clearly evident in Comrade Berlinguer’s defense of NATO.

Of course, he covers up by saying he does not want to change the balance of power between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. But his real concern comes through when he says, “a change in favour of the Warsaw Pact would mean the extension of the Soviet model of economic planning and organisation” — meaning, of course, the “extension” of socialism!

Comrade Berlinguer wants the working class movement in Europe to put off, to postpone, the struggle for socialism because it would upset NATO.

Camouflaging support for NATO and claiming to be for peace and disarmament, many of the Italian Communist leaders adopt a “plague on both your houses” so-called neutral stance in relation to the “socialist camp” and the “imperialist camp.”

Any neutrality between classes in struggle objectively turns into support for the reactionary class holding back social progress.

Denouncing the division of Europe into two equally guilty opposing blocs, these Communist leaders call for the dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw

Pact countries, under the assumption that once they are dissolved every country will then “develop independent initiatives aimed at re-establishing the East-West dialogue and promote negotiations leading to arms reduction in a balanced manner and on the basis of mutual security.”

Aside from the fact that this position appears to be either the height of naivete or hypocrisy, the statement concentrates only on denouncing the Warsaw Treaty nations, the “Soviet-bloc,” the “Soviet SS-20s,” and ending “Soviet interference, military intervention and pressure on non-aligned countries.” Objectively, this position is nothing short of aiding and abetting the imperialist designs of the NATO alliance.

### **Society of Revisionists and Opportunists**

The ideologues of US imperialism have established minimum standards for membership in the “Society of Revisionists and Opportunists.”

These standards have been carefully formulated by Zbigniew Brzezinski.

The leading Communists espousing the revisionist-opportunists slander contained in the documents under discussion would definitely qualify for membership.

Let us take a look at the criteria set up by Brzezinski & Co: -

- 1) “Disassociation from the Soviet Union and its dictates”;
- 2) “Promotion of democracy and socialism with a human face”;
- 3) “Ending democratic centralism in the Communist Parties”;
- 4) “Advancing policies which correspond to the national traditions of individual countries and mute the class struggle”;
- 5) “Cease criticism of US foreign policy”;
- 6) “Set the Communist Parties in the European capitalist countries against those in the socialist countries”;
- 7) “Discredit existing socialism in the countries in which a socialist society has already been built, particularly the Soviet Union.”

(P.N. Fedoseyev et al., *What is “Democratic Socialism?”*, Moscow Progress Publishers, 1980, p.69.)

### **Cover for Rejection of Real Socialism**

In the world Communist movement the Eurocommunist leaders stand alone in accusing the Soviet Union of “maintaining the Soviet political model at all costs.” They continually charge that the Soviet Union has devised such “a model of socialism in the Soviet Union that denies real

socialist democracy.” They assert that the Soviet Union is an “institutionalised bureaucracy.” They charge that the Soviet Union is determined to “export,” “impose,” and “maintain this model” in other countries by “brutal means,” under the domination of the Soviet “Leader Party.”

I am sure the Italian and Spanish comrades know full well there is no “model” in the real world of socialism, that there never was and, what is more important, no one ever insisted there was.

### **Laws of Socialist Construction**

However, Communists throughout the world will insist that there is a wealth of invaluable, inexhaustible socialist thought and experience accumulated in the 64 years of building socialism. There are innumerable lessons, conclusions and guiding principles derived directly from the building of real socialism that have universal features as well as national peculiarities.. How could it be otherwise?

Denial and rejection of this reality is a denial and rejection of scientific socialism guided by Marxism-Leninism.

Among the universally applicable experiences which have become the laws of socialist construction are the following:

1) Socialism can become a reality only as a result of waging the class struggle in all areas of life, including the ideological arena;

2) The socialist revolution can become a reality only if the capitalist class is removed and barred from economic power, which means taking over the means of production. Also, the enemy must be removed from positions of power in the political and ideological arena;

3) Socialism can become a reality only by the organisation of state power in which the working class, in alliance with the petty bourgeoisie, farmers, intellectuals and professionals, hold the dominant position of power in the country;

4) Socialism can become a reality only if the leading force, the working class, is led by its revolutionary, vanguard Communist Party, guided by and equipped with the creative application of the science of Marxism-Leninism;

5) Socialism can grow and flourish only if it pursues an international policy of anti-imperialism and anti-racism, and if it takes its place in the front ranks of the forces that propel the world revolutionary process;

6) Socialism can prosper only if it plans the economy based on objective possibilities and the resources on hand.

These, and more, are fundamental concepts that are universally applicable. To ignore and reject the wealth of practical experience and knowledge accumulated in building socialism is to move in the direction opposite from the

path of socialist construction.

Of course it is true that these universal concepts must be placed within the context of national peculiarities, traits and traditions. But just as there is universal sameness in the real world of capitalism and the class struggle, so there are universally applicable features in the struggle against capitalism and for socialism.

Again, how could it be otherwise? Denial flies in the face of reason and reality.

Thus, when Marxists speak of multiplicity of forms of socialism, they mean the historically determined variety of ways of manifesting its single substance — the socialist state ownership of the means of production. They have the same mode of production, the same nature of political power. These features are characteristic of the single substance of socialism.

Denying the time-tested principles of socialist construction, Comrade Berlinguer continues to flail away at the non-existent windmills of a non-existent “Soviet model.”

Searching for some kind of model, Comrade Berlinguer comes up with a “Western,” and more specifically, an “Italian model.” All the rhetoric about models is simply the preparation for his absurd conclusion that, “it is precisely in the area of Western Europe that we speak of a third way or stage in the struggle for socialism.” Astoundingly, he adds, “the alternative is in Italy.”

Why in Italy? Is not Italy still a capitalist country where the ills of dying capitalism continue to breed unemployment, poverty, exploitation and oppression?

Are we now to believe that the class struggle in Italy is different? That the ruling capitalist class is different?

### **Eurocommunism and “The Third Way”**

When examined more closely, the “third way” of the Eurocommunists is largely a transplant of the old discredited formulas and cliches from the opportunistic swamps of social democracy.

The Eurocommunists speak in abstract gobbledygook about “no split between socialism and democracy, between social property and social control, between the means of production and forms of democratic organisation and political power.”

But they become very specific and exacting in their demand to discard Marxism-Leninism, proletarian internationalism and “any concept of a workers’ and peasants’ state.”

If not workers’ and peasants’ state power, then whose power?

The logical answer — and one that fits into the Eurocommunist concept — is the power of private corporations, landlords and other petty bourgeois elements. In the real world there are no “third way” class forces.

The Eurocommunists talk about a “democratic society” as if there are no opposing forces, no political and ideological struggles in the transition to socialism. In their fantasy world all forces will passively accept or enthusiastically welcome the socialist revolution.

In fact, they resurrect the old Bernsteinian concept of “humanising the class struggle,” which is nothing less than class peace. It means an opportunistic class partnership, a class collaboration in which the interests of the working class are always subordinated to the interests of monopoly capital. No “third way” schemes can get around this bottom line of reality.

### **Abandoning the Working Class and Class Struggle**

In a very real and fundamental sense the attacks on real socialism are but one element, one by-product, of a creeping opportunistic abandonment of the class struggle arena, both nationally and internationally.

Much earlier, this was the essence of Comrade Berlinguer’s concept which he called “the historic compromise,” in which he proposed a policy of accommodation with the ruling class of Italy in order to pave the way for Communists to become a part of the Italian government.

Now, there is nothing wrong with tactical adjustments. But this was an offer to compromise the real interests of the working class and, in essence, to put the class struggle itself on the shelf. The Italian capitalist class was not asked to compromise any of its self-interest.

### **Role of Soviet Union**

The abandonment of the class struggle arena on the world scene is also in the Italian Party’s slander that,

The role of the Soviet Union *sometimes coincides* with the interests of the countries and peoples fighting against imperialist and reactionary regimes for freedom and national liberation. But, at other times, *it runs counter* to these interests. (Italics added.)

The Italian statement leaves the questions — how, where and when — these interests “run counter” unanswered. And it does so because the statement is another exercise in the substitution of lying propaganda for truth and reality. This is not only rejection of where the Soviet Union stands in the class struggle, but also where it stands in the struggle against imperialism and for national liberation. What other force in the world is as consistently anti-imperialist and on the side of national liberation as the Soviet Union?

Such vile slander is in league with the Big Lie that the Soviet Union conquers, exploits and oppresses other nations and peoples. In league with the policies of US imperialism, this is an effort to separate and isolate the Soviet Union from the forces of the world revolutionary process.

### **Ultimate End of Opportunism**

Maoism's open alliance with US imperialism is the logical consequence, the ultimate end of opportunism. It also started slowly.

The same abandonment of the class struggle is also clear in the continuing refusal of the leaders of the Communist Party of Japan to take a forthright stand against Japanese imperialism. The policies of the capitalist class of Japan are not limited to "militarism." They are basically imperialist.

Opportunists back away from taking a forthright stand against the imperialism of their own country because they do not believe it is possible to convince workers that it is in their self-interest to oppose the imperialist policies of their own country. This backing away is an accommodation and a concession to bourgeois nationalism. Opportunism and bourgeois nationalism invariably become inseparable.

### **Objective Role of Opportunism**

Opportunism influences sections of the working class. But as a rule the articulators and advocates, the most deeply infected and co-opted sectors, including in Communist Parties, are among the petty bourgeois elements. A basic lack of confidence in the working class is always a big factor behind the opportunistic schemes to give up the class struggle. Opportunism blocks out all concepts of working class internationalism because it covers itself with rhetoric based on narrow nationalism.

The pressures on working class leaders come from all sides. They are relentless and never-ending. These ideological and political pressures are both open and insidious, blatant and subtle. There are frontal attacks as well as flank attacks. There are threats and bribes, flattery and seduction. The enemy uses sugar coated pills and silver hooks. There are frame ups and payoffs. They work to soften up and to corrupt.

Throughout history, the great majority of working class organisations and leaders have resisted and rejected such pressures. The history of the working class movement is a history of proud, heroic and militant fightback against opportunism.

But there are exceptions. There have been and there are those who succumb to these pressures.

Opportunism is a no-fight, no-struggle policy. It is a policy of capitulation, of giving up and selling out the interests of the working class. It is a policy

that is covered up by abstract, radical-sounding phrasemongering.

Whatever the revisionist-opportunists may claim about their motivations, their intentions do not determine the objective role they play. That depends on the concrete content and conditions of the class struggle between capitalism and socialism, on what they do for the contending sides, which in this case proves to be for capitalism. Objectively, they stand on the side of capitalism, according to their own words and deeds.

Lenin once observed:

It is not a matter of intentions, motives or words, but of the objective situation, independent of them, that determines the fate and significance of slogans, of tactics or, in general, of the trend of a given party or group. (V.I. Lenin *Collected Works*, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1963, Vol. 19, p. 262.)

### **Some Conclusions and Lessons**

A most important lesson is to understand that opportunism never appears full-blown. It sneaks in on tiptoes, wearing Hush Puppies. It is a slow, insidious development. Therefore, the time to stop the infection from spreading is when it appears in small and seemingly insignificant ways.

The opportunism expressed in these Party statements is opportunism tailored to the relationship of forces in a world where there are two competing socio-economic systems. It is, therefore, opportunism in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism. That is where the so-called “third way” comes from. It is a balancing act between the two systems. But the damage is done to the working class and socialism.

### **Off the Communist Road**

When one does not accept the class struggle, or the unique, advanced role of the working class, there is no motive or compulsion to accept the concept of proletarian internationalism. The concept that the working class is not necessarily your class can also lead to the concept that the capitalist class is not necessarily your enemy.

Certainly, in the two documents there is no evidence that capitalism and the capitalist class are the enemy. There is however, much evidence that socialism, the Soviet Union and the countries of real socialism are seen as the problem because the main fire is directed at them

### **Achilles Heel of Opportunism**

Opportunism is a dead-end street. History is a stern teacher. For the working class, the main lesson is that unity and struggle are prerequisites and preconditions for victory. Catering and accommodating to world

imperialism never resulted in lasting victories. And the class struggle on the world scale — between world capitalism and world socialism — is no exception to this rule. The struggles against opportunism and revisionism are features of the class struggle.

The fortunes of opportunism are tied to the declining fortunes of capitalism. Truth and objective reality are the Achilles Heel of opportunism. Anything and anyone tied to the declining and decaying system of capitalism is doomed to extinction.

Everything and everyone tied to the world revolutionary process, to the building of socialism, to the working class movement and to national liberation are destined to live and achieve history's greatest advance — to socialism and communism.

# For the party spirit

by W Briggs

**The struggle for socialism attracts a variety of people for a variety of reasons. A worker engaged in the battle between capital and labour may develop class consciousness and subsequently socialist ideas.**

People, rightly concerned at the arms race and its potential consequences may well, through experience develop an understanding that socialist policies provide the basis for a peaceful life.

Participation in the work of friendship societies with socialist countries leads people to the conclusion that socialism works.

Working women, victims of capitalist exploitation, may come to support socialist policies through their experience in the women's movement, student's through the day to day issues of student politics, Aboriginals through the oppression of capitalist society and so on.

All socialists probably come to an awareness that socialism provides answers through some particular issue.

With the benefit of the science of Marxism-Leninism the revolutionary party gives each individual a broader view than a single issue allows, develops and fuses these individuals into a unified whole and brings a scientific understanding of the laws of development of society and the interrelationship of the issues and the various parts of the working class movement in its fight against the capitalist system.

Without such a general base the actions of well-meaning individuals remain just that — individual.

The bourgeoisie, of course, encourage this individualism. For them it is of paramount importance to keep the undercurrents of political awareness frustrated. Trade unions, women's, student's, Aboriginal movements and others, by themselves, cannot bring about changes in the basic structure of society, no matter how effective they may be in achieving what are, in fact, limited aims. They may alleviate the worst effects but not cure the complaint, just as the doctor who prescribes pain killers for a cancer patient will ease the pain but not cure the complaint.

Lenin saw this problem when he wrote of the circle spirit as against the Party spirit.

In *To the Party*, written in 1904, he made reference to the problem that crops up when individuals who have a history of circle, or single issue activity, fail to adequately integrate into the wider party body.

“Certain prominent figures in the more influential of the former circles, unaccustomed to the organizational self-limitations which party discipline demands, are inclined from force of habit to confuse their own circle interests with the general party interests, with which in the period of the circles they may in many cases have coincided.”

A political party that does not address itself to the question of overcoming these problems, or actively promotes single issue political activity, will inevitably do itself and the movement it claims to support nothing but harm.

The Communist Party of Australia has chosen a path of chasing the single issue bandwagon. By actively supporting homosexual issues, drug reform and the radical feminist movement (to name just three) they have emerged as the champions of fringe issue political causes. In encouraging such isolated campaigns and failing to develop an overall strategy they cannot develop the people they bring to their banner and make little attempt to do so.

Another political movement which fits this category is the Trotskyists. They temporarily attract young people to their ranks by the deliberate use of single issue politics.

The most current of these issues is that of the struggle of the peoples of Central America. Over the past few years they have discovered and lost interest in South Africa, the Middle East, Vietnam, anti-bureaucracy, Poland, Afghanistan, students, homosexuals etc. Cuba and Central America is just the most recent issue. It certainly will not be the last.

The appeal is always to the romantic view of revolutionary activity. They certainly have fertile soil in which to work.

Young people are often attracted by the revolutionary phrasemongering of these pseudo-revolutionaries. However, once the issue becomes less romantic and another bigger, brighter and more lurid issue bursts upon the scene, the line and emphasis changes, leaving their new recruits, as yet undeveloped, in considerable confusion.

The consequence is that this small sect has a large turnover in members — always young. Emphasis is constantly placed on their “orientation to youth.” But what happens to these young recruits after a few months or years? Revolutionary phrases do not sustain over a longer period, the really hard and mostly unromantic work of revolutionaries. The inevitable result is a veritable graveyard of otherwise valuable people, the victims of single issue politics and a failure to develop a comprehensive understanding of the laws of development of society and what must be done to change it.

A true Marxist-Leninist party, on the other hand, operates from quite a different point of view.

Someone who becomes active in support of one issue and at first sees it as all important may well orientate towards socialist ideals. It is the responsibility of the party to then begin the overall political education of the person,

showing him or her that the one issue is part of a many-sided larger issue — the struggle of socialism versus capitalism. The development of the new comrade is then a matter of gradual and continued growth in maturity, understanding and, through exposure to the broader struggle, a deeper awareness of the movement as a whole. A comrade, thus developed, is more likely to prove to be a long-term and valuable party member. Issues come and issues go but the inevitable struggle continues.

From time to time the party is criticised for “not doing enough” about this or that issue. “What are you doing for the unemployed?, to preserve the wilderness?, to fight against rent increase?”, and so on. To bog ourselves down in endless and exclusively reformist struggle would not bring many worries to the ruling class. While the party activists fight in all possible ways for beneficial reforms it must not become the role of the revolutionary party to do the “patching up” of the inequities of the capitalist system or making it work more efficiently.

Our aims and aspirations must be to bring about basic and overall changes in the very structure of society.

Another criticism levelled at us is that we are conservative in approach. By this it would seem that our accusers would have us espouse all sorts of causes some of which have nothing in common with the class we serve. Perhaps our critics would rather we shouted endless slogans from the rooftops, calling to “smash” this or “overthrow” that.

Those who would have us throw off this alleged conservatism might be happier if we postured in the manner of the Spanish Anarchists of the 1870s, “...nothing has happened as yet, but there is permanent revolution on so important a spot as the public square.” No doubt these “revolutionaries” could not be called conservative, but Engel’s reply to them is as relevant today as when it was written: “...ceaselessly sounding the trumpets, and for this very reason is ‘permanently’ unable to move from the spot.”

The bourgeois would prefer such empty antics. They serve as a “healthy safety valve.” But, the business of building a revolutionary vanguard party is a serious one.

We live in times of rapid social change. To desert a correct ideological stand for the sake of apparently quick and transitory victories would be a gross error.

A leading bourgeois weekly, *The National Times*, recently ran a full page article on a 14 year old member of the Socialist Workers Party. To give such coverage in the form of free advertising is sadly laughable. Were these revolutionary phrase-mongers a real threat they would not get any such support. It is not too much to assume that the bourgeoisie actively encourage such “revolutionary” activities as a means of slowing the real revolutionary process.

Our party needs to be aware of the need to properly develop comrades in order to overcome this tendency to view a single issue as all important. Naturally each issue is important. The revolution in Central America, for

example, has vast implications and must be seen in its true perspective but that can only be achieved by connecting the issue with the wider struggle between socialism and capitalism and against imperialism.

It is inevitable that some comrades will work almost exclusively in one area of activity. These comrades, while doing valuable work must be party members first. By this it is meant that their primary allegiance is to the party which in turn must give the necessary guidance that the leading role of the party would suggest.

This begins in the party branch, at party meetings. The party branch and its executive should be made aware of the activities of all comrades, irrespective of their area of work and help with leadership and advice putting forward well-thought-out objectives and policies. In this way the work of all comrades is enhanced and both the party and those public organisations in which members may also be active are strengthened.

When this does not happen, the tendency is for the role of the party to become unclear, submerged or even to be regarded as unnecessary. Without the development of a strong, disciplined party apparatus we would be condemned to a perpetual circle existence with the circles becoming ever smaller until we become a mere collection of individuals chasing single issues with little or no real result.

Only when we eliminate the circle concept and spirit and fully accept the role and responsibility of the party and become a true party of Marxist-Leninists, can we hope to achieve any real success.

We have the possibility now to develop our party into a truly influential and successful revolutionary party.

Lenin, the inspiration for all revolutionaries, best sums up the need for us to develop the party:

“One step forward, two steps back...it happens in the lives of individuals and it happens in the history of nations and in the development of parties... We have already won a great deal, and we must go on fighting, undismayed by the reverses, fighting steadfastly, scorning the philistine methods of circle wrangling...and striving by dint of persistent and systematic work to give all party members, and the workers in particular, a full and conscious understanding of the duties of party members....The proletariat can, and inevitably will, become an invincible force only through its ideological unification on the principles of Marxism being reinforced by the material unity of organisation, which welds million of toilers into an army of the working class.” (*Lenin Collected Works* Vol 7 p 414).

With the words of Lenin in our minds, let us continue the work of building a party which will eventually be victorious.

# “Superpowers” Theory — Enemy of peace and national liberation

by S. Hall

**On 7th April 6,000 Queenslanders rallied and marched for peace as part of the national week of demonstrations prior to the UN Special Session on Disarmament. It was the largest post-Vietnam rally seen in Brisbane and twice as large as last year's peace rally. It is estimated that about 100,000 marched throughout Australia.**

The Brisbane rally was notable, apart from its sheer size, for the greatly increased realisation that the sole responsibility for the arms race lies with US imperialism and its accomplices. This fact was evidenced by the texts of all the key speeches and by the vast majority of propaganda and slogans advanced.

Divisive and misleading concepts, however, remain. First among these continues to be the theory of the “Superpowers.”

The superpowers theory is the product of Mao Tse-Tung's own peculiar brand of petty-bourgeois nationalist deviation. He used the occasion of the 1957 meeting of world Communist and Workers' Parties to give a glimpse of his thoughts on this subject as they were then developing.

He advanced the idea that there were three worlds: the socialist, the imperialist and the “intermediate” or “third” world. In 1957 he still asserted that China belonged to the socialist world and that the “third” world would only be brought into the socialist camp as a result of a nuclear war between the socialist and imperialist worlds. Every communist party disowned Mao's theory, but Mao persisted and returned to Peking to purge the CPC of cadres who refused to follow his new line. So began Mao's long but direct march to the betrayal of the socialist cause.

It was not long before the logic of Mao's own deviation led him and his followers to revise the “three worlds” theory to suit their own nationalist ambitions.

By 1974, the superpowers theory as we know it today had been fully developed by the Maoist leadership. On April 11 of that year Teng Hsiao-Ping (CPC Politbureau member) addressed the UN General Assembly. The

Maoist leadership had by now found it expedient to lump both the USA and USSR together into the first world — the world of “superpowers.”

Teng said that China and all the developing countries, regardless of their social systems, belong to the “third world” while the developed socialist and capitalist countries all belong to the “second world.” He claimed that most of the second and third world is dominated by one or other of the “superpowers” which seek to extend their hegemony at the other’s expense.

Thus the superpowers theory was born and developed in Maoist China. The Maoists created their theory in order to destroy the unity of the socialist world and the solidarity between the socialist countries and the national liberation movements by painting the USSR as “imperialist.” Peking hoped to destroy the political position of the Soviet Union so bringing the socialist countries and the national liberation movements under its leadership.

When their plans inevitably failed the Maoists moved steadily to a position of open alliance with US imperialism in opposition to peace, socialism and national liberation.

The United States has now become the “lesser evil” of the two superpowers. The socialist world, the national liberation and peace movements are described as “puppets of Soviet imperialism.” Reagan naturally agrees.

But why has the superpowers slogan been taken up by other “left wing” sects? (Recently in Australia this old Maoist battlecry has been taken up by a pseudo-trotskyist group calling itself the “International Socialists” (IS).

The reason is that the superpowers slogan is super-opportunist. The basic contradiction in the world today is between the working class socialist system and the bourgeois system of capitalism. This has been so since the October Revolution in 1917 when Russia emerged as the world’s first socialist state. Since then socialism has spread to one third of the globe making it a world system. Imperialism has continued to unsuccessfully resist the world-wide transition from capitalism to socialism.

By virtue of its size, long experience in building socialism, economic and military strength, the USSR is the leading force — the backbone — of the socialist world. Since the end of the Second World War, the United States has been the leading imperialist power. The USSR is a socialist state of the whole people while the USA is a dictatorship of the capitalist class. Consequently, they are different in every respect except their size.

To propose that a country’s actions are mainly determined by its size or economic capacity is to deliberately ignore the class essence of modern world politics. To speak of “superpowers” in the abstract is to abandon the class struggle on the international scene. To embrace Mao’s superpowers theory is to disregard the main contradiction in the world today.

United States imperialism recognises the main contradiction. It gives overt and covert support to all theories which tend to obscure this contradiction. The “superpowers” idea is such a theory.

American imperialism knows that if it can create a division between the socialist world on the one hand and national liberation and peace movements

on the other, it will weaken both, particularly the latter. It is fully conscious of the fact that the socialist world is the main force for peace and the main source of assistance to the liberation struggles.

Provided sects such as the Maoists and “International Socialists” act to conceal the main contradiction in the world today, all their other talk about revolution and socialism remains hollow rhetoric. Any ideology which attacks the foreign policies of the USSR and other socialist countries and supports the specious superpowers theory will find support in one form or another from US sources.

Imperialism will tolerate “revolutionary” talk, including criticism of US policy itself, provided it is accompanied by counter-revolutionary action. The superpowers theory is a guide to such action. It opportunistically conceals the basic contradiction in the world today and aids the anti-peace and anti-liberation forces.

Fortunately, the Maoists’ attempt to destroy the alliance of world socialism, national liberation and peace failed as a result of an ideological struggle waged against Maoism. But the Maoist cudgels have been taken up by US policy and by its witting or unwitting mouthpieces in this country.

An ideological struggle must be waged against this most dangerous of theories in today’s peace movement.