



Theoretical journal  
of the Socialist  
Party of Australia

# Australian Marxist Review

- ★ *European social revolutions*
- ★ *SEQEB dispute*
- ★ *Marxist parties and trade unions*
- ★ *Working class intellectuals*
- ★ *Our cultural heritage*
- ★ *Dialectics vs eclecticism*
- ★ *Internationalism*

**QUARTERLY**  
**NEW SERIES No 13**  
**OCTOBER 1985**  
Price 60¢

# **Australian Marxist Review**

**Editor: P Symon**

**Editorial Board Members:**

**S Anthony**

**R Gowland**

**A Miller**

**B Rooney**

**Published by New Age Publishers  
for the Socialist Party of Australia  
65 Campbell Street, Surry Hills 2010  
Phone (02) 212 6855**

## CONTENTS

<b>The European social revolutions of the 1940s</b>	<b>World Marxist Review .. 4</b>
<b>The SEQEB dispute</b>	<b>W Dawson ..... 31</b>
<b>Lenin on relationships between revolutionary Marxist parties of the working class and trade unions</b>	<b>Viktor Filatov ..... 35</b>
<b>Working class intellectuals</b>	<b>Gus Hall ..... 39</b>
<b>Using our cultural heritage</b>	<b>Jim Henderson ..... 47</b>
<b>Dialectics vs eclecticism</b>	<b>Martyn Stevens ..... 49</b>
<b>A letter about internationalism</b>	<b>Bill Briggs ..... 54</b>

# The European social revolutions of the 1940s

Following World War II a period of social revolutions took place in Central and South East Europe. The form, content and processes of these revolutions is of exceptional interest to all revolutionary parties concerned with the problems of social change and the transition to socialism.

The *World Marxist Review* established a Commission to study these revolutions and its findings were published in the *World Marxist Review* in issue No. 7 of 1984.

The discussions of the Commission show the substance of the revolutions in the eight countries concerned, their common features and uniformities, the diversity of forms in which they proceeded and the methods and techniques used in carrying out the radical social transformations.

The following are the findings of the *WMR* Commission, slightly abridged. Here and there some detail has been omitted to reduce the length of the article.

\* \* \* \*

## Introduction

The revolutions which began four decades ago in Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, GDR, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia had fiery champions and obdurate enemies, as all the revolutions of the past did. The socio-political revolutions which took place in that period continue to be an issue in the ideological contest and a pretext for diverse inventions and insinuations by the adversaries of socialism.

Even within the working class movement, one will frequently hear this question: were the changes in their eight European countries true revolutions? The social system was changed without the bloodshed of civil war, while anti-fascist uprisings did not occur in Hungary and on the territory of the GDR.

Nevertheless, these were political and social revolutions meeting all the scientific criteria, for they substituted the power of one class for the power of another (or several classes), and radically changed the social structures, the class relations, and all the forms of political, constitutional, spiritual and cultural life. The peoples of these eight countries rose to a qualitatively higher stage of development and advanced to a new socio-economic formation. These revolutionary changes proved to be deeper and more radical than anything these peoples had experienced over the previous centuries.

The mid-20th century revolutions are events of world-wide historical scale and significance for the whole of mankind, because after the Great October Revolution they blazed new trails and developed new forms and methods of transition to socialism. They not only opened up the way of progress for the peoples of these eight countries, but also brought about important changes in the political map of Europe; together with the revolutions in a number of Asian countries — Vietnam, China, and Korea — they changed the face of the world. As a result, socialism, which had initially been established in the Soviet Union, transcended the framework of one country, and this was followed by the formation of the world socialist system.

### **Revolutionary Innovation**

The mid-20th century revolutions had a number of peculiarities and distinctive features as compared with the earlier ones — the numerous bourgeois revolutions, the Paris Commune of 1871, the Great October Socialist Revolution or the Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919 — for they cannot be classified without reservation either under the head of bourgeois-type revolutions or of the earlier proletarian-socialist-type revolutions.

The first thing that leaps to the eye is that they grew gradually, step by step, out of the people's anti-fascist resistance to the German or Italian fascist occupation regimes (the exclusion being the territory of what is now the GDR). In Albania, Yugoslavia and to some extent in Bulgaria, where the resistance assumed the forms of partisan struggles, the anti-fascist national liberation war merged with the people's revolution, as a result of which the peoples not only drove out the fascist invaders, but also overthrew their own exploiter classes and established the power of the workers and peasants.

As early as 1942, the national liberation armies of Yugoslavia and Albania established control over wide territories in their countries, dismantled the old apparatus of coercion, and set up new organs on power. Bulgaria's Patriotic Front, relying on the partisan army, led the people to the victorious anti-fascist uprising of September 9, 1944. These events are regarded as the starting point of the revolution in all these three countries.

In Poland, resistance to the German fascist invaders developed into a revolution after the formation of a provisional government, the Polish National Liberation Committee, in July 1944. The same thing happened in Czechoslovakia after the Slovak National Uprising (August 1944), which marked the

start of the revolution, and the formation of the Kosice Government (April 1945), and the Prague Uprising (May 1945). In Romania, the first step was the overthrow of Antonescu's fascist regime (August 1944), and in Hungary, the formation of a provisional government at Debrecen (December 1944).

Finally, on the territory of what is now the GDR, changes proved to be possible only after Hitler Germany's unconditional surrender, the liberation of the German people from fascism, and the formation of anti-fascist, democratic organs of self-government.

The peculiar change of power is the second important feature of these revolutions which distinguishes them from all the earlier ones. In all the revolutions before the 1943-1945 period, the power of one class was, as a rule, overthrown and the undivided rule of another class established through uprising or other armed forms of struggle, with the new class taking over state power in the form of a government springing from the revolution. In the 1940s, the radical change in the character of power (and that is known to be the main criterion of revolution) was not a one-off act but a gradual and relatively peaceful process. Even in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Romania, where uprisings took place, the undivided rule of one class did not take shape all at once. Everywhere governments involved the participation of representatives of various classes of the society.

There was a similar characteristic feature to the solution of a fundamental task in the revolution like the breakdown of the old and the establishment of a new apparatus of state power. In the first half of the 1940s, the Germans and Italian invaders or their satraps held all the political and economic power, including the organs of repression and administration in all these eight countries. As the fascist occupation regimes and the vassal-dictatorship structures crumbled under the blows of the relentlessly advancing Red Army, partisan contingents and other armed forces, the old apparatus of administration and coercion (above all the army and the police) fell apart in all these countries: at once in some, and somewhat later in others (as in Romania). Other forms and elements of the old state apparatus in most of the countries were eliminated only in the course of the revolution, and in some cases were even used and transformed into organs of the new power.

New organs of power and administration — central and local — simultaneously emerged in the anti-fascist Resistance or on the territories liberated by the Red Army.

Let us bear in mind that provisional governments were constituted everywhere from 1943 to 1945. People's liberation committees, which regulated and directed social life in the liberated territories were already operating as local organs in Yugoslavia as early as 1941. From 1942, national liberation councils were formed in Albania. Patriotic Front Committees were set up in Bulgaria. In the second half of 1944, still illegal national councils appeared in the communities, districts and provinces of Poland. At the end of the year, national committees emerged in Hungary. From 1944 on such committees

also had a big part to play in Czechoslovakia.

These organs, constituted by the people themselves, were the first to seize the initiative in the liberated areas, to mobilise the forces and resources for the country's final liberation, work to resume production, supply the population with the prime necessities and prevent the restoration of the old order. The national committees and national councils were helped by the civil militia, the people's courts, the factory committees, the trade unions and other social bodies which grew out of the organised people's movement.

The power which gradually took shape in the various countries had different names and — what is even more important — had a different class content.

The state forms in which these revolutions developed and the new people's power was constituted were also highly differentiated, especially in the early years.

In the early years, many juridical norms and state structures taken over from bourgeois democracy were put at the service of the revolution. Thus, the 1920 bourgeois constitution remained effective in Czechoslovakia until 1948. In Poland, the 1944-1946 revolutionary transformations rested on the bourgeois-democratic constitution of 1921. Parliamentary elections in 1945 and 1947 in Hungary, in 1946 in Czechoslovakia, and in 1947 in Poland, as also the first democratic elections in the Soviet Occupation Zone of Germany in 1946 were held in accordance with slightly modified bourgeois-democratic electoral laws.

The next characteristic feature of these revolutions is that, with the exception of the GDR, they were at first all equally directed both against external and against internal enemies: German or Italian fascism and imperialism, and their satraps in these countries. This closely linked the struggle for national liberation and social emancipation, and the resolution and consistency with which radical socio-economic measures and reforms were put through. In Poland, for instance, the land reform was started as early as 1944; in Albania, Hungary and East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia in 1945, and in Bulgaria in 1946.

Almost everywhere, the property owned by the German Reich and the war criminals was confiscated immediately upon liberation, while the enterprises of the occupiers and collaborators were sequestered, subjected to workers' control and subsequently nationalised. In accordance with the will of the peoples demanding hard guarantees against any repetition of the vicious events of the Second World War, foreign capital was expropriated and the key industries, financial institutions and banks nationalised in all the eight countries but at different times and in different ways.

As a result, the revolutions in the countries of Central and Southeast Europe went beyond the framework of all the bourgeois revolutions, but did not yet go as far as the Great October Socialist Revolution.

The concrete historical situations in the individual states were so diverse, the balance of forces taking shape in them so differentiated, and the depth and pace of socio-economic transformations so different that no generally accepted definition of the new relations and of the character of these revolutions could be produced. That is quite natural, for the fascist occupation regimes gave way to a new, democratic order, which looked neither like the bourgeois order, nor the Soviet system. To designate the new type of states, the Yugoslav and Albanian comrades used the concept of 'people's republic'. As early as 1944, Georgi Dimitrov used the term 'people's democratic state', while others spoke of the 'state of new democracy', 'anti-fascist democratic system', and so on.

Accordingly, the character of the individual revolutions was also differently defined in that period. In Bulgaria, it was regarded as a people's democratic revolution; in Czechoslovakia, as a national-democratic revolution; and in the GDR, as an anti-fascist democratic revolution. As time went on and experience accumulated, the substance of these revolutions was also more deeply comprehended. Seeking to have some general concept suitable for all the countries, the term 'people's democratic revolution' came to be used, but it was largely abstracted from the national specifics and is not in use everywhere. Besides, historians take different views of its content.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, the character of the revolutions cannot be expressed in any single definition covering every aspect of the multifaceted phenomenon. The anti-fascist, democratic element was the most pronounced element of the revolutions everywhere. In Albania, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia, the point of national liberation stood out more clearly than it did in Hitler Germany's formal vassal states, for instance, Hungary and Romania. Where heavy feudal survivals remained, the revolutions had anti-feudal facets. Considering that the fascists and their henchmen had personal connections with big industrial and financial capital, the revolutions in all the eight countries were, from the very outset, explicitly anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist.

In retrospect, the revolutions of the 1940s are now, with good reason, regarded and defined in general terms as a new form, as a new mode of transition from capitalism to socialism. Depending on the concrete conditions in the individual countries, their ruling communist and workers' parties lay special emphasis on this or that aspect of the revolution.

The documents of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia speak of a people's liberation war and a socialist revolution. The Bulgarian CP regards the people's uprising of September 9, 1944 as the starting point of the socialist revolution because, the Bulgarian comrades say, the people's democratic power began to exercise the functions of the proletarian dictatorship from the first day of victory. The CP Czechoslovakia holds the revolution to be a national-democratic one; its completion paved the way to socialism. The Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party emphasises the fact that the democratic revolution developed into a socialist revolution. The Romanian Com-

unist Party notes the completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, the deep revolutionary transformations and the advance to a higher stage, the socialist revolution. The Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) lays emphasis on the unity of the revolutionary process in the course of which the anti-fascist, democratic transformations prepared and initiated the socialist revolution.

The revolutions of the 1940s cannot be divided into two revolutions, as some did in the past, because no grounds for such a deep demarcation are provided either by the development of the power, the socio-economic changes, or combinations of the two. Their specific feature lies precisely in the fact that they were a coherent process, that they were 'revolutions in movement'. Depending on the concrete situation, specific accents were laid in the individual countries, but all the revolutions were under the influence of international processes that were common to them all: those in the socialist countries, in the world communist and working class movement, on the one hand, and the 'cold war', on the other.

## **Internal and External Conditions**

The revolutions of the 1940s did not proceed in a vacuum, or in isolation from the surrounding developments. They were closely connected with the victorious Red Army's westward drive as it scored one victory after another over the Hitler invaders. The balance of forces in the world largely determined the broad class alliances in the revolutions of the 1940s, their economic and political potentialities, and the forms of struggle, so that, for all the national distinctions, the revolutions in these eight countries proceeded virtually in one and the same historical situation.

The fundamental prerequisite of the revolutionary changes consists in the fact that these developments began after the Great October Socialist Revolution, which had transformed socialism, once a social ideal and a scientifically-grounded idea, into existing reality and ushered in the new world-wide historical epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism. After the Second World War, the general crisis of capitalism deepened and entered upon a new phase.

From the standpoint of the concrete balance of forces in the world, the development of the revolutionary process in the countries of Central and Southeast Europe was determined by four factors.

First, Hitler Germany and its satellites suffered a crushing military, political and moral defeat.

Second, fascism was routed by the powers of the anti-Hitler coalition, with the Soviet Union, a socialist state, making the greatest contribution to the victory and shouldering the main burden of the war against the Hitler Reich. The fact that national liberation, which rescued the peoples of these countries from downright physical annihilation, had come from the East, from the USSR, was for them of tremendous political and moral importance.

Third, Germany's defeat was simultaneously a defeat for the reactionary forces supporting Hitler and Mussolini in the occupied countries and collaborating with the invaders. The right-wing circles were irreparably discredited in the eyes of the popular masses. The fact that members of the former ruling class, the big capitalists and landowners in the first place, had committed heinous acts of national betrayal could not but have an effect on the goals of the revolutions and the aspirations of the masses. For all practical purposes, the parties which had compromised themselves were excluded from active political life.

Fourth, in the course of the struggle against Hitler Germany and its vassals in the Resistance and in the partisan war, cooperation developed among the various political forces which is why, when it came to forming the new power and laying the foundations of the economy, a sufficiently broad national unity was already in existence.<sup>2</sup>

Those are the prerequisites which created a favourable situation for the revolutions of the 1940s from which the Communists were able to proceed. However, it is not right to discount the factors which had a negative effect on developments and on the speed with which social problems were solved. There was, above all, the economic backwardness of these countries — with the exception of the future GDR and Czechoslovakia. Besides, the war, which had been fought mainly in Europe, brought tremendous devastation in its train.

Finally, in the early post-war years, the imperialist powers, notably the United States and Great Britain, made use of their rights and powers as members of the anti-Hitler coalition to meddle in the domestic affairs of the countries of Central and Southeast Europe and tried to hamper the ongoing social transformations.

The three leading powers of the anti-Hitler coalition — the USSR, The United States and Great Britain — had agreed at the Crimea Conference (February 1945) to pursue a concerted policy in restructuring national-economic life and establishing a post-war order in Europe that would 'enable the liberated peoples to destroy the last vestiges of nazism and fascism and to create democratic institutions of their own choice'.<sup>3</sup>

But as soon as the common enemy — Hitler Germany — had been routed, the contradictions of interests stemming from the social systems of the allies made themselves known. For the Western imperialist powers, the urge to halt the ongoing changes turned out to be more important than their commitments to eradicate fascism and militarism. The United States and Great Britain secretly conducted a fundamentally different political line cutting across the agreed decisions of the anti-Hitler coalition. In a cable to the US President Harry Truman in the spring of 1945, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill already expressed profound concern about the 'Muscovite advance into the centre of Europe'. In March 1946, Churchill delivered his notorious Fulton speech about an 'iron curtain' allegedly having been lowered by the Com-

munists in the heart of Europe, and called for an Anglo-American alliance against 'Eastern Communism'. A year later, President Truman proclaimed a foreign policy doctrine which has gone down in history under his name and whose main purpose was to support the reactionary regimes and promote counter-revolutionary schemes in the 'totalitarian' states of Europe by military and economic means in the name of 'democracy and freedom'. The Marshall Plan, which was made public in the summer of 1947, was designed to serve the same purposes.

Direct or indirect cooperation took shape between the United States and Great Britain, on the one hand, and the reactionary circles of the states of Central and Southeast Europe, on the other. Bourgeois politicians operating within these countries or in exile hoped to take over key posts at home with the aid of the Western powers and to prevent the revolution from deepening. By economic or diplomatic means, the US and British governments supported these forces and exerted pressure to force desired changes in the make-up of governments formed after the expulsion of the invaders.

The United States and Great Britain were most stubborn in defending the interests of the bourgeois Polish circles. In 1944, US and British politicians made great play of their propaganda thesis that the Krajowa Rada Narodowa, the country's provisional legislative body operating on the liberated territory of Poland, was 'unrepresentative', and wanted to see it reorganised so as to guarantee the preponderance of the emigre circles. They used the recognition of Poland's western borders, its representation in the United Nations, and so on as a means of political pressure. When the unrealistic nature of these claims became clear in the spring of 1945, Winston Churchill, who wanted to see the USSR join in the war against Japan, tried to convince the London emigre leader Stanislaw Mikolajczk, whom he had but recently been grooming for the post of Polish prime minister, to accept any terms in the negotiations with the Krajowa Rada Narodowa, so long as he managed to get a foot in the door and tried to open the whole of it. As a result of the 1945 agreement between the Krajowa Rada Narodowa and the emigre government, four ministers representing bourgeois parties were included in the new cabinet.

The United States and Great Britain also tried to hamper the consolidation of the people's democratic system in Yugoslavia and to create the prerequisites for a restoration of the old order. They tried in various ways to get the bourgeois politicians into the government and to undermine the sovereignty of the People's Liberation Front at the moment of the country's complete liberation. In the summer of 1944, London exerted direct pressure and made the diplomatic recognition of the new Yugoslavia contingent on the make-up of the cabinet. The Communist Party of Yugoslavia and Yugoslavia's National Liberation Committee, desirous of strengthening the country's international positions, agreed to a compromise in early 1945 and brought into the cabinet, headed by Josip Broz Tito, six representatives of the bourgeois emigres.

Furthermore, in the summer of 1945, the United States and Great Britain

declared that they would recognise the governments of Bulgaria and Romania only after these were reorganised. They also demanded a change in the status of the Allied Control Commissions operating in Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary so as to widen the legal opportunities for interfering in these countries' internal affairs, something the United States and Great Britain had already done in the past. Bulgaria rejected the ultimatum. In 1946, two ministers representing the so-called historical parties (national-zarunist and national-liberal) were included in the Romanian government.

Hungary was also subjected to overt pressure: shortly before the 1947 parliamentary elections, the British delegate on the Security Council came out against its admission to the United Nations on the pretext that 'basic political freedoms' were being violated in the country.

Means of economic pressure were also used against these countries, which had been bled by the war and which were badly in need of assistance.

In early 1946, the US ambassador in Poland protested against the nationalisation of industry and declared that he would object to the granting of US credits to the country. In 1947, the World Bank, under the influence of the Western powers, refused to give Poland a loan. In 1946, the US Export-Import Bank withheld a credit to Czechoslovakia and Hungary for political reasons. In 1947, in response to the nationalisation of US property in Czechoslovakia, the US Administration not only refused to let the country have the economic aid it had already promised, but also impounded a large part of Czechoslovakia's gold stock, which the nazis had taken out of the country and which had fallen into US hands. Despite Klement Gottwald's promise to make good the losses caused by the nationalisation, the United States did not return the gold (the issue was settled only in 1982).

The revolutionary events of the 1940s in the eight countries of Central and Southeast Europe are closely connected with the outcome of the Second World War: the Soviet Union's liberatory role and the Red Army's advance to the Wismar-Pilzen-Trieste line. Bourgeois ideologists have tried to use this incontrovertible fact to back up their claim that the Soviet Union was allegedly 'exporting' revolution, that these revolutions had been imposed from outside, and so on. There has even been some misunderstanding and false interpretation within the ranks of the working class movement.

The USSR certainly played a big part in these revolutions, but it could neither fabricate their fundamental causes, nor 'make these peoples happy' against their will. Revolutions cannot be caused at will, and they do not flare up under the impact of external factors alone. Revolutions are always based on deep-seated national and social requirements, which spring above all from the exacerbation of antagonistic contradictions within the countries concerned. That is precisely what happened with the revolutions in Central and Southeast Europe. At the outset of the Second World War, the egoistic class policies pursued by the ruling bourgeois-landowner circles in these countries led to their defeat and, as a result, to their enslavement by German and Italian

fascism. For Albania, Poland and Yugoslavia that meant military defeat and occupation, for Bohemia and Moravia — surrender and occupation, for Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia, membership of the anti-Soviet coalition and their conversion into vassals.

The conversion of these countries into colonies and semi-colonies of German or Italian imperialism led to tremendous economic, political and cultural regress in these countries. In those conditions, the antagonistic contradiction between labour and capital was modified, assuming the form of the basic contradiction of social life, between foreign fascists and their satraps, on the one hand, and the broad popular masses, on the other. There was a regrouping of the class forces. It is not the Soviet Union, but German and Italian imperialism conducting a colonialist economic policy that intensified the struggle against the invaders by the workers, handicraftsmen, peasants and a section of the anti-fascist national bourgeoisie.

The Red Army was scoring the victories that decided the outcome of the war. In 1944, it began to advance towards the borders of what are now the socialist states of Europe. It became obvious that the Hitler bloc's defeat was inevitable. That, together with the intensified fascist terrorism, the losses, the wartime hardships and the devastation, exacerbated the discontent, protests and resistance of the masses. The above-mentioned basic contradiction was increasingly intensified and ultimately led to the ripening of a revolutionary situation.

The formation of national-liberation fronts was an important milestone on the way to it.

As their influence in the masses grew, the subjective prerequisites were created for the anti-fascist struggle developing into revolution. It is not the Soviet Union that generated them, but the inexorable logic of developments which may not have been understood with equal clarity by everyone, but which was most keenly felt by all the strata of the population. It is not the Soviet soldiers who carried out the revolutions, but the popular masses in these countries, acting independently and for themselves.

The Soviet Union's contribution consisted in the advance of its troops rousing the peoples to overt struggle, while its defeat of the fascist armies, the police and other organs of repression carried out much of the destructive work which is attendant on any revolution. But it fell to the lot of the peoples themselves to carry out the hardest part of the revolutions: the establishment of the new power and the organs of administration, and the revolutionary transformation of the society's socio-economic structures and spiritual and cultural relations.

At that time, the countries which became the arena of the revolutionary events had roughly 100 million people. The fascist period showed, it is true, that the peoples can be kept in fear for some time, but they cannot be ordered to carry out a revolution, to set up new state organs, to share out the landed

estates, to restart the factories and plants, and to demonstrate in their hundreds of thousands in support of the nationalisation of enterprises belonging to the monopolies and members of the financial oligarchy, in support of the reform of the schools and the whole system of education, and the democratic renewal of culture. Indeed, the success of the liberation struggle and the popular revolutions in these eight countries was ensured by the massive participation of their peoples.

When Yugoslavia was liberated from fascism, its national liberation army had 800,000 officers and men, the Albanian — 70,000, and the Bulgarian — 40,000 partisan fighters; over 2 million Poles fought against fascism and the various fronts. The Slovak National Uprising involved 80,000 armed fighters, and nearly 100,000 people erected barricades during the Czech people's May uprising in Prague in 1945. During the 1946 referendum in Bulgaria, 92.7 per cent of those who took part voted for the liquidation of the monarchy. In Hungary, land reform commissions involved 35,000 people, and in East Germany 50,000 peasants, agricultural and industrial workers. These were not Soviet citizens, but Yugoslavs, Albanians, Bulgarians, Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Romanians, Hungarians and Germans all freely taking key socio-political decisions for the first time.

The Soviet Union's role (apart from what has been said) lay in the fact that the presence of its army and its exercise of control functions in a number of countries until the conclusion of peace treaties protected the revolutions against intervention and paralysed domestic reaction, so assuring the revolution of a peaceful way of development. Under a different balance of forces, the probability of armed intervention from outside and sanguinary clashes would have been great. In Romania, for instance, armed provocations were staged in early 1945 by the government of General Radescu. Thanks to the resolute support given to the democratic forces by the USSR representative on the Allied Control Commission in Romania, the 800,000-strong demonstration staged in Bucharest in response to a call from the Romanian Communist Party, and the mobilisation of the patriotic contingents, the clashes did not develop into a civil war. The Red Army's presence also had a similar role to play in Poland, where the right-wing bourgeois circles not only preserved their emigre political centres (the government, the provisional parliament, etc.), but in May 1945 had at their disposal a regular army totalling 200,000 under the command of the Western powers, and also armed underground contingents.

While preventing the export of counter-revolution, the Soviet armed forces observed the rules of international law so scrupulously that even bourgeois politicians from the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party, as archive documents testify, were forced to admit in 1946 that "the obligation not to interfere in our internal affairs is being fulfilled by the USSR consistently and with a tact that is not always usual in the attitude of big powers to a small state. There was not a single case in which the USSR has in any way tried to exert an influence on the settlement of our internal affairs, and its behaviour in this respect

sets an example of honest fulfilment of obligations”.

An equally high appreciation of the activity of the Soviet representatives on the Allied Control Commission was given by the head of the Romanian government Petru Groza, when he said: “Throughout the whole armistice period, the sovereignty of the Romanian state and its independence, and the national dignity of the Romanian people were not infringed on a single occasion. On the contrary, the representatives of the Soviet Government have been a shield protecting that independence, freedom and dignity against any encroachments whatsoever. Thanks to that support, we have been able to rebuff every attempt to limit our sovereignty and independence through external interference in our internal affairs.”<sup>4</sup>

The Soviet Union’s support in the international arena in the period in which the post-war order in Europe was shaped was also of great significance for the fortunes of the revolution in all the eight countries. From 1943 to 1945, the USSR concluded the highly complicated negotiations with the Western powers, which were members of the anti-Hitler coalition, on the Polish, Yugoslav and Czechoslovak question, the Soviet government invariably sided with these countries’ democratic forces.

The Soviet Union, which suffered the greatest human and material losses in the war, helped to create and strengthen the new social order in the eight countries by economic means as well. In the early post-war years, the economic ties between these states and the USSR were mainly in the field of foreign trade. Large-scale Soviet deliveries of fuel, raw materials and equipment were highly important, for instance, in reviving Polish and Romanian industry. In addition, in 1946 and 1947, the Soviet Union repeatedly came to the aid of the people’s democratic states with large deliveries of grain, thereby frustrating the counter-revolutionary plans of reaction, which had a political stake on hunger.

The foreign trade between the USSR and these eight countries was largely carried on under Soviet credits: by the end of 1952, it had made available long-term credits totalling 15 billion roubles on exceptionally easy terms: at 1-3 per cent interest a year. Klement Gottwald characterised the 1947 Soviet-Czechoslovak trade treaty as follows: “The treaty ensures us, on advantageous terms of payment, regular deliveries of a large part of the raw materials our industry needs, and at the same time the sale of a large part of the products of our heavy and light industry, which makes it the iron backbone of our economic plant for the next five years. The treaty has been concluded on a realistic economic basis and meets the interests of both countries, without any political strings whatsoever.”<sup>5</sup>

Let us also emphasise that, by its presence, the Red Army, a class force, helped to invigorate the working people’s revolutionary action and to create favourable conditions for the success of their independent struggle. The very existence of the mighty Soviet Union was confirmation that revolution is feasible and that socialism is not a utopia but a reality. The world’s first socialist

state already had much practical experience on which the other peoples could rely. In their constructive activity, the communist and workers' parties of the countries of Central and Southeast Europe could always rely on the USSR's moral and political support. The fundamentals of the socialist revolution and the building of a new society had been tested in the Soviet experience, but it was up to the peoples taking the way of deep social transformations to master them for themselves.

## **The Communists' Revolutionary Strategy**

The revolutions of the 1940s did not flare up spontaneously, but they were not the handiwork of a handful of bold revolutionaries either. Both the start and the course of these massive movements were prepared ideologically, organisationally and military, strategically and politically thought out, and purposefully and circumspectly carried out at every stage by the Communists, the leading political force of these revolutions.

The communists and workers' parties in the country where these events proceeded had to work deep in the underground, and hundreds of thousands of their members and experienced functionaries died in the dedicated and consistent struggle against the invaders.

The Communist Party of Yugoslavia lost 50,000, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia — 25,000; nearly one-half of the membership of the Communist Party of Germany — 300,000 in 1933 — fell victim to fascism: they were executed, imprisoned and thrown into concentration camps. In view of that ordeal, it is not surprising that at the beginning of the revolutions the communist parties of these eight countries were not too numerous: the Polish Workers' Party, for instance, had about 20,000 members, the CP Yugoslavia — 12,000, the Bulgarian Workers' Party (Communist) 25,000 and the CP Albania — only 600-700.

Through their heroic and dedicated resistance to fascism, invaders and quislings, the Communists, however, succeeded in winning not only high authority and recognition, but also great trust among the broadest popular masses. Since it was perfectly obvious that even after liberation they continued to take the most consistent stand for the interests of the workers, peasants and other labouring strata, there was a rapid influx of new members into their ranks.

The communist and workers' parties were, without doubt, the largest numerically, the best organised and politically the most influential of all the parties and movements involved in the revolution, both supporting and opposing it. Their policy and tactics had a scientific Marxist-Leninist basis. That is what made the Communists the most active and purposeful participants in the revolution. They had an explicit programme, they advanced the revolutionary process, and organised the masses. In short, they were the core of the revolution.

The Communists exposed the roots of the disastrous economic situation

which existed in some countries, warned against a repetition of the errors of the pre-war period (for instance, the Munich policy in Czechoslovakia) and formulated the pressing tasks of the day, a broad spectrum ranging from food for the people, and the restarting of factories and plants, to the eradication of the survivals of fascism and of the occupation and vassal regimes.

The Communists' historical achievement is that they provided a realistic political form for the aspirations and interests of the working class and all the other working masses, showed that these could be translated into reality, organised the social forces required to do so, and gave the lead in the great process of social and political transformations.

But the Communists' great political influence, activity and purposefulness do not yet signify that from the very beginning the revolutions set themselves socialist tasks, that they were carried out under socialist slogans, or that they even had a socialist character. On the contrary, the experience of the class battles in the period between the October Revolution and the Second World War, especially the lessons of the European revolutions of 1918 and 1919, the 24-year history of the Comintern, and also the fact of the fascist takeover and the struggle against it — experience often acquired at the price of blood — inexorably impelled the Communists to draw the conclusion that actual social life and the struggle of the classes do not so much depend on the formulation of goals or on good will, as on the balance of social and political forces and the actual weight of the parties and social movements among the masses.

In the course of the liberation struggle and revolution, the Communists, the left-wing Social Democrats and the other forces traditionally acting under the slogans of socialism did not, of course, make any secret of the fact that their ultimate goal was to rescue the working people from exploitation and oppression. Nevertheless, in most countries (except Albania and Yugoslavia, where the parties in effect put through socialist measures even in the course of the national liberation war), the Communists in that period did not make any socialist demands and did not fight directly for socialism. From their own experience, they drew the conclusion that objective and subjective prerequisites were required for building the new system, and that the masses had to be won over only with the aid of understandable slogans and tasks which they were prepared to fulfil. That is why, in accordance with the situation then existing in the individual countries, the communist parties put forward numerous and diverse current demands in the hope that these could be carried out in a broad alliance of the working class and other classes and strata, in alliance with the democratic parties and organisations.

That was completely in line with the popular front strategy worked out by the Seventh Congress of the Comintern for the purpose of overthrowing fascism. In the course of the Second World War, the bestial fascist policy of genocide created the prerequisites for extending the chosen strategy to the formation of anti-fascist liberation fronts, to include, apart from the workers

and peasants, sizable sections of the middle strata, the intelligentsia and the bourgeoisie which had not compromised themselves by collaboration with fascists. In view of the differentiated conditions and the balance of class forces in the individual countries, there was a difference in the influence enjoyed by the Communists and their programmatic task within the patriotic or national anti-fascist liberation fronts.

In Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, for instance, the communist parties were the recognised leaders of the anti-fascist popular movement from the outset. In Hungary, Poland and Romania, where the Social Democrats (and in Poland and in Czechoslovakia, also the emigre governments) had a greater influence, the Communists succeeded in winning clearly leading positions only in the course of the struggle.

The class basis and the political make-up of the national liberation fronts also determined the character, programmes and composition of the first government organs on which the representatives of the communist parties acted as initiators of the most important economic and socio-political reforms.

The first programmes of the revolutions were formulated: by the Bulgarian Fatherland Front in July 1942, the Polish July Manifesto was issued in July 1944, the Hungarian Debrecen Programme in December 1944, the Romanian Administration Programme in January 1945, the Czechoslovak Kosice Programme in April 1945, the decisions of the Albanian Permet Congress in May 1944, and the Appeal of the Communist Party of Germany in June 1945.

None of these programmes called for the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship or transition to socialism. The emphasis was on the country's final liberation and the establishment of close friendly relations with the Soviet Union and all the other peace-loving states. Attention was also centred on preserving, extending and strengthening the broad alliances of all the working people and of all the anti-fascist democratic parties in rehabilitating the national economy, and punishing foreign and local fascists, war criminals and their henchmen, and depriving them of economic positions. It was, of course, also centred on building the new democratic organs of power, so as to conduct a policy of peace, democracy and social progress, and on ensuring unity of action by the workers and all the other working people as a necessary prerequisite for successfully carrying on the revolution.

The communist parties formulated and made public the following immediate goals: Bulgarian Workers' Party (Communist) — removal of the monarchy and creation of a people's democratic state; Hungarian CP — overthrow of Hungarian reaction and the country's democratic transformation; CP Germany — creation of an anti-fascist, democratic regime, a democratic parliamentary republic; Polish Workers' Party — national liberation and creation of a new Poland without landowners and big capitalists; CP Romania — the establishment of an independent, sovereign, secure and flourishing Romanian state; and CP Czechoslovakia — liberation of Czechoslovakia, consistent conduct of a democratic national revolution, and solution of the

nationalities problem on the basis of equality for the Czechs and the Slovaks. In doing so, the Communists were fully aware that the concrete potentialities, speed and forms of development of each revolution depend not only on the national realities, not only on the actions of the working class and the popular masses, but to a great extent also on the international situation, on the place of the new states within the system of international relations, and likewise on the extent of the influence exerted by the Soviet Union and the Western powers, which were members of the anti-Hitler coalition, in the individual countries.

The documents of that period show that a majority of the communist parties had no intention of swiftly moving on to socialism. Klement Gottwald emphasised at the Eighth Congress of the CPCz in March 1946 that a large private-economic sector would remain alongside the nationalised people's enterprises, and that small and middle private enterprises would be kept going within the new economic systems. Georgi Dimitrov also spoke out from 1945 to 1947 in favour of retaining private property and encouraging private initiative for the country's economic development. A programmatic declaration issued by the new Fatherland Front government in November 1946 even proposed the lifting of a number of restrictions on private initiative which had to be imposed in the early period after the September 9, 1944 uprising to defend the people's democratic gains. In 1946, the SED issued a special declaration in connection with the referendum on the gratuitous confiscation of enterprises belonging to active nazis and war criminals, saying that these measures did not affect the personal property of individual citizens or capitalist property in the means of production. Following the nationalisation of industry in 1948, Poland still had 12,000 capitalist enterprises, and East Germany — 36,000. At the time, the capitalist sector accounted for 10 per cent of industrial output in Poland, for 15 per cent in Czechoslovakia, and for 39 per cent in East Germany.

In the fight against right-wing socialist demagoguery and bourgeois slanders, the leaders of the communist and workers' parties repeatedly said that they had no intention of introducing Soviet power or turning the country into a Soviet republic. Guided by the generally recognised Marxist tenets, which said that countries and peoples could not advance to socialism along one and the same, stereotyped way, all the parties strove to proceed from the concrete conditions, the correlation of social forces in their states and their people's mood, aspirations and wishes. The communists were fully resolved to use the existing historical opportunity and the favourable international situation to blaze new and hitherto untried trails to revolution. That is exactly what they did.

Georgi Dimitrov in 1945-46, for instance, repeatedly stressed that people's democracy was not Soviet power, and that the conditions of struggle for socialism in European countries were different from those which had existed in tsarist Russia in 1917-1918, and that when Bulgaria started to advance

towards socialism, they would strive to have it built by the whole people. When the Socialist Unity Party of Germany was set up in 1946, the German Communists drew special attention to the fact that the new party 'regards the basic propositions of Marxism not as a scheme or a hard-and-fast credo, but as something to apply in the specific German conditions and to the specific German way of development'.<sup>6</sup> In the summer of 1945, Klement Gottwald said: "We in our Republic are going through a peculiar type of development which cannot be fitted into any stereotype and under which we must seek our own ways, our own methods, and our own Czech and Slovak policy."<sup>7</sup>

The logic of revolutionary development and the change in its conditions, above all the acts by the reactionary bourgeois forces and the 'cold war' atmosphere created by US imperialism, and also some of the processes within the emergent socialist camp, subsequently called for more radical measures of a socialist character and accelerated the transition to socialism.

Let us recall that even during the national liberation war, such revolutionary measures were advocated by the CP Yugoslavia. The CP Albania looked to a socialist revolution from February 1946. The Hungarian CP (jointly with the Social Democratic Party of Hungary) put the propaganda of socialist ideas on the agenda in May 1946. That same year, the Polish Workers' Party formulated the conception of a Polish way to socialism. The Bulgarian and Czechoslovak parties began to speak of transition to socialism at the end of 1947 and the beginning of 1948.

From 1947 and 1948, these countries got down to national-economic planning. The rehabilitation of the national economy was completed in general form within the framework of the early annual or two-year plans. With the drawing up of the first five-year plans in 1949-50, most of these states started the balanced construction of the foundations of socialism. In the GDR, the transition to socialism was announced in 1952.

The establishment of the ideological and organisational unity of the working class and the working class movement became an important prerequisite for advance to socialist construction.

As early as April 1946, following a year of solid politico-ideological preparation and practical unity of action in East Germany, 680,000 Social Democrats and 620,000 Communists united in the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED). In 1948, united working class parties took shape in most of the other countries where the revolutions had taken place. In February, the Communist and Social Democratic parties of Romania merged into the Romanian Workers' Party, and in August the Bulgarian Workers' Party (Communist) and the Social Democratic Party of Bulgaria merged into the Bulgarian CP; in mid-June, the Hungarian CP and the Social Democratic Party merged into the Hungarian Working People's Party, and at the end of June the unification of Czechoslovak Social Democrats with the CP Czechoslovakia was completed. In December of that year, the Polish Workers' Party and the Polish Socialist Party set up the Polish United Workers' Party.

These processes developed on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, markedly accelerating the maturity of the subjective factor of the revolution and turning the fraternal parties into a true leading and guiding force of the society capable of coping with the exceptionally difficult task of transition from capitalism to socialism.

### **In the Flames of the Class Struggle**

The revolutions in Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, GDR, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia were not minority revolutions, as bourgeois ideologists assert. These were truly major democratic revolutions. First, they were characterising the massive involvement of all the classes and strata of the society. Second, all the fundamental decisions of the revolutions were taken in the course of the mass struggle carried on by democratic, parliamentary or extra-parliamentary means. Third, these revolutions were distinguished by their democratic methods.

Revolutions do not develop in sterile social conditions, and certainly not in an atmosphere of universal good will. They make headway through acute conflicts, ideological, political, economic and sometimes military confrontations between classes. Only through the clash of opinions, strategic conceptions and political programmes, which is inevitable in any revolution, do the parties and social movements win over the masses and make their way to power. There is no mechanical determinism about the class struggle. To recognise that the revolutionary process is law-governed and that it reflects social progress does not imply a denial of the role of accident, the subjective factor or the individual. On the contrary, in that sense every revolution contains within itself a broad spectrum of diverse alternatives, and it depends above all on the forces which are predominant in the revolution which of them is to be translated into reality.

In all these revolutions, the Communists were unquestionably just such a political force. That being so, did they hold all the key positions from the very outset? No, they did not. The communist parties remained in a minority in all the early provisional governments.

Of the 16 ministers of the first Fatherland Front government in Bulgaria in September 1944, only four were Communists. The first Czechoslovak government in Kosice consisted of nine Communists, 13 members of other parties, and four non-party ministers. In the first Hungarian government in Debrecen, the ministerial post ratio between Communists and non-Communists was three to seven, in the Yugoslav government formed in March 1945 — eight to 20, and in the reorganised provisional national unity government of Poland in June 1945 — seven to 14. The first Romanian government set up after the August uprising even had a big-bourgeoisie character. Only the fourth government set up in March 1945 under the chairmanship of Petru Groza could be regarded as a people's government: it included 13 members of the National Democratic Front, including four Communists, and five members of the National Liberal Party. In the early period, even the posts of chairman of

the council of ministers in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Romania were initially filled by non-Communists. President Edvard Benes of Czechoslovakia was a bourgeois politician, while the Hungarian Zoltan Tildy articulated the attitudes of the peasants and the urban petty bourgeoisie.

This make-up of the highest organs of power often failed to reflect the actual balance of forces, the influence on the masses and the revolutionary potentialities of the individual parties and politicians. This applies especially to Poland and Yugoslavia, where representatives of the bourgeois emigres were included in governments only under pressure from Britain and the United States.

All the revolutionary provisional governments relied on a broad alliance of class forces and on the patriotic (national) fronts which emerged in the course of the liberation struggle, and politically brought together several parties, including typically bourgeois parties.

The checkered social and party-political make-up of the governments corresponded to the political reality of that period and in the main reflected the existing pattern of class forces in the individual countries. Apart from workers, peasants and democratic intellectuals, members of non-fascist groups of the bourgeoisie were also represented on the governments, and the latter naturally sought to direct the revolutions along bourgeois lines and to get them over with as soon as possible. Under the pressure of events and the mood of the masses, the Horthyites on the Hungarian provisional government, and the bourgeois ministers of the Czechoslovak and Polish governments were forced to sign anti-fascist, democratic programmes. There was also a possibility of confronting bourgeois politicians who pursued counter-revolutionary purposes with this alternative: either they fulfilled their obligations and remained participants in the revolution, or they exposed themselves before the masses as an anti-democratic force.

Consequently, the political condition, character of power, and balance of class forces, the interrelations of the political parties within and outside the national fronts in that period were extremely diverse and multi-layered, or pluralistic, to use a modern term, in all the countries.

Bourgeois politicians within the governments and leadership of the political parties not only held important posts, but also had the possibility of carrying on legal political and public activity. Initially they did have a considerable influence on the masses of working people, such as the peasants in Hungary and Poland, and the urban petty bourgeoisie in Czechoslovakia.

The opponents of the revolutions of the 1940s frequently say that the members of the provisional governments and other new organs of power were not elected in a democratic way and, for that reason, ruled 'illegally'. Indeed, these organs did not emerge from bourgeois parliamentary elections, but, as in other revolutions, sprang from the revolutionary sovereignty of the people, who set up these organs, controlled them and, whenever necessary, removed those who badly served their interests.

While those who exercised the revolutionary power and built the new life from the very outset had not been elected, they were, none-the-less, true representatives of the people, as will be seen from the composition of the revolutionary organs and the policy they conducted. Here is one example. The Provisional Debrecen National Assembly consisted of more than 80 workers and poor peasants, 60 intellectuals, 36 middle and rich peasants, and about the same number of businessmen and merchants.

The profoundly democratic character of the revolutionary organs which were set up is evidenced by the following fact which is, in principle, unusual for any revolution: they were fairly rapidly legitimised electorally and then acquired a constitutional basis.

Never before in the history of these countries had elections been prepared or held in such a democratic way. They were held just when the early socio-political reforms were in full swing: the landed estates were being shared out, the enterprises of the fascist big bourgeoisie confiscated, and the education system restructured. By then, the programmatic goals of the national fronts were well known. That is why the voting amounted to a decision on the goals and content of the revolutions which the people took by means of their ballot papers, i.e., with the observance of democratic legality even according to bourgeois-parliamentary concepts.

All the political and social forces — both proponents and opponents of the new democracy — were aware of this, and that was the spirit in which they all prepared for and took part in the elections.

In Czechoslovakia, Hungary and what subsequently became the GDR, where there were no overtly opposition parties, the supporters of the big bourgeoisie and the landowners set up opposition groups within the national front parties to campaign against the revolutionary forces in the elections and try to explode their unity from inside.

Sensible of their political weakness, the right-wing bourgeois circles looked to the Western powers for support in the electoral struggles. The Yugoslav opposition, for instance, opted for the tactic of boycotting the elections in 1945 in the hope of providing the United States and Great Britain with a pretext for intervention. Bulgarian reaction took the same attitude: it cast doubt on the democratic character of the forthcoming elections and proposed that they should be held under the control of the allied powers. At the Potsdam Conference, the US delegation made diplomatic recognition of Bulgaria and Romania directly contingent on the elections and a reorganisation of their governments. That was followed by a string of official notes and ultimatums by the British and US representatives on the Allied Control Commission in Bulgaria. But none of this helped, and Bulgarian reaction suffered a crushing defeat in the elections.

In 1946, the bourgeois circles once again tried to use the same means before the elections to the Grand People's Assembly in Bulgaria. A month

before the electoral campaign ended, the United States demanded that an international commission should be set up to supervise the course of the elections and that two prominent members of the opposition should be co-opted into the government, without waiting for the election returns. For several years, the West kept putting the most stubborn pressure over elections in Poland: the United States and Great Britain wanted the polling to be held as soon as possible, before the democratic forces were politically consolidated, and tried to interfere in the electoral law. The returns testified to the outcome of that stormy class struggle.

The revolution faced the most difficult situation in the parliamentary elections in Hungary (November 1945). The Communists and Social Democrats together won 34 per cent of the vote, the Small Holders' Party — 57 per cent, and the others another nine per cent. A week later, the elections to Yugoslavia's Constituent Assembly gave the Popular Front candidates over 96 per cent of the vote. Equally convincing were the results of the voting held simultaneously in the elections for the People's Assembly of Bulgaria. Despite the boycott announced by the opposition, 85.5 per cent of the voters went to the polls, and 88 per cent of them voted for the joint ticket of the five Fatherland Front parties.

In the elections to Poland's legislative Sejm (January 1947), the common ticket of the four Democratic Bloc parties won 80.1 per cent of the vote, while Mikolajczyk's opposition party got only 10.3 per cent.

These results were a resounding vote of confidence in the way the revolutions had travelled until then, and simultaneously a mandate from the electorate to the legislative assemblies, governments and parties to continue advancing along that way.

That did not, of course, mark the end of the contest, i.e., of the acute struggle between the proponents of the revolution, and the forces trying to restore the pre-war order. In the hope of support or direct intervention from the United States and Great Britain, the counter-revolutionary opposition tried again and again to reverse the tide of history. But being unsure of winning in open democratic struggle for the masses, these circles opted for conspiracy, sabotage, reactionary plots and even armed attacks. Thanks to the Communists' circumspect policy, the revolutionary forces' unity, patience and vigilance, and, not least importantly, the temporary presence of Soviet troops, the bitter class struggle did not, as a rule, assume the form of armed clashes or civil war.

In long, hard and often sharply exacerbated contest between the people and reaction, and clashes of opposite political conceptions, the progressive forces, with the Communists at their head, gained superiority and won over the masses to their side. This will be seen, for instance, from the fact that in the following parliamentary elections in Hungary (August 1947), the left-wing bloc of democratic parties already won 61 per cent of the poll, while the communist party (22 per cent) became the strongest group in the national assembly.

Did the Communists behave disloyally with respect to their partners and the other national front parties? No, they did not. Even where the elections showed them to be the strongest parties and where they had, according to the rules of bourgeois democracy, the right to form one-party governments, the Communists refrained from doing so. In 1945, Georgi Dimitrov put it very concisely when he said: "It is malicious legend and slander to say that the Communists wanted to seize the whole of the power and that they had allegedly even seized the whole power...It is not true that the Communists wanted to have a one-party administration."<sup>8</sup>

The February 1948 events in Czechoslovakia showed how the communist parties acted in the revolution, making use of the legal forms of democratic action and struggle, including parliament, mass demonstrations, rallies, etc. When preparing for the parliamentary elections, the CP Czechoslovakia got down to vigorous work under the slogan: 'Win over the Majority of the Nation'. In response, the reactionary forces decided to take a gamble and to engineer a government crisis. They expected President Benes to accept the resignation of the right-wing ministers and to form a provisional government of civil servants, whom the West would then help to pave the way back from the national democratic revolution to the traditional pre-Munich-type bourgeois democratic order.

But in response to the attempt to stage that counter-revolutionary putsch, the Communist Party roused the masses to a broad offensive: the working people's revolutionary organisations — factory councils and peasant committees — came out against reaction. A warning general strike, involving 2.5 million people, and a demonstration by contingents of the People's Militia showed who actually held power. Benes was forced to reorganise the National Front government by including the progressive representatives of political parties and trade unions. Klement Gottwald later emphasised that even that complicated situation was settled by the CPCz and the National Front 'by democratic, constitutional and parliamentary methods'.<sup>9</sup>

The subsequent course of the revolutions in the individual countries and the various degrees of polarisation of the class forces, above all the line pursued by the individual bourgeois parties, determined their fortunes. Because of their small size, some of them disbanded, others were dissolved for engaging in counter-revolutionary and unconstitutional activity, while still others continued to exist, gradually modifying their policies and character, and continuing to play an independent political role in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the GDR and Poland to this day, being represented on the governments and other organs of power in these countries.

The deep revolutionary changes of the 1940s, the laying of the foundations of socialism in the 1950s, and subsequent developments brought about a radical change in the economic basis and ideological superstructure of these eight countries, and in the social conditions and living standards of their peoples. Gone are exploitation, class greed, economic crises, curbs on the

working people's social rights, privileges in education, and many other defects of the capitalist society. For a number of reasons, there is a big difference in the overall level of development of the individual socialist countries, the extent to which the material and cultural requirements of the masses are satisfied, and the forms in which socialist democracy is practised. But everywhere the people's industriousness and spiritual wealth, and their unity round the Marxist-Leninist parties have yielded tremendous economic and social results. Never before in the lifetime of two generations have social conditions been so radically changed for the better.

A great many difficulties and obstacles had to be overcome on the way to socialism and in acute class struggles against the reactionary forces in all the eight countries. As in any revolution, 'many things have been done which it would have been better to leave undone, and many things have been left undone which it would have been better to do'.<sup>10</sup> In the late 1940s and early 1950s, 'serious mistakes and tragic errors were made. The difficulties have been overcome and the errors gradually corrected,' says, for instance, an Address issued by the CPCz CC.<sup>11</sup>

The record of the revolutions in the countries of Central and Southeast Europe shows that it is impossible to create a totally new social system and overcome the difficulties at home and abroad at one go, within a few years, because it takes time to do so, especially in view of the peoples' differing historical and political experience; and the different levels of development and potentialities of these states.

## **Enriching the Revolutionary Theory**

When making history, the revolutions enrich the peoples' experience, create new social realities and produce new social theories, confirming some truths and conclusions, and discarding others. The social revolutions of the 1940s in Europe, together with the people's revolutions in Vietnam, China and Korea did both: they not only changed these countries and the balance of forces in the world, but also made a major creative contribution to the further development of the Marxist-Leninist theory, especially the doctrine of the socialist revolution and the strategy of building the new society.

The outstanding leaders of the revolutions of the 1940s were, of course, even then aware that the ongoing transformations paved the way to socialism and added to the already existing Soviet system yet another, new form of transition from capitalism to socialism. While the events were still in full swing, it was understandably hard to obtain an all-round theoretical comprehension of their substance and perspectives. With the passage of time, the opinions on this score which existed in the early years tended to change and gain in depth.

In 1946, for instance, General Secretary of the PWP CC Wladyslaw Gomulka and the leaders of the Hungarian CP believed that in the light of the international and concrete national conditions there was a possibility of

developing towards socialism through people's democracy as a form of power used in place of the proletarian dictatorship. At the 15th Congress of the CP Germany in 1946, Wilhelm Pieck said: As a result of the special situation which has taken shape after the break-up of the reactionary state apparatus of coercion and the establishment of a democratic state 'there is a possibility for the working class to advance to political domination in a peaceful way, by democratic means. In order to guarantee this way, in order to spare our people great sacrifices in a bloody civil war, we now want to set up the SED.'<sup>12</sup>

Following Georgi Dimitrov's speech at the Fifth Congress of the Bulgarian CP (December 1948) and Boleslaw Bierut's at the PUWP Unity Congress (December 1948), the proposition that the states of people's democracy exercised the functions of proletarian dictatorship was generally accepted.

Later, as more experience was gained, the ruling parties of the eight countries, together with the CPSU, summed it up theoretically, the first such collective discussion being held in September 1947 during the Information Meeting of some communist and workers' parties in Poland, which was attended by representatives of the leadership of the communist parties of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, France, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, USSR and Yugoslavia. The regimes created by the revolutions were assessed as a new type of state in which power belongs to the people and large-scale industry and the banks to the state, where the working class in alliance with other working people holds the leading positions, and where the foundations are being laid for transition to socialism.

Following an in-depth analysis of the radical changes in the international situation and a summing-up of the historical experience of the USSR and other socialist states, the 20th Congress of the CPSU, which was held in 1956, elaborated the Marxist-Leninist proposition on the diversity of forms of transition by various countries from capitalism to socialism and indicated the possibility of peaceful transition to socialism. It emphasised the tremendous importance in the context of the present epoch of Lenin's principle of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems and drew the conclusion that there was a realistic prospect of averting another world war.

The overcoming of the personality cult, which is alien to Marxist-Leninism, and its consequences had a positive effect on the fraternal parties' mutual relations and on their ideological and theoretical cooperation.

During the celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution there was a Meeting of Representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties of the socialist countries, which adopted a Declaration formulating the general uniformities of the socialist revolution and socialist construction, analysing the diverse potentialities of such a revolution, including peaceful transition to socialism, without civil war, and with the use of parliamentary methods, and setting forth the principles of relations and cooperation between socialist countries.

The new generalisations, conclusions and theoretical propositions made in the 25 years since then have enriched, specified or corrected the old ones. In this respect, the same thing happened after the revolutions of the 1940s, as after the October Revolution. As the problems and tasks of socialist construction were tackled, the theoretical concept of socialism became more precise and concrete. In 1923, Lenin said that, compared with the pre-revolutionary period, our whole notion of socialism had radically changed.<sup>13</sup> Something similar also occurred after the mid-20th century revolutions, whose concrete course and everyday practice of socialist construction proved to be more diverse and vibrant, more contradictory and protracted than the Communists had imagined before the start of the transformations and the parties had formulated in their programmes.

The revolutions of the 1940s and the development of the socialist society since then have, on the one hand, provided convincing confirmation of many of the theoretical generalisations made by Lenin and the CPSU in the light of the USSR's experience. On the other hand, they have also brought much that is new — in practice and in theory — but then one cannot expect things to be otherwise in such creative and innovative processes as revolutions are.

The new elements relate above all to the following:

- the possibilities, conditions and forms of winning power;
- the state forms and political systems of socialism;
- the social motive forces and allies of the revolution;
- the ways, forms and methods of the socialist transformation of industry, the handicrafts, commerce and agriculture;
- the pace and duration of the period of transition from capitalism to socialism;
- the understanding of the dialectics of the general uniformities and the concrete historical and national conditions of the revolution and socialist transformations.

On all these questions, the Marxist-Leninist theory is now ampler, more comprehensive and more precise than it was 40 years ago. In addition, the Marxist-Leninist theory faced a great many new problems arising from the fact that the revolutions of the 1940s had transformed socialism into a world system. That made it necessary for the communist and workers' parties to take the next step in the creative elaboration of theory, i.e., to sum up the experience of the socialist states' economic and political relations with each other.

The revolutions whose anniversaries we are marking once again prove the correctness of the Marxist-Leninist proposition that revolutions are not carried out according to recipe, and that they cannot be bent to a scheme worked out in advance, to some cut-and-dried model. On the contrary, life has demonstrated the unusual diversity of the goals and the political and social motive forces of the revolutions, forms of takeover of power, methods of exercising it, and ways of carrying out socialist transformations.

But for all that they undoubtedly have features, principles and goals which are proper to all revolutions, regardless of the geographical location of the countries in which they take place, the levels of their socio-economic development and national traditions.

In all the states of Central and Southeast Europe here being considered the working class, led by the Marxist-Leninist parties, wields political power and acts in alliance with other working classes and strata, social property in the means of production exists everywhere, and economic development is planned. Socialist democracy is developed on the basis of the working people's truly wide-ranging participation in every sphere of social life, and the socialist ideology and culture are being moulded.

There are both similarities and dissimilarities to the eight revolutions in the states of Central and Southeast Europe: in all of them, fundamentally the same socio-economic relations have been shaped in different ways as a result of the application of a variety of forms and methods.

The unity of substance, of the ideological and political principles, lines of development and ultimate goals makes these revolutions similar, and not only to each other, but also to the Great October Socialist Revolution, and to the revolutions in Vietnam, China, Korea and Cuba, while the choice of concrete paths for the society's advance and the ways and means used to transform it are different. In the latter sense, each of the revolutions is the only one of its kind, a unique phenomenon. In terms of the results of the radical changes, they all belong to the same type of revolution continuing the way of the October Revolution.

From this standpoint, the concepts of general uniformities and specific features which are usually used to compare relations in various countries express the dialectics of these relations only partially, especially when these two sides of the same coin are contrasted to each other. Lenin gave this a highly precise formulation: 'The universal exists only in the individual and through the individual.'<sup>14</sup>

The problem of the diversity of ways of social transformation can be understood through the dialectics of the common features of the revolutions and the concrete conditions in which they are expressed, the correlation of form and content, of the law-governed and the accidental, of the world-wide historical universality and the specific methods, duration and pace of each revolution.

If one considers the forms, ways and means in carrying out a revolution there are, of course, very many in the advance to the new society, while there is only one socio-economic substance to the transition from capitalism to socialism.

The socialist system, in the form in which it now exists in all these eight countries, with all its historic achievements and with all that has yet to be achieved, with all its advantages and problems, is the outcome of the interac-

tion of objective prerequisites and the subjective factor, an indicator of the capability of the ruling Marxist-Leninist parties to apply the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism creatively to the concrete conditions of individual countries. The new society is the product of the innovation of the working class acting in alliance with the peasantry and the intelligentsia, that is with the whole people. The new system which has taken shape as a result of the revolutions of the 1940s is deeply rooted in history, for it has inherited and carried on everything that was progressive, humanistic and democratic in the history of the peoples of these countries, embodying, for its part, the development of the ideals of progress, democracy and humanism.

The socialist states of Central and Southeast Europe have travelled a long and impressive way. They have accumulated a vast amount of experience which is of historical significance. The most important conclusions to be drawn from it, said former CPSU CC General Secretary, Konstantin Chernenko, is the need for the socialist countries to be united, for unity helps them to score fresh successes in their creative and constructive endeavour. It helps them to safeguard what has been gained by the labour effort of millions, to beat back the attacks of the class adversary, and confidently to advance along the way of peace and socialism.

## References

- (1) One group regards the 'people's democratic revolution' as a special type of general democratic revolution proceeding under the leadership of the working class and its party, and preceding the socialist revolution. In other words, 'people's democratic revolution' includes the process of the society's transformation until the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship. Others identify the 'people's democratic revolution' with the socialist revolution, arguing that the revolution begins with the establishment of a socialist state and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The participants in the discussion held the view that 'people's democratic revolution' is a coherent and consistent revolutionary process passing through various phases of development, including the anti-fascist, anti-imperialist, and democratic stages of approach to the socialist revolution and the proletarian dictatorship.
- (2) The third and fourth factors did not operate in the Soviet occupation zone in Germany.
- (3) *Tehran. Yalta. Potsdam*. Collection of Documents, Moscow, 1970, p. 189 (in Russian).
- (4) *Scinteia*, September 20, 1947.
- (5) K. Gottwald, *Spisy*, Vol. XIV, Prague, 1958, p. 219.
- (6) *Bericht vom 15. Parteitag der KPD*, Berlin, 1946, pp. 102-103.
- (7) K. Gottwald, *Spisy*, Vol. XII, Prague, 1955, p. 83.
- (8) G. Dimitrov, *Works*, Vol. II, Sofia, 1954, p. 290 (in Bulgarian).
- (9) K. Gottwald, *Spisy*, Vol. XV, Prague, 1961, p. 234.
- (10) Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1969, p. 385.
- (11) *Rude Pravo*, April 21, 1984.
- (12) *Bericht vom 15. Parteitag der KPD*, p. 209.
- (13) See V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 474.
- (14) *Ibid.*, Vol 38, p. 36l.

# The SEQEB dispute

by W Dawson

After eight long months the ACTU, the Queensland Trades and Labor Council (QTLC) and a number of individual unions have declared against any further industrial action in support of the SEQEB electrical workers. They have been told that they should look for other employment or try and get re-employment in their former jobs, but on Bjelke Petersen's terms.

It is not surprising that the 750 SEQEB electricians who held the line, manned the pickets, stood up to police harassment, spoke and many meetings in Queensland and in other states, are bitter.

Let us be quite frank about it, it was not any lack of fortitude on the part of the electrical workers or any unwillingness for solidarity action by other trade unionists in Queensland or other states. There was a dismal lack of leadership and fortitude and very poor tactics at other levels.

Bjelke Petersen has been handed a big victory and the trade union movement has suffered a self-imposed defeat.

What started out to be a reasonably simple dispute about saving jobs in the industry from contracting has ended with these workers jobless and the union movement helpless to do anything about their plight.

Bjelke Petersen has celebrated his Government's victory by extending the contract system to other areas in the power stations.

From the moment that the Government decided to take action against the electrical workers at the beginning of this year, the Union movement has been in retreat. Initially, after the sackings, the workers started to rally to their defence. This led to the situation where power workers controlling the level of power to the grid were lined up by the Government for stiff action by the Courts.

Up until this stage there had been no call for mass action by the QTLC and the workers had extended support by their own independent initiative and

resolution. However, it was the Union leadership, including the QTLC that decided on lifting the action.

There was at this juncture another course of action open and that was to escalate the dispute and develop solidarity actions. But, as at the time of the original sackings, the Union leaderships decided not to call on the collective strength of the working class. It was not until the ACTU blockade tactic went into effect that any attempt was made to get workers across the country to take industrial action.

This was also promptly stopped, just as it appeared to be taking effect, by the intervention of the Federal Labor Government with a promise of a solution via legislation and Federal award coverage for the industry. Even if successful this tactic still left the workers without their jobs.

So, how did all this come to pass?

Clearly the workers' traditional enemy, the boss and his Government in Queensland are to blame for this attack on the workers and their Unions. In a previous attempt to sack workers during the Rail dispute in 1981, the Government failed miserably. It was forced to retreat by the collective might of workers strike action and in particular the actions of power station workers. Why did this not happen this time?

In the first place there was not a call from the QTLC when the workers were sacked, to take appropriate action although many workers responded magnificently to the sackings, with at least one provincial Trades and Labor Council calling a general stoppage presuming the QTLC was about to do the same.

Instead, the QTLC and unions involved continued to talk to the Industrial Commission and the State Public Service Board in the hope of getting a solution. This did not come about even after giving ground on conditions of employment. The Government was not interested in a solution as it was not faced with being swept from office. Furthermore, the lack of union resolve was apparent to the Government from the failure to call for action. There appears to have been an underestimation of the Government's intentions on the part of the trade union movement.

When the situation became worse due to the actions in the power industry the Government took the next logical step for it and started to impose fines; first, \$1,000 and then \$50,000 per worker, to intimidate and crush the resistance of the workers. At this point the unions involved along with the QTLC leadership decided upon retreat without the issue even being tested. There was still no call to escalate the dispute.

The electrical power having been restored and victory declared by the Government, the sacked workers were still looking for their jobs. At this point it was decided to start the blockade of the State from without. This campaign, slow to move at first, finally had some impact and workers generally started to feel again that the issue was winnable. But no sooner had it started to take

on the dimensions of a real fight than the Federal Government stepped in with the promise of legislation which they said would fix it all up. The price was to call off the proposed boycott of the Queensland.

The industrial action stopped and it was then all up to the Labor Government to deliver. The result was Federal legislation allowing for speedy Federal registration of the Electrical Trades Union so that a return to work under the old conditions could be ordered by a Federal Arbitration Court. At least that was the theory.

This process became bogged down in the Courts and appears to be ineffectual as the Arbitration system would find it difficult to order re-employment of workers sacked before coverage was given.

The Trade Unions in Queensland led by the QTLC at no stage called upon its only known power — that of the workers withdrawing their labour. They tried all other avenues — the Courts with Bjelke's judges, the Industrial Commission with Bjelke's appointees!

New life appeared to be given to the solidarity actions following very well attended meetings of unionists in Brisbane and other centres on August 22nd. But no use was made of this new expression of workers' power and willingness to act.

So, why didn't the leaderships use the workers' traditional response and the demonstrated willingness of rank and file workers to act?

The position may appear confusing, but taking into account the national position of the trade union movement the lack of action can be seen in its true light.

Since signing the Accord, the election of a Federal Labor Government and the acceptance of the National Wage Indexation guidelines, the union movement has sought to participate in the decision making processes of Government and industry. The formula became tri-partite conferencing, not action. Simon Crean, on behalf of the ACTU pleaded with Bjelke Petersen for "talks".

Gone, for the time, are the days when campaigns are accompanied with industrial action. From wages through the whole range of union activity many union leaderships appear to prefer "talking" and working on joint parties to resolve differences. Even the question of job safety is not resolved on the basis of not working till this or that hazard is rectified but referred to the joint worker/boss committee for resolution.

It is fairly obvious that the role of unions has changed from direct means of campaigning to talking with employers about the problems to gain consensus so as to remedy wages and conditions in everyone's interests. Herein lies the falsehood. The struggle between the classes has not come to an end and the outcome of each struggle is determined by the strength of the classes involved. In this instance Bjelke Petersen proved to be strong and determined while the trade union movement was hesitant and failed to make use of its potential strength.

In this environment it becomes apparent that union leaders including the QTLC, after following this method of work on wages and conditions should continue to talk rather than fight even with people as clearly anti-worker as the Bjelke Petersen Government.

It can be estimated safely that there was no conscious decision not to use the industrial option. With the prevailing environment it probably did not cross the minds of many trade union leaders. They convinced themselves in advance that it was useless.

There were statements that the workers did not respond in the 1981 rail dispute. The lack-lustre support for the Trade Union Support Committees which were formed to back up the SEQEB workers was clear evidence that the leaderships neither wished to build popular support nor sought to test the resolve of the workers against their natural class enemies.

The role of the Federal Labor Government was deplorable. The promise to introduce legislation was designed specifically to stop the development of the boycott action just as it was beginning to bite. Nothing worthwhile has or could come from the Government's legislation. The SEQEB workers could not have got their jobs back that way and Government leaders knew it. They were to be sacrificed in the interests of Australia's image as a land of industrial peace.

In the short period since the sacking of the SEQEB electricians the attacks on workers and their trade unions have intensified.

The AMIEU (Meatworkers) has been savagely fined under Section 45 D of the Trade Practices Act. They were also making a stand against the introduction of individual work contracts outside of awards.

Youth wages are under attack. The de-registration of the BLF by three Labor Governments is being strongly pushed. The unions have accepted discounting of the CPI and real wages have gone down.

As the crisis of capitalist economic production continues these attacks will intensify and become even more vigorous if the employers sense that the resistance of the trade union movement is going to be weak.

When the workers and their unions amend the present collaborationist course and use the full potential of their real might a different outcome to disputes like that of the SEQEB workers would follow.

If you don't fight you lose!

# **Lenin on relationships between revolutionary Marxist parties of the working class and trade unions**

by Viktor Filatov

The following questions often arise among activists of trade unions and members of the Marxist-Leninist parties: whose activity, that of the party or trade unions, is more important to the working class; in what way should relations between the party and trade unions be built; must trade unions be neutral and independent of politics and the party?

To understand clearly relationships between the party and trade unions, it is necessary to remember what a trade union is from the viewpoint of its birth, aims and place in the working class movement, the character of its organisation and activity, and what the experience of the revolutionary movement of the working class of all countries has proved.

Trade unions are mass organisations of factory and office workers, which unite the working people linked by common interests on the basis of their activity in production, in the service sphere, and in cultural work. Trade unions began to be set up in the epoch of capitalism as organisations to defend and improve the economic interests of workers. They emerged much earlier than the political parties of the working class in most countries.

Of great importance to the understanding of the place of trade unions in the working class movement is Lenin's assessment of their creation. The leader of the world proletariat viewed it as "a tremendous step forward for the working class in the early days of capitalist development, inasmuch as they marked a transition from the workers' disunity and helplessness to the rudiments of class organisation".

Virtually since the emergence of the political parties of the working class, a sharp debate on the relationships between the party and trade unions has been going on both among trade union leaders and inside the parties. All those who came out for the trade unions to concentrate on economic struggle alone, irrespective of the convincing character and the arguments, in effect, did not challenge the system of private enterprise and accepted the exploitation of man by man.

Such arguments as “wages to workers and politics to politicians”, “workers know their own interests better than others” and “trade unions must be above politics” do not affect the foundations of the system of hired labour and the power of capital.

Such views were strongly criticised by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who stressed that the workers’ economic struggle alone could not lead to liquidation of the capitalist system. They taught the working class parties of their time to strengthen their ties with trade unions and to turn them into organising centres of the working class.

Under new historical conditions, Lenin further developed the views of Marx and Engels on the role of the trade union organisations, their political education and the struggle for the elimination of the system of hired labour and capitalist power. He showed convincingly that the economic struggle was the collective struggle of workers against the capitalists and for the most favourable working and living conditions. This struggle was led by trade unions. But those who absolutised economic struggle (the so-called “economists” in Russia) and denied the necessity for political and ideological struggle condemned the working class to eternal slavery.

Recalling the well-known idea of Karl Marx that the liberation of the working class is a matter for the working class itself, Lenin pointed out that this could be done only through the active and wide participation of the working class in struggle. The working class wages political struggle under the leadership of its revolutionary party which bases its activity on science and revolutionary theory.

What role must trade unions play in this process? A principled answer was given to this question by Lenin. “Trade union organisations,” he wrote, “not only can be of tremendous value in developing and consolidating the economic struggle, but can also become a very important auxiliary to political agitation and revolutionary organisation.”

So, the need to draw the working class into political and ideological struggle to liberate itself and society as a whole from exploitation and to implement fully its fundamental economic interests determines the character of the relationship between the political party of the working class and the trade unions.

Another factor determining the character of these relations is that trade unions are one of the biggest mass organisations of the working class and of

the working people. Through trade unions, the party gets in contact with the working class. The working class learns the importance of good organisation, of organised action and, thus, can constitute an organised class force capable of influencing the policy of the ruling class.

The character of relationships between the revolutionary Marxist party of the working class and workers' trade unions lies first of all in the fact that the party exercises ideological guidance in the trade union movement.

Contrary to fabrications by opponents of the working class movement and by the enemies of trade unions, ideological guidance of the trade union movement by the revolutionary Marxist party of the proletariat has nothing in common either with its subordination to the interests of the party, or with its dependence on the party, or with the party's command over trade unions.

The only subordination both of trade unions and the party is their subordination to the fundamental interests of the working class, to the final goal of its class struggle, which lies in eliminating the system of exploitation of man by man and in establishing a just, socialist system in which the people led by the working class would be the masters.

What is meant by the ideological guidance of the trade union movement by the Marxist party? First of all, the task lies in imbuing the working class movement with socialist consciousness and in developing class awareness among members of trade unions. The party explains to trade union members the role of the working class and the trade unions in the class struggle. It exposes new forms of exploitation of the working people, and persuades them of the necessity of unity of action of the working class in the struggle for its vital interests.

Regardless of the political views of some individual members of trade unions or of the trade unions' political orientation, the party comes out for the most active defence of the vital interests of the factory and office workers in their trade unions. It urges trade unions to struggle for workers' control over the implementation of the economic and social policies of the bourgeoisie which never allowed and does not allow the working class such rights.

At the same time, the party exposes the anti-worker essence of the different views and theories propagandised by the ideological advocates of the bourgeoisie about the workers' "co-participation" in economic management, about an imaginary "shared responsibility of trade unions and the bourgeoisie" for the allegedly bad consequences flowing from the competition between the capitalist monopolies and the trade unions.

How does the Marxist party ideologically guide trade unions in practice? This guidance is carried out by diffusing the views of the party through the trade union press and by the distribution of the party's own press, through speeches of party members at workers' meetings, by participation in activities in defence of the workers' interests against the aggressive policy and actions of the imperialist forces which adversely affect the living stan-

dards and the rights of the working people in the capitalist world.

The Marxist party ideologically influences trade unions and, in the final analysis, their policy, through communists who are members of trade unions. These communists can be rank-and-file trade unionists or hold elected leading posts in the trade unions. They by all means pursue the party class line in the trade unions.

If communists are members of the trade unions controlled by the social democratic parties and rightist trade union leaders, they strive to ensure the implementation of a class proletarian policy, acting as an opposition to the rightist leadership.

The bourgeoisie and its ideological advocates, including the right social democratic leaders and the trade union leaders of the right, mobilise every possible means to undermine the prestige of the Marxist parties among the working class, and to eliminate their ideological influence on the trade union movement.

To these ends, the ideological advocates of the bourgeoisie widely propagandise the idea of “trade union neutrality” and the slogan of the “independence of trade unions”. The experience of the working class movement in all countries shows that there can be no “neutral” class organisations in a society divided into antagonistic classes. Either the trade unions uphold the consistent stand taken by the working class and pursue the class proletarian line or, through the efforts of the right trade union leaders, they drag behind the bourgeoisie, become its partners and follow the road of class collaboration.

As a rule, the leaders of the trade unions play a most important role in determining the line. The militant spirit of trade unions, the level of organisation, the clear consistent pursuance of the class line and the unity of action of different trade unions largely depends on the stand and conduct of the trade union leaders.

The true leaders of the working class place the vital interests of the working people above everything else. They subordinate all personal factors to these interests and help the party develop class consciousness among trade union members. All their thoughts are directed at strengthening the unity of the working class, and at raising the consciousness, organisational standards and militant spirit of the trade unions, which form the basis of success in the difficult and complicated struggle against the monopolies and the governments which support them.

# Working class intellectuals

by Gus Hall

The Party has already entered the straight road of leadership of the working masses by advancing “intellectuals” drawn from the ranks of the workers themselves. (V I Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol 15, p 18)

Many working people, especially in the capitalist world, go through life in the belief that the world of ideas, of theory and science, is beyond their ability to understand. They believe theory and science have very little to do with their everyday lives or activities. They accept the idea that the world of ideas, the realm of thought, is for intellectuals and professionals.

That, of course, is how the ruling classes of all past and present exploitative societies have wanted it. They know that a class that thinks will not for long accept exploitation or slavery. In all past exploitative societies, books and schools were for the ruling class elite. They were “ordained” to do the thinking for the working people. These concepts, of course, reflect reality in societies where there is a sharp division between physical and mental labour.

US capitalism has always promoted the concept that thinking should be limited to the chosen few. The capitalist class fought against the establishment of the public education system. They lost the battle, but never gave up. They have continued their attempts to limit the number of students, and as much as possible to limit the scope of education to satisfying industry’s technological requirements.

The educational restrictions have always been aimed against the working class youth. And there have always been special racist restrictions against Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano and other racially oppressed young people. The stubborn resistance to bilingual education is one current instance of this resistance.

After World War II, the government’s education program for veterans

opened the door to higher education to tens of millions of young working people. Now, however, they are attempting to close that door again. Today, state monopoly capitalism is continuing to enforce the policy limiting the scope of education for the working class.

But that is not the whole story. Because of the internal contradictions of capitalism, the advance of science and technology, and because of strong public demand, capitalism has not been able to keep the realms of thought, of science and of theory closed in the same way previous exploitative societies did. In this sense, reality has changed. But many old notions and prejudices stubbornly resist the new reality.

This is an important question because a historic truth is being used by many to put over ideas that are not true, including the anti-working class concept that working people are not able to think. For many, the reflection of past realities has become the basis for a timeless, anti-working class dogma.

One does not have to be a professional historian to realise that important changes have taken place which have their effects on the working class, such as the availability of mass public education and higher education, the high rate of literacy in the industrialised countries and the mass publication of basic books. Even the achievement of an eight-hour day has given workers more time for studying and thinking. The new level of mass communication, of science and technology, have created new relationships between the broad masses and the world of theory and thought.

Many still hold to outdated and very narrow notions of what intellectuality is and who intellectuals are. Many cling to the old, elitist concept that only those who “think full-time” qualify. That, of course, conveniently disqualifies all who work with their hands.

Many intellectuals use the past reality to justify and sustain their prejudices that workers are not able to think. Even in some of the best circles, this erroneous concept gives rise to attitudes of intellectual snobbishness or elitism. In many instances, it gives rise to ideas that only people with professional training, or middle class intellectuals can or should lead working class organisations.

In the US, this is one of the concepts that social democracy promotes in the trade union movement. It is a defense they use because most of the social democratic cadres in the trade union movement have non-working class backgrounds.

This problem is not limited to the US or to capitalist countries in general. There are reflections of this in the world communist movement and it occasionally appears in Marxist-Leninist literature. However, it is necessary to state that, while on the surface the problem appears the same, in essence there is a difference. In the non-capitalist world, it is a leftover of old ideas.

The following is a rather typical example of this kind of statement appearing

in Marxist literature. As a rule, it seems to appear without much thought. It is not defended, discussed or elaborated upon:

It must be borne in mind that in an exploitative society, where there is an impassable gulf between mental and manual labour, the classes whose lot is manual labour *are unable as a rule* to advance ideologists from their own ranks. Their ideologists most often are members of other classes who have enough time and money to get an education, and at the same time are *capable of understanding in what direction history is moving*. (Emphasis added).

Such a formulation, while having an element of historical truth, leaves the door wide open to all kinds of misinterpretations. It certainly does not indicate that there are and have been changes in class relationships and in the role of classes in society.

When referring to the working class, phrases like “are unable”, combined with the implication that other classes “are capable of understanding in what direction history is moving”, are unacceptable. If the working class is not “able” to provide people “from its own ranks” who “are capable” of understanding Marxism-Leninism, then it is not “capable” of understanding Marxism-Leninism. However, life proves otherwise every day.

With the advent of capitalism, there emerged a new class — the working class, which in many ways is unique and to which history has assigned the unique task of the final elimination of all classes, including itself. A class that is capable of carrying out such a monumental task is more than capable of making contributions in the field of thought.

Even in the last century, when the educational gap between manual workers and intellectuals was much greater, the advantage in grasping complicated ideas was not always on the side of the intellectuals. For example, as Engels noted in his Introduction to Marx’s *Wage Labour and Capital*, “the uneducated workers, who can be easily made to grasp the most difficult economic analyses, excel our supercilious ‘cultured’ folk, for whom such ticklish problems remain insoluble for their whole life long”.

The question of theory-science and its relationship to the working class must be dealt with in present day terms. It cannot be approached as a timeless cliché.

As the working class matures and develops, and as it fulfils its historic assignment, two processes take place. The class struggle and the working class become an increasingly greater influence in moulding a new type of intellectual, an intellectual who, although not of working class background, is a working class partisan.

An outstanding example of this kind of intellectual is John Reed, a founder of our Party, who was described by Mike Gold in these words: “He identified himself so completely with the working class. He undertook every danger for the revolution. He forgot his Harvard education, his genius, his popularity, his

gifted body and mind, so completely that no one else remembered them anymore. There was no gap between John Reed and the workers any longer.” (*Mike Gold About John Reed, Mike Gold: A Literary Anthology*, International Publishers)

Secondly, the working class is increasingly producing new working class intellectuals from among its own ranks.

It must be kept in mind not to confuse the role of the intellectual with the role of a vanguard working class revolutionary party. The task of such a party was defined clearly by Lenin: “The task of the proletarian party is to introduce socialist consciousness into the spontaneous working class movement, to impart to it a conscious nature.”

How well the Communist Party fulfils this task in a planned, organised way is a very basic measure of how it fulfils its vanguard role, and how well it helps to prepare the working class for more advanced struggles. This task is fulfilled by parties in which the cadres who come from a working class background and those who come from a non-working class background blend into one communist, working class revolutionary-intellectual collective.

Therefore, the concept of introducing class and socialist consciousness “into the spontaneous working class movement” must not be interpreted to mean that this can be done only by intellectuals of non-working class origins and status.

There are many significant changes that must be taken into consideration when dealing with the question of intellectuals and the working class.

The birth and building of socialism in the world has added a new — a qualitatively new — element to this question, because the working class in socialist societies is the dominant influence not only in everyday political affairs, but also in the development of theory and science. As socialism does away with the differences between mental and physical activities, it is also removing the barriers which prevented workers from making their full contribution in the field of thought and ideas.

In the socialist countries, the working class is doing what Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels said in *The Holy Family* it would be forced to do. The working class “cannot abolish the conditions of its own life without abolishing all the inhuman conditions of life of society today which is summed up in its own situation.”

The effects of the changes in the socialist countries are felt world wide. This is a very important new factor, a new influence on the development of intellectuals from the ranks of the working class. The example of the historic achievements of societies where the working class is the leading force act as a source of confidence for workers, a stimulant to enter the area of ideas, of theory and of science.

The Communist Parties have made unique and historic contributions to

opening up the world of thought, the world of theory and science, to workers. The Communist Parties are themselves schools for the development of intellectuals with a partisan class viewpoint.

As capitalism decays, the capitalist class becomes less and less the basis for the development of intellectuals with a healthy social consciousness, and even less so for intellectuals with a partisan working class consciousness. Life has shifted that historic responsibility to the working class.

As working class parties, the Communist Parties are a factor in helping the working class carry out that responsibility. However, the last ten years or so have produced evidence that not all Communist Parties or leaders of Parties accept that responsibility. There are leaders of some Communist Parties who have difficulty accepting the idea that life has forced the working class, because of its unique position in the economic structure, to become the most advanced revolutionary class in society. This is related to opportunistic ideas about the class struggle and the working class in general.

In essence, opportunism is a policy of making unprincipled concessions to the capitalist class. Opportunism is always related to the class struggle, which is not surprising because that is the hub of the relationship between the two classes. That is where the capitalist class presses for concessions.

Invariably opportunists soften their stand on the class struggle and from that point on, there is a line of retrogression. To dilute the concept of the class struggle is to downgrade the role of the working class. From that point on, the idea of socialism becomes a conversation piece; the role of the working class in the struggle for and building of socialism is diluted to nothingness. The concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat is dropped, not because the words can be misused, but because the concept of working class rule is objectionable to the capitalist class and those influenced by it.

As the working class matures and develops, and as it fulfils its historic assignment, two processes take place. The class struggle and the working class become an increasingly greater influence in moulding a new type of intellectual, an intellectual who, although not of working class background, is a working class partisan.

An outstanding example of this kind of intellectual is John Reed, a founder of our Party, who was described by Mike Gold in these words: "He identified himself so completely with the working class. He undertook every danger for the revolution. He forgot his Harvard education, his genius, his popularity, his gifted body and mind, so completely that no one else remembered them anymore. There was no gap between John Reed and the workers any longer." (*Mike Gold About John Reed, Mike Gold: A Literary Anthology*, International Publishers)

Secondly, the working class is increasingly producing new working class intellectuals from among its own ranks.

It must be kept in mind not to confuse the role of the intellectual with the role of a vanguard working class revolutionary party. The task of such a party was defined clearly by Lenin: "The task of the proletarian party is to introduce socialist consciousness into the spontaneous working class movement, to impart to it a conscious nature."

How well the Communist Party fulfils this task in a planned, organised way is a very basic measure of how it fulfils its vanguard role, and how well it helps to prepare the working class for more advanced struggles. This task is fulfilled by parties in which the cadres who come from a working class background and those who come from a non-working class background blend into one communist, working class revolutionary-intellectual collective.

Therefore, the concept of introducing class and socialist consciousness "into the spontaneous working class movement" must not be interpreted to mean that this can be done only by intellectuals of non-working class origins and status.

There are many significant changes that must be taken into consideration when dealing with the question of intellectuals and the working class.

The birth and building of socialism in the world has added a new — a qualitatively new — element to this question, because the working class in socialist societies is the dominant influence not only in everyday political affairs, but also in the development of theory and science. As socialism does away with the differences between mental and physical activities, it is also removing the barriers which prevented workers from making their full contribution in the field of thought and ideas.

In the socialist countries, the working class is doing what Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels said in *The Holy Family* it would be forced to do. The working class "cannot abolish the conditions of its own life without abolishing all the inhuman conditions of life of society today which is summed up in its own situation."

The effects of the changes in the socialist countries are felt world wide. This is a very important new factor, a new influence on the development of intellectuals from the ranks of the working class. The example of the historic achievements of societies where the working class is the leading force act as a source of confidence for workers, a stimulant to enter the area of ideas, of theory and of science.

The Communist Parties have made unique and historic contributions to opening up the world of thought, the world of theory and science, to workers. The Communist Parties are themselves schools for the development of intellectuals with a partisan class viewpoint.

As capitalism decays, the capitalist class becomes less and less the basis for the development of intellectuals with a healthy social consciousness, and even less so for intellectuals with a partisan working class consciousness. Life has shifted that historic responsibility to the working class.

As working class parties, the Communist Parties are a factor in helping the working class carry out that responsibility. However, the last ten years or so have produced evidence that not all Communist Parties or leaders of Parties accept that responsibility. There are leaders of some Communist Parties who have difficulty accepting the idea that life has forced the working class, because of its unique position in the economic structure, to become the most advanced revolutionary class in society. This is related to opportunistic ideas about the class struggle and the working class in general.

In essence, opportunism is a policy of making unprincipled concessions to the capitalist class. Opportunism is always related to the class struggle, which is not surprising because that is the hub of the relationship between the two classes. That is where the capitalist class presses for concessions.

Invariably opportunists soften their stand on the class struggle and from that point on, there is a line of retrogression. To dilute the concept of the class struggle is to downgrade the role of the working class. From that point on, the idea of socialism becomes a conversation piece; the role of the working class in the struggle for and building of socialism is diluted to nothingness. The concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat is dropped, not because the words can be misused, but because the concept of working class rule is objectionable to the capitalist class and those influenced by it.

And, as is the case with at least one Communist Party, the opportunistic decay has reached the point of dropping Marxism-Leninism. When a Party leadership regresses to that level, perhaps the dropping of the claim to Marxism-Leninism is simply a reflection of the truth.

The idea that the working class is not able to develop intellectuals from its own ranks is turned into a cover-up for anti-working class concepts.

In some cases, this weakness leads to situations where middle class, professional intellectuals tend to take over and hog the leadership of Communist Parties in the capitalist countries. Often they use the words "class struggle" and "the working class" as cliches, but take no steps to make it possible for the working class cadres of these parties to be a factor in policy decisions.

Such leaders are not willing to accept the leading role of the working class in the field of thought, or in their parties. They dilute the concept of class struggle. They downgrade the historic role of the working class. They eliminate the working class in the struggle for socialism, and they do not think the working class is able to produce an intellectual.

The time has come to bury the idea that the working class is unable to think. In fact, Marxism-Leninism is a science so closely related to the rise of the working class movement that to eliminate the working class as a basic influence and participant in the further development of the science is like eliminating the heart in living matter.

The historic role of the working class was clearly placed by Marx and

Engels: "Before the proletariat fights out its victories on the barricades and in the lines of battle, it gives notice of its impending rule with a series of intellectual victories".

Many errors in the history of our Party can be traced to periods when there was a lack of working class participation in the leadership of the Party. The history of the world communist movement argues for greater participation of workers in the field of theory-science. It is time to drop concepts and cliches that do not correspond to the new realities of this period of history.

# Using our cultural heritage

by Jim Henderson

The program and policies of the SPA quite correctly lay emphasis on the importance of concentration on the working class, in the factories and other workplaces. In other words, concentration on the workers, paying attention to the interests of the class.

This should not be taken to mean that the interests of the workers outside the workplaces must not be taken into consideration. It is wrong and sectarian to automatically regard anything outside the workshop as being in opposition to or detrimental to the working class, as being in opposition to the work in the factory or workplace.

It is essential that the Party members take an interest in matters of a cultural nature and take an active interest in spheres which are of benefit to the class and at the same time, are usually pleasing and instructive forms of entertainment. Among these are films, TV programs, live theatre, ballet and literature. For example, attendances at the live theatre are considerable and appear to be growing.

It was regrettable when the Fraser Government drastically cut the grants to the theatre. There was scarcely a whisper from the Party, though the SPA in Queensland put out a leaflet which was very well received. It was particularly well received by a theatre that was producing mostly progressive plays, some with a clear working class message, for example, *Faces in the Street*. This theatre had its grant cut completely.

There was a street theatre which put on many working class and progressive skits. It assisted in many campaigns but folded because of lack of finance.

Over recent times there has been, in general, an improvement in the plays selected, though there are still too many that are reactionary and too often portray the working man as foolish and backward.

It is true that admission prices are too high but it must not be thought that ordinary workers do not attend the theatre. Generally the players are of the working class and the same applies to members of ballet schools.

A very important role is played by literature. Large numbers of books are being produced, many of them bad, but at the same time, there are some which are critical of the capitalist system, some highlighting the need for a proper peace policy and laying the blame for the arms race where it belongs on the capitalist system and, in particular, the US.

Progressive working class novels have played a most significant part in introducing members of the working class to the movement. It is only necessary to recall such works as *The Jungle*, *Boston*, and many others by Upton Sinclair. His early novels did a splendid job for the movement. Then there are the works of Jack London, Bellamy and others. *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropist* and Left Book Club publications played a considerable part in their time. We have our own Australian writers in Katherine Prichard, Judah Waten and others.

It is probably true that Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* introduced more workers to the movement than the three volumes of *Capital*. Many would never have made contact with the indispensable works of Marxism-Leninism without such introductions.

*The Guardian* should run a regular column dealing with cultural matters as a guide to readers. There are many books being published today and a publication guide would be of value. Likewise in other cultural spheres.

Winning adherents to the movement through cultural participation is not to undermine or neglect the work in the factory, but is actually an introduction to the work within the workplace.

Often cultural activity is wiped aside as being "bourgeois". Such an attitude is neglect of the cultural heritage of Australia and of the international working class and progressive movements. This heritage has been created in the first place as the result of past struggles of the Australian people.

It goes without saying that not every person will enjoy every art and cultural form. That is natural. However, when we speak of culture, we embrace a wide and varied spectrum. We must have a more positive approach to cultural matters.

Our Party program says:

"A democratic socialist culture is developing in Australia based on the experiences of the democratic movement and on the struggles of the working class. Many Australian writers and artists of all kinds produce rich, creative work in line with the democratic, peaceful and progressive traditions of the people, and resist the use of inferior local and overseas material".

We cannot assist in this if we stand aside!

# Dialectics vs eclecticism

by Martyn Stevens

The SPA has always recognised the importance of Marxist-Leninist philosophy as a basis for correct political judgements. Without the correct philosophical approach, political errors inevitably result.

One error which underlies many mistaken views is philosophical eclecticism.

In a publication by the Brown/Clancy forces in 1983, there is an attempt to define eclecticism as “analysis of **one** or **some** sides of a given question as against the **all-sided** analysis approach of dialectical materialist philosophy”. (*Problems and Perspectives — An analysis of trends in the communist movement in Australia*, page 40, emphasis in original).

The attempt to reduce the difference between dialectical materialism and eclecticism to the number of sides taken into account is a totally inadequate and wrong approach, as will be made clear below. But first we should note why this interpretation of eclecticism was used. There were two reasons: firstly to defend Bill Brown from the criticism by the SPA that his talk of “all-sidedness” and “balance”, which he used to promote his opportunist views, was “eclecticism” (See *The pattern of struggle for Marxism-Leninism in the communist movement of Australia*, p 9); and secondly to argue against the SPA leaders’ supposed one-sidedness.

The *Problems and Perspectives* publication says: “Fundamental departures from Marxist philosophy by the central leaders of the SPA include:

- Failure to apply the universal principles of Marxism-Leninism in an all-sided way which takes into account both Australian conditions and universal laws; (i.e., the combining of the general and the specific).
- A one-sided approach to democratic centralism which has developed authoritarian, centralist methods of leadership.

—A one-sided application of the law of criticism and self-criticism in which criticism of the leadership is regarded as “anti-party” and self-criticism by the leadership is non-existent.” (Pages 41-42)

On the question of applying the universal principles of Marxism-Leninism to Australian conditions, whereas the SPA attempts to do that, the Brown/Clancy grouping, just like the revisionist leaders of the CPA before them, pose Australian conditions *against* the application of Marxist-Leninist principles.

Pat Clancy, for example, complained of “slavishly copying the Bolshevik model” (*Problems and Perspectives*, p 34) when comrades argued for the Socialist Party to be based on Leninist principles. Posed against that was “the deeply held democratic traditions of the Australian working class” (*Ibid.*, p 35). Clancy wanted to combine, in true eclectic fashion, Marxism-Leninism in name with Australian bourgeois democracy and reformism in practice. He did not seek to apply in Australia what was genuinely Marxist-Leninist, for that would presumably be “one-sided”.

### **What is eclecticism?**

If eclecticism is not simply a refusal to take into account all sides, then what is it?

*Eclecticism is the mechanical combination of aspects.* It is characterised by its inability to grasp the *essence* of things and processes, its inability to recognise *the main thing*. This results, above all, from its rejection of the dialectical materialist approach of determining *the main contradiction* within each phenomena. Only on the basis of determining the main contradiction can the essence of each phenomena be understood and the superficial approach of eclectics avoided.

Eclecticism sometimes hits upon the main thing, even the main contradiction, but what makes it eclecticism is the fact that it attempts *to deny any contradiction* and to combine aspects mechanically.

### **Examples**

The CPA's Coalition of the Left concept is based on the eclectic combination of “leadership” and “unity” in a way which limits both. “Too much” leadership from the party is supposedly elitist and sectarian, and “too much” unity with others on a basis which is “too wide” and includes the unconvinced non-left workers is supposedly reformist. That approach denies the contradiction and interconnection between the vanguard party and the working class masses, whom the party must unite with and give political direction to. It tries to overcome that contradiction by limiting both aspects and adding them together mechanically.

Some other concepts of left unity make essentially the same mistake. The dialectics of party and class is denied in favour of an eclectic, mid-way mish-mash of the left. This is supposedly the correct “balance” as something half-

way between what are seen as two extremes: the party (with its supposedly “too narrow” basis) and the class (which, including as it does some people who are not socialists, is seen as “too broad”). In fact, this approach is a sectarian denial of the need for broad, working class unity, and an opportunist denial of the leading role of the party. On the pretext of avoiding two one-sided errors, sectarianism and opportunism, it commits both.

So-called “Marxism-feminism” is a good example of eclecticism. It attempts to make use of Marxist concepts by subordinating them to bourgeois-feminist ones. It presents a picture of a “one-sided” Marxism that is little concerned with the liberation of women and of a one-sided feminism that is little concerned with achieving socialism. It then argues for a combination of the two in which feminism is “renewed” from a supposedly Marxist viewpoint and Marxism is “renewed” by feminism. It is easy to see that this is based on a distorted view of Marxism in the first place. Socialist women are not in need of a special feminism outside of Marxism or to be added to it, for Marxism itself is the best theory for the liberation of women.

What about the argument by the Brown/Clancy forces that the SPA has a one-sided view of democratic centralism? The Fourth Congress of the SPA agreed that democratic centralism was a *single integrated process*. The Brown/Clancy forces argued that, on the contrary, it had to be seen as *two* processes. They argued that if it was seen as one process, then all the weight could be put on the centralist side to the detriment of the democratic side and that this was in fact happening. What was needed, they said, was a dialectical “balance” of the “two processes”.

However, that view is based on separating out abstract “democracy” and abstract “centralism” from the real life process by which the will of the Marxist-Leninist party is carried into effect. In that real life process, the democratic and centralist aspects are indivisible.

For example, any frustration of majority decisions is a frustration of party centralism and simultaneously a frustration of party democracy. It is not a question of having “too much” centralism or “too much” democracy but a question of strengthening *democratic centralism*.

However, the eclectic thinker warns of the supposed dangers of “too much” democracy on the one hand and “too much” centralism on the other. They are balanced out by limiting both qualities, thus weakening democratic centralism.

On the basis of separating out democracy and centralism in the party, the Brown/Clancy forces demanded all the rights and all the democracy for themselves, handing over all the duties and responsibilities to others.

For communists, there is no artificial separation of their rights and responsibilities. They act in accordance with what is necessary. This is simultaneously their right and their revolutionary duty. For example, communists do not recognise any right of party members to engage in negative, carping criticism

which drags things down and disrupts party unity and party work. However, where constructive criticism can be made on the basis of an objective appraisal, in a way which helps to lift the standards of party work and helps to overcome errors and obstacles, then such criticism is not only a right but a duty. For just as communists have no right to use criticism in a harmful way, so they have no right to withhold useful and helpful criticism.

However, the Brown/Clancy forces saw criticism and self-criticism not as a process of objective analysis for the good of the party but as a big stick to beat people with. They insisted on the right to criticise their opponents and the duty of their opponents to criticise themselves. At the same time, they strongly rejected having their own work under party guidance and subject to critical examination. Such a mechanical separation of rights from duties undermines rather than strengthens the party. This cannot be solved by their eclectic combination but only by seeing rights and duties as indivisible.

## Eclectics and metaphysics

Eclectics is anti-dialectical. It is a form of *metaphysics*. Metaphysics is the term Marxists use to describe undialectical, mechanical thinking. The main thing which metaphysics cannot accept is the inner-contradictoriness of all phenomena. Metaphysics can accept contradiction *between* two separate things or processes. It cannot accept contradiction *within* a single thing or process. In other words, it accepts *external* but not *internal* contradiction.

Metaphysics will respond to inner-contradiction in two main ways:

1. "This *or* that. There *is* a contradiction."
2. "This *and* that. There *is no* contradiction."

The first way is recognised by many to be metaphysical because it is one-sided and poses one thing against the other. However, there are many who fail to recognise the second alternative as also metaphysical, because it is not one-sided. The simple view is taken that whereas metaphysics is one-sided and poses one thing against the other, dialectics takes into account all sides and sees the interconnection between things.

However, while the crudest form of metaphysics is one-sided, a more advanced form, eclectics, takes into account two or more sides but mechanically combines them.

Eclectics could be well described as an attempt to appear dialectical with the use of purely anti-dialectical, metaphysical thought. People often at first understand dialectics in a metaphysical way, as there being *two sides* to everything, two bits which somehow relate. The eclectic thinker vulgarly interprets dialectics as a relationship between two things or components, looking at the external relations between separate entities rather than the internal contradictions of a single whole.

Some eclectic thinkers will reason: "If we see a contradiction between democracy and centralism that must be resolved one way or the other, then

the result will be one-sided — either democracy only or centralism only.” They will then reject that “either/or” approach and stress the need for democracy *and* centralism, declaring: “There is no contradiction.”

That seemingly logical argument is flawed by the metaphysical concept that contradictions must be resolved “one way or the other”. It is a variant of the metaphysical rejection of inner-contradictions.

Contradictions are inherent in all things and processes. On the basis of the main contradiction within each phenomenon, its essence may be disclosed. Without that approach, its essence remains a mystery behind a cloud of superficial and apparent features.

Some might accept that in a philosophy class but not in their everyday thinking. They might say there is “no contradiction” between democracy and centralism, or “no contradiction” between the leading role of the party and unity with others, and so on. If they can prove it, they will have overthrown dialectics and its concept of the universality of contradiction in all things. Without that dialectical concept, we cannot correctly explain the development and self-movement of processes. We would be left with essentially idealist and metaphysical approaches, no matter how “all-sided” they might be.

Lenin says that “the substitution of eclecticism for dialectics is the easiest way of deceiving the people. It gives an illusory satisfaction; it seems to take into account all sides of the process, all trends of development, all the conflicting influences, and so forth, whereas in reality it provides no integral and revolutionary conception of the process of social development at all.” (*Collected Works*, Vol 25, p 400).

# A letter about internationalism

by Bill Briggs

You ask me about nationalism and internationalism and I can only agree that these questions are among those urgent tasks facing the Party.

Naturally, being an internationalist is part of being a communist, or rather a rounded individual and communist. Unfortunately people are not born communists and one does not miraculously become one upon becoming a Party member.

In order to become a communist in the fullest sense of the word, it is necessary to work at it. A comrade can and must be taught all manner of things. After all, isn't that why we have education courses and classes? As the comrade learns, say, the basics of Marxist political economy, then so too internationalism must be learned and attitudes changed.

We place much emphasis on internationalism in the Party, but I wonder just how far many comrades go in this regard? I don't doubt that, if asked, every Party member would claim to be an internationalist — after all the Party proclaims its internationalism — but does saying so make it a fact?

There is obviously much more to it than being anti-racist and so on. It must become something ingrained.

For instance, I believe myself to be an internationalist but how good a one, I wonder. To be honest, it's not something I have questioned. I just assumed myself to be so.

Until I lived overseas for a time in a non-English speaking country, I considered that I had a pretty good understanding of problems migrants faced — lack of language, cultural differences, loneliness, etc, etc, but I was merely skimming the surface. I had tried to put myself in their shoes but, of course, couldn't come anywhere near a real understanding. The culture in which I lived was **my** native culture. I was always at home, always at ease in it, able

to cope with the subtleties, nuances and so on.

Overseas I found myself in a situation about as different as anyone could imagine. I lived in a socialist country with a social system that I advocate, but still problems remain. For the first time, I was an alien in a totally alien setting.

It is only now that I can come anywhere near to an understanding of the problems of migrants in Australia. I knew that I would be returning home but the whole concept of home and homeland has taken on a new perspective for me.

Also my feelings of nationalism have been heightened. I don't mean in any way a regressive nationalism or in the ugly Australian sense, but of ties with my homeland and a strengthening of interest in and caring about what is happening back at home.

This in part I put down to my being a political activist. It is a very strange feeling. It is as though I was somehow removed from the struggle. I can't remember a day in my life for the past 12 years that that I wasn't engaged in some political action, whether organised or just in a day to day mixing with people. Often this action was wildly misdirected, but you will understand what I am on about. So I felt a bit like Rip Van Winkle dozing in some sort of limbo.

I am sure the experience changed me and will continue to change me, in a positive way, I hope. My world view has changed and I certainly have a different view of Australia.

I agree that our migrant comrades (pardon that expression; it seems somehow ugly) need to develop as internationalists and not as expatriates clinging to and built on nationalist loyalties which could often grow stronger upon arrival in their new home. So too do Anglo-Saxon comrades need to look outward more.

Australians have a peculiar insularity. We need to work at developing an understanding of what it means to be part of the real world and an understanding of the problems faced by non-Anglo-Saxon comrades in the Party and in the working class generally.

What we don't need is to try to turn these migrant Australians into parodies or caricatures of Australians or to foster Australian nationalism as a counter to Greek, Cypriot, Lebanese or other nationalisms.

That is why it is so much easier to teach political economy than internationalism.

I think there needs to be a double-edged method used. Certainly a theoretical education but coupled with experience. Experience in this context can act as a great teacher.

To begin with, perhaps, "neutral", "common" ground could be found. To take up an international issue which does not immediately affect any particular group might be a starting point for mutual cross-cultural work. El Salvador

is such an issue. Everyone, regardless of ethnic background or actual country of residence, supports this struggle.

I know the Party supports the liberation movements but am unaware as to cross-cultural work done in this sphere.

It becomes a “teachable” moment for all comrades on the importance of the international arena and internationalism. Forums, demonstrations and so on ought to include broad ethnic representation. Why not have Arab and Greek speakers on El Salvador? I understand that language plays a big part but obviously large numbers of Greek and Arab Australians are concerned about these issues but they seem to be somewhat neglected at these events.

Perhaps Greek comrades, who obviously know the problems of on-the-job exploitation better than I, might speak to non-Greek branches and so on across the whole spectrum of the Party rather than the separatism that unfortunately seems to have crept in. There would be definite positive results, I feel, as speakers would develop skills and confidence and exposure to each other (Greek to Arab, Arab to Australian, Australian to Greek, and so on) must help awareness.

Other possibilities might include internationalist forums where speakers from a whole range of ethnic backgrounds come together to speak on issues affecting both Australia and the world. They may well attract a wider audience. It might need to be guided a bit to keep it internationalist but a sharing of experiences and a mixing of different cultures couldn't go astray.

Eventually, of course, the question comes back to how best to fight for a socialist Australia. This fight, if it is to be successful, must be a unified one. Feelings of unity must be developed and an awareness that we are one working class and are all communists who happen to share Australia as a home.

It is in Australia that we must fight for socialism without becoming pseudo-Australians, without forgetting heritage and so on, but still remembering we are communists first. The successful achievement of a socialist Australia would be the best contribution we could make to the common internationalist struggle.

Nationalism, I agree, is an obstacle. My own experiences lead me to believe that the problem is exacerbated when away from home, but at the same time it is possible when the clouds lift for a moment, to see the problems fairly clearly. I certainly wouldn't propose that the Party membership emigrate in order to learn about nationalism.

I came to the communist movement in possibly an unorthodox manner. It was not through job related issues solely, nor through the peace issue alone. These all contributed but, perhaps, the over-riding factor was one of support early on for the liberation movements which led to an awareness of the need to liberate Australians as well.