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# Australian Marxist Review

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- ★ *GDR, Hungary, Czechoslovakia*
- ★ *The strategy of the "New Right"*
- ★ *The CPA and the "New Party"*
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- ★ *An independent New Zealand*

# **Australian Marxist Review**

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# The revolutionary essence of Perestroika

by Yegor Ligachov,  
Political Bureau Member and  
Secretary CPSU Central Committee

*(Note: This article has been slightly abridged.)*

**The changes in the Soviet Union have aroused interest all over the world. And that is as it should be. The deep going reorganisation in a country whose part in resolving international problems is so great, is bound to exercise a strong influence on the state and outlook of the contest between socialism and capitalism, and on the confrontation of the forces of progress and reaction, peace and war.**

The unusually wide spectrum of assessments, judgements and opinions concerning processes that come under the heading of **perestroika** (variously translated as reorganisation, restructuring, etc) may be broken down into two major groups. The democratic and progressive public sees them as evidence of the dynamism and confidence of Soviet society, and of its capacity for drastic renewal and advancement. It wishes us success in our undertakings, to which it traces socialism's ever more distinct humanitarian essence and growing appeal. The right conservative imperialist quarters, on the other hand, are afraid of just this. They portray **perestroika**, the mistakes and faults we have exposed of late, as an admission of the defectiveness of the socialist system, as the beginning of its return to the capitalist fold or as a cosmetic operation that changes nothing of substance in the Soviet Union.

Since not all people abroad have a clear idea of what is going on in the USSR, it will be useful to describe the main elements of the ongoing change in most general terms and in the light of some fundamental provisions of Marxist-Leninist theory.

We call the reorganisation that is underway in our country a turn of historic scale and revolutionary impact. That is no metaphor. It is farthest from my thoughts to put emotional thrust behind the importance of the ongoing changes. They are really **revolutionary in essence**. Cumulatively, they stand for Soviet society's passage from one quality to another. But they represent a **revolution of a special type**. It does not replace one mode of production by another and occurs within **one socio-economic system** or, more precisely, within the socialist phase of the communist system, which constitutes an entire stage of developing socialism. It does not, therefore, change state power, but deepens socialist popular rule and secures its fuller and more effective use in socialism's interests.

The ultimate purpose of **perestroika**, Mikhail Gorbachev said at the January 1987 plenary meeting of the CC CPSU, is to impart to socialism the most up-to-date forms of organising society, and to open up the humanistic nature of our system to the utmost in all the decisive areas, the economic, social, political and ethical.

The Marxist-Leninist method of analysing the processes in society is the key to understanding the revolutionary nature of the ongoing change.

**First.** The economic impact of **perestroika** consists in aligning the relations of production with the new level of the productive forces. That is its revolutionary quality. This does not, of course, imply an antagonistic conflict between two sides in social production which is settled through social revolution. It stands for qualitative changes inside socialism, on socialism's own basis.

In practical terms, this means relieving the relations of production of everything that acts as a brake on the development of the productive forces, and conversely, it means giving them the sort of self-impulse that would open up socialism's constructive potential to the utmost. That is the task which is now facing Soviet society.

The Soviet Union has attained truly historic success in building socialist society. Our achievements are immense and beyond dispute. They are the dependable foundation for our present and future plans. But at a certain point, the country began losing some of its innate dynamism and processes foreign to socialism began to surface.

What are the most deep-lying causes of this?

The country's previous leadership proved no match for the problems at hand. All too often, it evaded pressing economic and political issues, and when it did take major decisions, they were not, in many cases, followed through to the end.

Theoretical thought lagged far behind. Over the past few decades our notions of socialism had in many ways remained in a solidified, immobile state. Sanctioned in an authoritarian manner, they became incontestable and "absolute" verities subject to nothing more than commenting. Society's

socio-economic structure was held to be ideal. As a result, nothing was done to pinpoint its intrinsic contradictions and to eliminate them promptly.

The consequence of this was that the economy was run by outdated methods. The prejudice concerning the role of commodity-money relations and the operation of the law of value generated a subjectivist approach to price-setting, departures from the socialist principle of paying for the work done and a levelling in distribution. What caused the gravest consequences were the stiff restrictions on the financial autonomy of enterprises and amalgamations.

The relations of production ceased to stimulate scientific and technical progress, any rapid development and introduction of the latest technologies, enhancement of production efficiency, and output of high-quality goods. That is why the party defines **perestroika** as resolute elimination of the elements of stagnation, to be replaced by a dependable and effective mechanism that will accelerate Soviet society's socio-economic development through scientific and technical progress and vitalisation of the human factor.

It is an urgent task, as we see it, to shape production relations that would stimulate the advancement of up-to-date productive forces not by abstract slogans and instructions, but by pertinent methods of economic management, by democratising factory life and making it the natural effect of the conditions created for the functioning of the economy, its various branches, each work collective and every worker.

All industrial enterprises, building, the railways, and trade have this year gone over to new management methods that have acquitted themselves well in our large-scale economic experiment. The agro-industrial complex has been singled out for independent planning, financing and management. Engineering, fuel and energy, building, the social sphere and foreign trade have been formed into complexes.

The radical reform of economic management will integrate the entire renewed structure of production relations. It will be governed by the Law on State Enterprises, which has been subjected to a nationwide discussion. The key provisions of the Law are full operational economic autonomy, self-management, independent decision-making, and full responsibility for the results achieved.

The managerial reform will see a far-reaching reorganisation of the state system of planning, technical and other supply agencies, financial and credit mechanisms and price setting. All this is to form a dependable structure for the conversion to economic management methods and to a harmonious blend of consolidated centralised planned management and more democratically run production at shopfloor level.

**Second.** One of the main criteria of revolution is that it **invades property relations**. The October Revolution put an end to private ownership of the means of production and thereby also to the basis for the exploitation of man by man. Socialist property became the economic foundation of the Soviet Union. It stands to reason that this chief gain of the working class and all other

working people in our country is untouchable. But that does not mean that the functioning of socialised property is not subject to any change. As we know, it functions in two main forms — as property of all the people and as co-operative property. Both have undergone a certain evolution.

The former, as socialist property owned by all the people was, therefore, to be directed and managed by the state only, which acted in the name of society as a whole. This was conceived in theory, and carried into effect in practice. Planning of the items and volume of production, price setting, and the technical and social policy of enterprises — all this was determined to the last detail by central and, partly also, by republican governmental agencies.

This was justified when we had to industrialise the country along socialist lines in a historically short time, to concentrate the economy on the basis of crushing the enemy during the war and then to make good the ravages of war.

But at the present time, this “super-centralisation” that evolved at a special period in the life of our society is not objectively necessary. Its advantages came to be outweighed by negative consequences. The chief fault is that the immediate producers, that is, the work collectives, are in effect barred from participation in management. Property of all the people is in substance identified with state property. Though it is property of all the people, it loses a real owner in each specific case, and becomes ownerless, as it were. Since this is so, no immediate economic interest spurs the producer to safeguard and expand it. What spurs him is chiefly the responsibility that he bears for it before the law.

The substances of **perestroika** is for work collectives to become the real masters of that part of the property of the whole people which they handle following the conversion of the economy to the principles of complete operational autonomy — profitability and self-financing. It means that each enterprise, its technical and social upgrading, the wages and salaries of its personnel, should depend on the end result, on the quantity and quality of what it produces or what services it affords or, in short, on what it earns.

The instrument-making, chemical engineering, automobile oil refining, petrochemical, and light industries have been converted to complete operational economic autonomy, and so have the merchant marine and commerce. Enterprises in agriculture, too, operate along similar lines. And in 1988 and 1989 practically all industries will go over to operational economic autonomy.

The foreign trade of enterprises is being relieved of trammels. We might say that the stereotype of the state's foreign trade monopoly being identified with the monopoly of one ministry, that of foreign trade, has now been scrapped. A score of ministries, 72 major amalgamations, enterprises and agencies have been granted the right to export and import on their own. Nearly half the exports of the engineering industry are handled by the producers without any intermediaries.

Direct ties between work collectives and their customers abroad are growing, and the establishment of joint ventures, of international associations and

organisations, is gaining pace. This means, in effect, that a new variety of socialised property is coming into being.

As for the co-operative form of property, we have for years considered it on the theoretical plane as no more than an underdeveloped form of socialist property. This had serious consequences, creating armchair administering of collective farms. Besides, it led to the scrapping of craftsmen's co-operatives. The number of co-operatives shrank rapidly in the latter half of the 1950s and in the early 1960s, largely through their conversion into state farms — a process that continued in later years.

After the 27th Congress of the CPSU, co-operatives have been regaining lost ground. We expect, among other things, that collective farms will register better results once they are relieved of excessive control. Co-operatives are being formed for the procurement and processing of recyclable waste, in public catering, the service industry, and in consumer goods production. Co-operatives are also appearing in gardening and vegetable-growing.

Misconceptions and prejudices concerning the role and prospects of individual small holdings in agriculture and of self-employment in general, are being rectified. The measures taken by the party in recent years have made for the further development of collective and state farms and encouraged in individual small holdings. The latter account for nearly a quarter of total agricultural output in the country and for a still greater percentage in livestock breeding, potato growing and cultivation of vegetables. Recently, the USSR Supreme Soviet passed an act which lists the various fields in which citizens are permitted self-employment.

**Third.** Marx, Engels and Lenin defined **steep increases in the rate of social development** as a distinctive feature of revolution. The same applies entirely to **perestroika**. Its purpose is to secure an acceleration of social processes in all spheres of life without exception — the economic, social, political, cultural and intellectual.

But let me stress that the acceleration strategy does not boil down to rapid progress in some separate social field. Such singling out would be a recurrence of subjectivism in politics, with all the harmful consequences this entails. A real reorganisation, a new quality of growth, is possible only if the change embraces all the mutually connected social processes. You cannot make the economy advance vigorously unless people's psychology changes, their sense of social responsibility grows stronger and they shake off outdated dogmas and stereotypes. No sharp turn can be expected in the development of the social sphere unless the economic basis is provided for it. None of the other things can be accomplished either without imparting a new dynamism to the political system of socialism, to the development of culture and social ethics.

The time factor is highly significant. It is natural to want to attain palpable results that would be felt by all Soviet people as quickly as possible. We are perfectly well aware that the party has won trust — but on credit, and that cre-



dit is not everlasting. Owing to the mistakes and faults of the past, all of us — the party and the people — are now having to work against time.

For all that, however, speedy change is not a goal in itself for us. Setting the rate of **perestroika** is all-important politically and in practice. Yet Mikhail Gorbachev noted that while delay and hesitation are disastrous, haste, impatience and premature action, too, can do a lot of harm. The important thing is not to overlook the simple fact that any excessive increase in the number of contemplated tasks will prevent us from carrying them out in good time.

That is why now, when we have a clear long-term political platform and when we have taken major and fundamental decisions, painstaking practical efforts are of prime importance to achieve everything we have planned. The party and its leadership are determined to act daringly, vigorously, and consistently. We cannot afford to treadmill somewhere halfway, and to confine ourselves to half-measures. The half-baked decisions of the past let us down. But as we increase the rate, scale, and depth of the changes, we are laying the emphasis not on the process but on the result.

**Fourth.** Marx, Engels and Lenin viewed the socialist revolution as the supreme act that asserts the interests of the working people. But not only that. As they saw it, revolution was an act of the **mass of the people**. The more fully the masses are involved in revolution, the deeper and the more irreversible become the revolutionary changes. The very first steps of **perestroika** have shown that most Soviet people welcome it as an expression of their own interests, and as a task that concerns each and everyone. They have pledged to participate in carrying out the party's plans because the ultimate purpose of **perestroika** is to secure a better material and spiritual life for Soviet people and to really enlist every working person in the running of society.

The party sees greater democratisation of the entire social fabric as the lever making it possible to activate the decisive force of **perestroika**, that is, to involve the people in it. This means that we are not undertaking broad democratisation just to please someone although it is true that we have always tried to enhance the appeal of socialism. We view this appeal from clearly defined class-based positions and regard it as the best possible order of things which best serves the fundamental interests of the working people.

Further democratisation and broader popular control is an innate requirement of a developing socialist society. Only in conditions of openness, discussion and a free and unhampered comparison of different viewpoints can one avoid mistakes in decision-making on matters relating to the country's future. Only in conditions of democratisation, criticism and self-criticism which freely enable all to consciously assess what is happening can one avoid distortions of the principles of socialism. Finally, only in conditions of democracy and control "from below" is the shaping of creativity possible in individuals.

The guessing games of Sovietologists as to how close the reforms in the Soviet Union are bringing it to the standards of "Western democracy" are therefore completely groundless. We are not steering towards Western-style

liberalisation which masks the absolute sway of capital, but towards deepening socialist democracy, socialist self-government by the people. Step by step, reorganisation creates conditions for tangible and growing mass participation in government, in the management of all affairs of our society.

Today, the USSR attaches foremost attention to the development of democracy on the shopfloor, to the consistent promotion of self-management principles in the activities of work collectives. I refer to forms of economic organisation which enable every worker to feel and actually be in genuine and responsible control of his or her factory or enterprise.

We are switching to the practice of electing the managers of amalgamations, enterprises and shops, as well as workteam leaders and foremen who are to report to those who elect them. There are provisions for granting the councils of work collectives the right to suspend implementation of decisions taken by the management.

Democratisation is designed to enhance the initiative, rights and responsibility of local government bodies and civic organisations and to ensure that their activities be as open as possible.

It is of prime importance to ensure strict observance of Lenin's concept of the Soviets as bodies that not only take decisions but also secure and monitor their implementation. An atmosphere is being created conducive to fuller use of the initiative and energy of our youth, of its commitment to innovation and practical work.

Invariable participation of the working masses in the discussion of major economic and social issues is becoming a standard of political life. Our course is in stark contrast with the situation in capitalist countries where thousands of devious tricks are used to deprive working people of the opportunity to "make politics", as they say in the West.

Some new aspects of the electoral practice, specifically the nomination of several candidates for discussion and for voting, will be tested during the elections to the local Soviets of people's deputies as early as this year.

By promoting socialist democracy and developing its potential, the party is providing reliable guarantees that the past mistakes connected with breaches of the law and with violation of the collective principle of leadership do not recur.

**Fifth.** The revolutionary reorganisation of relations in the material sphere is being prepared, shaped and consolidated by **revolutionary changes in the intellectual and spiritual sphere.**

First and foremost this applies to social theory. When our party was being formed, Lenin put forward the famous precept that there can be no revolutionary movement without revolutionary theory. Now that Soviet society is tackling complex and large-scale tasks, it is particularly important to theoretically substantiate our approach to them and to define effective ways and means of their solution.

The entire strategy, the entire theory of **perestroika** is based on a truly Marxist-Leninist understanding of the way the objective laws of social development operate, and this understanding is steadily regaining its rightful status. It is proceeding from this principled basis that our party has arrived at bold and essentially innovative theoretical and political conclusions which combat dogmatism and all sorts of pseudo-theoretical junk. Dull rehashing of copybook maxims, insipid thinking and uncritical acceptance of dogma are being increasingly barred from the latest publications and discussions dealing with the social sciences. Social thought is getting bolder and developing a taste for studying acute problems that arise in the development of the Soviet society and of socialism as a system.

We believe it absolutely necessary to make theoretical research a field of high intellectual effort, for only this can enable it to effectively tackle two topical tasks — first, to project the new vision of socialism, chart the routes of its advancement and specify this fundamental knowledge by incorporating it into the concept of **perestroika**; and second, to spread the climate of intellectual quest and dynamism to all society and encourage collective thinking. This can be ensured by promoting a high ethical level of creative debate incompatible with name-calling or with charges of alleged deviations from socialism.

For a philosopher, economist, sociologist or historian to take a stand consonant with the demands of the day does not mean that he should be able to adapt to the views that are current. This stand depends on one's ability to constantly search for answers to the difficult questions reality poses, to study the actual dialectics of social development, and to fill the gaps that have opened in important areas of theory and practice of scientific socialism.

Public opinion is playing an increasingly prominent role. Public opinion has encouraged government agencies to resolutely combat violations of socialist legality, bribery, abuse of official position for personal gain, drunkenness, drug addiction and other social ills. Public opinion helps to expose incompetence.

Truly Leninist principles of cultural policy, of party guidance in literature and art are taking root in the course of **perestroika**. The effort is aimed at stepping up the activity of writers', artists', composers', film-makers' and other similar unions and at preventing unwarranted interference into purely creative work. The rights and powers of these unions are expanding, and the life of creative workers' teams is becoming more democratic. At the same time, the level of party and government guidance of cultural development is rising.

Much is being done to instil in the present generations a high level of intellectual endeavour, respect for everlasting human values, and an ability to think and assess things independently and vigorously.

**Sixth.** It is a salient feature of revolutionary **perestroika** in the Soviet Union that the masses have become aware of the need for change as an urgent social necessity **expressed, scientifically substantiated and launched into practical implementation by the Communist Party**. This is why, begun on

the initiative “from above”, **perestroika** was extensively supported by a powerful movement “from below”.

The party has found the strength and the courage to assess the situation soberly and to acknowledge the need for radically changing the political, economic, social and intellectual fields and for setting the country on the path of transformations. In this way the party reaffirmed and emphasised its revolutionary essence and its status as the leading force which is not content with the existing state of social relations, which can analyse and resolve the contradictions that these relations give rise to, and which is capable of criticising its own activities and bringing them into conformity with the changing situation.

Lenin regarded a party’s attitude to its own mistakes as one of the most important and surest ways of judging how earnest it is. “Frankly acknowledging a mistake”, he said, “ascertaining the reasons for it, analysing the conditions that have lead up to it, and thrashing out the means of its rectification — that is the hallmark of a serious party; that is how it should perform its duties and how it should educate and train its *class*, and then the *masses*.” (Lenin’s *Collected Works*, Vol 31, p 57)

The January 1987 plenary meeting of the CPSU Central committee noted how important it was now for the Communists to resolutely overcome the consequences of past violations of party principles and deviations in the pursuit of personnel policy. The party is making greater demands upon itself and its cadres, enhancing their responsibility for the work assigned to them, ensuring an influx of fresh forces to leading posts, and supporting intellectually vigorous and energetic people of initiative.

The tasks for all cadres is to learn to work in conditions of growing democracy and of the people’s increasing political and labour activity. This calls for an ability to be guided by the democratic way of thinking and acting, a way that implies and encourages an open competition of ideas. It means respect for the opinions of people, their social experience and their dignity. It means an ability to work so as to naturally highlight the advantages of our principles, demands and ideals, so that these advantages could reach hearts and minds and not be treated as dogma.

**Perestroika** is already yielding results. This is clear, among other things, from the record of the previous year. National income grew by 4.1 per cent as against the average annual rate of 3.6 per cent in the previous five-year period. The 1986 industrial output growth rate was one-third higher than the average annual figure for the previous, eleventh five-year plan period and reached 4.9 per cent. The vast dimensions of our economy impart special weight to these percentages. Within a single day, our country produces 1.7 million tons of oil, including condensate; 1.9 billion cubic metres of natural gas; 2.1 million tons of coal and 440,000 tons of steel. The output of agricultural produce has grown noticeably, and the scope of housing construction has increased.

But the main thing is that a very important political and moral goal has been

attained: the country now lives in an atmosphere dominated by the ideas of **perestroika** and the strategy of accelerating socio-economic development. There is now more democracy, more order and discipline, and a temperate way of life is gaining ground. The interests of socialism and of the people and the political authority of the party have been raised to a new height.

Having spread to all levels of the social edifice, **perestroika** creates guarantees of its irreversibility — the ever stronger unity of the will and action of the party and the people, the healthy development of the party itself. Positive processes are under way within the party. They are connected with the promotion of its internal democracy, the consolidation of its ties with the masses outside its membership, and the strengthening of the Communists' ideological and moral standards.

The acceleration machinery is only just beginning to operate, and is yet to move into high gear. We freely admit that acceleration entails difficulties and strenuous effort, that things may even become more complicated for some time until the measures we are taking begin to bring full-scale returns. The causes behind the problems that have accumulated in our society have proved to lie deeper than we previously thought. Conservative, outdated thinking and inertia are still strong. In many economic, government and even party bodies and in work collectives, not everyone is keeping pace with the demands of the day. There are many people who, while supporting change, take a long time to jettison the ballast of the past; others have adopted a wait-and-see policy.

There are also those who resist **perestroika** — those who see it as a threat to their well-being, who turn economic mismanagement into a source of personal gain, who have come to habitually regard the socialist state as a wealthy philanthropist distributing largesse almost automatically, irrespective of one's performance at work. They are the bureaucrats who have grown used to relying on the force of administrative pressure and who justly fear for their official status and social standing. They are the dogmatists who are afraid of any change "least something go wrong".

But the present situation differs radically from the past revolutionary turning points in the history of our society, such as the collectivisation drive among the peasants in the early 1930s. At that time there was a clash of classes, there were the kulaks, the enemy class. Today, there is absolutely no political opposition to the renovation effort, no political divisions in our society.

Our workers, farmers and intellectuals are calling on the party not to be content with what has been accomplished, to act resolutely, to advance and follow the chosen course unswervingly. It is also important to us that the reforms in the Soviet Union have evoked sympathy and understanding in world public opinion, particularly among the peoples of the fraternal socialist countries and in communist and workers' parties.

The Soviet Communists are fully aware that the changes under way in the USSR are of great international significance. **Perestroika** is showing everyone where our society channels its resources, what its programs and

intentions aim at, and how it spends its intellectual energy. No one stands to lose but the whole world stands to gain from the desire of the Soviet people to improve their country. In international terms, **perestroika** is an invitation to the other social system to compete on a strictly peaceful basis.

More than ever before our international policy is now shaped by our domestic policy, by the stake we have in durable peace and in predictable and constructive international relations. Our foreign policy is concentrating ever more on securing favourable conditions for our creative efforts to perfect socialism. In this work we see a realisation of our responsibility to the international working class, the working people and all nations, and our major contribution to the cause of social progress and peace.



One may say that socialism in the USSR has gained its second wind. The Soviet people are now more confident and look to the future with optimism. No wonder our friends who come to us from abroad tell us that our country has grown younger.

In its profound revolutionary essence, in the boldness of its plans and in its humanistic thrust the work we are now doing is a direct follow-up on the great accomplishments begun by Lenin's party in October 1917. After a span of many years we still feel the fresh blood of the October Revolution pulsing in the veins of our dynamic times. On the eve of the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution, this reality helps us to better grasp the strength, the class-based roots and the universal significance of the revolution, to take a fresh look at our objectives and tasks, and to understand the accomplishments and lessons of socialist history.

# Building socialism — GDR, Hungary, Czechoslovakia

by Jack McPhillips

**Although not essential for the purpose, a visit to the socialist countries and direct discussions with leading persons active in the development of a socialist society is of great assistance to communists from capitalist countries in getting better understanding of the problems associated with winning and maintaining political power from the bourgeoisie and developing a socialist society.**

That was the main conclusion of a three member delegation representing the Socialist Party of Australia which spent six weeks during April-May this year in the German Democratic Republic, the Hungarian People's Republic and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic.

Such a seemingly short period in three socialist countries certainly does not make anybody an authority on life in any of those countries nor enable an exhaustive examination of all aspects of the social systems. But with an extensive pre-knowledge of the political, economic and social systems this delegation was greatly assisted in its activities and objectives by extensive discussions with leading persons in the parties of the countries. They provided information and views on important aspects.

The information and views were conveyed to and discussed with the delegation in the course of fifty-two formal and official and some informal meetings which involved no less than 123 persons and took place in eleven localities.

CC functionaries of the leading party in each country, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SUP), Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP) and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia; regional and district party officials of each of

those parties, the Mayor of one city — Shwerin in the GDR — and two of his Councillors, officials of the central body of the trade unions in each country and trade union representatives in work places, managers of enterprises, workers and farmers of state and co-operative farms.

Of particular importance for the delegation and its purposes was an extensive question and answer session with a group of young workers numbering more than twenty at the Skoda auto plant in Czechoslovakia.

In addition to these forms of discussion the delegation was further assisted by informal and intimate conversations with those assisting the delegation in a personal capacity in each country. The delegation had ample opportunity to observe aspects of life in the countries concerned during unrehearsed walks through the streets of cities, towns and villages and at a variety of entertainment.

The delegation has accounted for its work and activities to the SPA Central Committee and the CC Executive and submitted to the CC its conclusions on its visits.

What follows is a brief outline of those conclusions.

Each of the countries visited face some difficulties even though each is a socialist country of many years standing.

The difficulties arise and affect political life, social institutions, the economy, the leading party and ideology and difficulties vary in each of the countries visited.

In Hungary the difficulties are quite serious in depth and extent. (Since the delegation's visit and report back those difficulties have further developed and reports confirm their extent and depth.)

However, the problems facing these countries are less serious and consequential than those currently facing the capitalist countries, including Australia. The circumstances in which the difficulties have arisen and exist in the socialist countries assist their favourable resolutions.

The leading persons with whom the delegation had discussions were unreservedly confident that the difficulties would be overcome without any weakening of their position as socialist countries.

The SPA delegation was equally confident of that outcome.

The socialist system is not endangered and this provides cold comfort for the imperialists and other anti-socialist forces, including such forces in Australia.

## **Earlier views confirmed**

The task of changing a society from one order to another, from capitalism



to socialism, is enormous. The difficulties associated with such a change and confronting those who undertake such a task are really great.

This task is not for the faint-hearted nor for those who approach it with merely a passing "hobby-like" interest and in a spirit of amateurism. It can be successfully accomplished only by the action of the masses led by a political party possessing and acting in accordance with a scientifically based knowledge of societies, with a membership convinced of the need for such a change and devoted to bringing it about.

The processes going on in all countries create changing circumstances which require changes in tactics and even in strategy. To deal successfully with and develop those processes it is essential to be alert for changes and to make necessary adjustments, consistent with the objectives of social change, in full and on time.

At no stage are the processes of social change and the problems and issues simple to comprehend or easy to solve.

Barring favourable leaps in the development of the processes of social change, each stage of that development is long-term. There are no prescribed short-cuts.

## **No common models of socialism**

All the above applies to the original process of changing the nature and form of political power and during every stage of building the new social system.

The concept of all countries finding their own way to socialism, with each contributing to the overall development of social change is not a "gimmick". It is a reality and has in fact existed for some time. This means the rejection of any particular model of socialism as being universally applicable to every country. It does not mean the rejection of the concept of certain common features being applicable to each country and, in fact, being necessary for success in the processes of social change and the development through various stages of the building of socialist society.

This means that there is not any one existing model of socialism in either the socialist countries or in the concepts and programs advanced by advocates of socialism in other countries that are necessarily applicable to Australia.

Socialist forces in this country and in particular the Socialist Party of Australia, must develop their own concepts and program for the development of social change and a socialist society in Australia based upon the historical features of Australian society and the concrete and specific features of the country. This must be done on the basis of Marxist-Leninist theories and by drawing upon the experiences of similar parties in other non-socialist countries as well as the parties of the socialist countries.

Differing models of a socialist society already exist in the three countries visited by the delegation and are being further developed with differing aspects. At the same time there are many similarities and common features.

Each is a socialist country. The leading force in each, by both prescription and by activity, is a Marxist-Leninist party, differently named. Each possesses a form of national front organisation for purposes of developing and maintaining national unity.

Each has an extensive trade union organisation and in each case the main cadre force of those organisations are members of the respective leading political party.

There are clear and discernible differences in the structures of their socialist economies. There are variations in the position and role in each society of the trade unions. There are differences in the structure and, to some extent, the role and functioning, though not so much in the purpose, of the national front organisations. There are variations in the position occupied in the society and its political, economic and social structures by the leading party in each country though each is formally recognised as the leading force in the respective country.

## **International situation**

There is a very high and positive estimation of the outcome of the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), of the report made on behalf of the CPSU Central Committee by General Secretary, M Gorbachev, of subsequent decisions of the CPSU leading bodies and of the international activity of Gorbachev. The basis for this estimation varies slightly but the conclusions on these events and activities are consistently favourable.

Great emphasis is laid upon the maintenance of world peace and the issue of disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament. Together with this goes the need for the development of the broadest possible unity.

Emphasis is given to the issue of peaceful co-existence of nations with differing social systems, not only by way of imperialism living in peaceful co-existence with socialism but also vice versa. This is not seen as a convenient concept for the time being but as a basic concept accompanied by an acceptance of imperialism's longer term existence as a system.

This is accompanied by a very firm "no co-operation, no compromise" in the ideological struggle between capitalism and socialism.

Following the many initiatives and proposals developed by the USSR and other socialist countries for disarmament and world peace, the peace forces are on the offensive. This is associated with new positions taken by the USSR consequent upon the CPSU 27th Congress and subsequent meetings of

CPSU leading bodies. The image of the USSR presented to the non-socialist world has improved. These developments have affected for the better the stand of sectional forces in the imperialist countries and especially in the USA.

These developments have widened the appeal of the cause of disarmament and peace and greatly strengthened the forces of the world-wide peace movement.

It is essential in these circumstances for the Communist and Workers' Parties to intensify their efforts in this vital area of activity. That need applies also to the Socialist Party of Australia.

## **The world movement of communist and workers' parties**

The position within the world communist movement has considerably improved in recent times. The factors and developments which have favourably affected the international situation in general have contributed to improving the position of the world movement.

A welcome and noteworthy feature of this improvement is a more ready acceptance of the need for and the right of each country and its communist party to find the way to develop its struggle for social change in accordance with its own estimate of the specific conditions and the main features of its historical development.

This is accompanied by a more ready acceptance of the independence of each of the parties constituting the world communist movement, ie, an acceptance of the self-evident fact that there is no ready made model of socialist development which is of necessity applicable to every country or party, and an acceptance of basic equality between each party.

This does not imply the equal importance and capacity of all the parties. Nor does it deny the inherent need for unity on the basis of proletarian internationalism in support of common aims.

However, differences within the world movement persist and the time is not yet opportune for a world meeting of communist and workers' parties. Bi-lateral and multi-lateral meetings and discussions and regional consultations are more on the order of the day as the means of further strengthening international communist unity.

## **Economic systems and structures of the three countries**

Although each of the countries are socialist states there are marked differences in the structure of their respective economies.

*German Democratic Republic:* The basis and backbone of the GDR economy are the industrial combines. These link together related enterprises engaged in various stages of the production process and marketing. Enterprises constituting a combine are situated in separated areas of the country.

Each has a parent enterprise and the manager of that enterprise is also the General Manager of the combine. The combines have considerable autonomy and authority in relation to their own functioning including the area of importing and exporting. However, this is not a “free-for-all”. They function in accordance with firmly established central planning and, in the ultimate, the overriding authority of the government and the parliament. However, discussion is proceeding on proposals to extend the authority and autonomy of the combines.

There are also extensive co-operative organisations in small scale consumer production and retailing. These are subject to regulation and control by established authorities.

In certain areas of the economy there is a degree of private industry. Such enterprises exist mainly in small areas of services, eg, shoe, watch and household repairs. But private enterprise exists also in certain areas of manufacturing.

Private enterprises are established only on permission of appropriate local and regional authorities. Their operations are subject to formally constituted controls as are their profit levels. This latter control is achieved mainly by taxation. At a certain level the rate of taxation becomes almost prohibitive, reaching 70 per cent. But they are also assisted in their operations by the government. Assistance includes financial assistance on certain terms. Privately owned enterprises do not compete with state owned enterprises.

The existence of such a private sector of the economy in these areas is considered necessary for the further development of the economy and society. Neither government nor party authorities advocate such a development for other countries but they are adamant in relation to its value for the socialist society of the GDR. This is consistent with the maxim of the independence of Marxist-Leninist parties and the right of countries and parties to find their own path to socialism. The Socialist Unity Party is certain that the path being followed in the GDR is correct for that country and it will not have any other model or path forced on it.

The level of technological development of industry is most advanced with automation, computerisation, robotisation and CAD/CAM (Computer-Aided Design/Computer-Aided Manufacturing) processes being main features. The current five year plan provides for further such developments.

The country’s agriculture consists of three sectors: co-operative farms, state farms and private plots. The co-operative farms occupy the overwhelming proportion of land given over to agriculture. There is no intention to extend the development of state farms.

There is considerable dependence on the production of private plots. This

dependence includes fruit, vegetables, eggs, poultry and some meat products. The existence and intended continued existence of a private sector of the economy stems to some extent from firm undertakings given by the Communist Party in the formative years of the socialist society against any form of liquidation of small business or small scale farming, including backyard farming. But it is due also to a calculated estimate of the value and need for such a sector in the development of the economy of the GDR.

Ideological work both within the party and in the society in general is extensive. A compelling force for this is the existence of a capitalist country on German soil "just over the wall", with several powerful TV and radio stations beaming in on the GDR.

But the attention to questions of ideology stems mainly from a consciousness of the imperative need for this activity for purposes of developing a socialist society.

The high level of activity in the field of ideology is not confined to party and/or government bodies. It is a responsibility shouldered by a multiplicity of organisations catering for the social, cultural, educational and, in some instances, material requirements of the people.

Extensive work is done by the trade union organisations. Some indication of this is the existence of a Trade Union and Social Policy Department of the SUP Central Committee. Such a section does not exist in any other party of the socialist countries. (The establishment of such a department is being contemplated by the Polish United Workers' Party.)

The extensive ideological activity, a wide-spread network of organisations involving the vast majority of the people, an ideologically strong party and close relationships and co-operation between the SUP, the trade unions and the management bodies, both in industry and agriculture, contribute to a general state of firmness, awareness and confidence in the GDR.

*Hungarian People's Republic:* Early in 1987 Hungary was experiencing considerable difficulties affecting areas of its political, social and economic life.

These difficulties were reflected in the party, the parliament, the trade unions and the mass social organisations.

Some of these difficulties were similar to those facing Australia, in particular, an adverse balance of trade, a burdensome level of foreign debt (though only \$US10 billion) and a degree of inflation.

Discussions had commenced among the people in general and, in particular, the Party, trade union organisations and non-party mass organisations on proposals advanced by the government for introduction of a "value-added" tax, thus increasing taxation, and to changes in relation to pensions. These changes would raise the age at which Hungarian citizens became eligible for

age pensions and for an increase in the amount contributed by workers to the fund from which pensions were financed.

A leading official of the central body of the trade unions pointed out that living standards were declining and there was general agreement among such people as himself, Party representatives and academic economists that standards would further decline unless the decline in the economy was arrested. In this connection, emphasis was given to the need to turn round the balance of trade and obtain relief from the burden of the \$10 billion national debt and the heavy cost of servicing that debt.

That surprising state of affairs exists despite the fact that the nation possesses adequate and appropriate academic institutions peopled by economists who have written, in journals distributed internationally, with authority, vision, perspective, and a knowledge and far-reaching understanding of the economy of the nation, of the world, and of current and prospective developments in those areas.

The only explanations for this unsatisfactory state of affairs offered by those who discussed the position was that the advice from economists, which must now be seen as being sound, was rejected. The standard of living had grown on the basis of borrowings and trade with the West. This had now been proven false.

There were also problems of an ideological character within the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and the people in general — especially the young people.

Central planning is a feature of the Hungarian economy but it appears to play a lesser role than in other socialist countries and lesser even than is intended in the proposals for further development of the USSR economy.

Enterprises in Hungary have long since exercised a considerable degree of authority and autonomy in their operations, including management methods, price fixing and trading. This is not without some element of central control. Although private enterprise accounts for only approximately 5 per cent of the national income and it is restricted to certain areas and subject to official controls, that area of the economy appears to be less controlled than in the other countries visited by the SPA delegation. The last five year plan was not fulfilled. Despite the difficulties, those with whom the issues were discussed were confident of them being resolved according to principles of socialism resulting in a stronger socialist Hungary.

(Since the delegation's visit brief reports indicate firm moves being taken in accordance with the ideas raised with changes of personnel in the Party, the government and in the economy.)

The Patriotic People's National Front is a widespread organisation and

exercises considerable influence and some authority. Although a loose form of organisation, it functions with a formal set of Statutes.

Agriculture consists of three sectors: state and co-operative farms and private plots. The co-operatives are the decisive sector and, together with the state farms, provide two-thirds of agricultural production. There is no intention to extend the state farm sector of agriculture.

The Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party is formally and officially recognised as the leading force in socialist Hungary and is prescribed as such in the nation's Constitution but the Party does not appear to proceed on the basis of being a Party in power even though the nation is a "one-Party" state. That position of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party appears to be a factor contributing to the unsatisfactory position in the country.

*Czechoslovak Socialist Republic:* Czechoslovakia was in the throes of discussion and planned action to restructure the nation's economy to correct some previous errors at the time of our visit.

Despite rumours to the contrary the Party and government were united in the processes of restructuring and correcting errors. Their commitment is firm and clearly manifested. Czechoslovakia possesses a developed economy but admittedly lags in the area of technological development.

But there is no mad rush into the necessary reforms. A number of enterprises have been selected for experimenting with the processes of restructuring. On the basis of the experiences gained the area of change will be extended and adjustments made to the planned restructuring.

Discussions with people at various levels and in differing areas of the economy revealed no illusions concerning difficulties associated with the restructuring. But the care being taken is not due to fear of difficulties.

The intention is for the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia to maintain firm control over the developments to ensure maximum benefit to the people, minimum difficulties and minimum interference by any forces hostile to the planned aims. That reference is not to persons who may have reservations about the intended reforms of the economy but to forces, and there are such, who would take advantage of inevitable difficulties in the processes of reform.

Except for limited private enterprise, in the area of certain personal services, the economy is fully socialised.

The national debt is approximately \$US2.5 billion and the nation has debtors owing it approximately the same amount.

Czechoslovakia consists of two nations — Czechs and Slovaks. There are separate government administrations and a joint parliament. There are two communist parties. Members of the Slovak Communist Party are also

automatically members of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. The nation of Czechoslovakia is a form of Federation and within that Federation there are four parties in addition to the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

Agriculture is almost entirely socialised. State farms are slightly more important in agriculture than in the GDR and Hungary. Both state and co-operative farmers are united in a Union of Farmers. This body has central and local (farm) organisation and functions in accordance with a formal constitution and procedures. Private plots of land exist for personal use and personal consumption.

There is a National Front organisation but, as distinct from Hungary, it does not function on the basis of formal Statutes. Its purpose is to develop national unity in support of Communist Party policies.

The authority and functioning of the Party is obvious in all areas. Except for the very limited area of private endeavour already mentioned, commercial, financial and industrial enterprises are socialised.

Despite some shortcomings, eg, the last five year plan was not fulfilled in all areas and difficulties anticipated in the planned restructuring, the position in Czechoslovakia is sound. There is an air of confidence and determination.

A main conclusion drawn by the SPA delegation on the basis of their extensive discussions and observations is that there is nothing in the functioning of the three socialist countries visited to encourage the imperialist dream of the collapse of socialism in those countries or on a world basis.

## **The struggle for socialism in the capitalist countries**

While emphasising that the way forward in the struggle for socialism in the capitalist countries is essentially a matter for the Marxist-Leninist parties in respective countries, views on this matter were freely expressed by appropriate people in each of the three socialist countries.

Those views included the following:

None of the developed capitalist countries exhibited the essentials for a successful socialist revolution either currently or in short term prospect. That being the case it is necessary for the Marxist-Leninist parties to come to grips with the fact that, despite its difficulties and even forms of crisis, imperialism was not about to collapse nor would it be easily, or in the short term, pushed from the stage of history.

While retaining the ultimate strategic aim of changing the order of society there is a need to proclaim more immediate strategic aims, to include these in programmatic statements, to make changes and amendments to existing policies and even adopt new policies and tactics in line with more immediate aims.



These immediate aims must be decided upon by the parties concerned and be related to the position in each country. They could include such issues as world peace, aspects of foreign policy, democracy, living standards and monopoly domination.

Pointing to the smallness and in many respects the limited effectiveness of all except a small number of the parties in the developed countries it is suggested that immediate aims require more emphasis in the activities of these parties.

There is a need to emphasise the importance of developing the widest possible unity of forces in each country capable of and willing to support such aims.

Nothing in these views as put to the SPA delegation suggests that the struggle for socialism in the developed capitalist countries is, in today's circumstances irrelevant or that the Marxist-Leninist parties in these countries need to lessen their internationalist positions.

The functioning of such parties, however, will be strengthened by a more realistic assessment of the objective circumstances and possibility in each of the developed capitalist countries.

# More than meets the eye

by Brian Rooney

**Australia is faced with an economic crisis which has ushered in a very long period of substantial deterioration in the conditions of production as compared with the preceding thirty years. Economic growth rates are low, unemployment is high and growing (despite claims to the contrary), inflation is substantial, the investment process and purchasing capacity are at a low ebb, production is below capacity, the balance of payments and trade deficits and government budget deficits are tremendous with no solutions in sight.**

Most importantly for the working class, this state of affairs is not going to disappear.

Neither the periods of depression nor the slight recovery and production growth, resolve the contradictions that have accumulated. Nor can they be resolved by the usual capitalist methods, because many of the contradictions transcend the framework of the cycle and are not of periodical, but are of a long-term, chronic and structural nature.

As with the rest of the world capitalist economy, Australia's economic development is distinguished by an involved and entangled variety of crisis phenomena: **the cyclical and the chronic, the current and the structural, the internal and the international.** The Citibank economists (*Advertiser*, 15/7/87) have stated that "at some stage over the next two to three years, the world commodity cycle will move into recession with alarming consequences for Australia".

In this state of affairs, the ruling class have made it quite clear that they are not going to bear the brunt of this crisis. On the contrary, they intend to make the working class pay.

It is under these circumstances that the so-called "New Right" has emerged and exerted itself.

## Is the “New Right” new?

Ideologically and in its aims the “New Right” is not new. Tactically there are differences. The “old right” did not consider it necessary to conceal its intentions from the people. The “New Right” does.

“New Right” advocates have realised that they are a minority in society and would not be able to win support for their real aim, which is that the working class sacrifice living standards and democratic rights so as to benefit the ruling class. For the purpose of winning people to their concepts, they have utilised the latest developments of the scientific and technological revolution in mass media, coupled with latest developments in the social sciences. In regard to the latter, they are now employing the best available bourgeois academics for the purpose of creating “think-tanks” with the task of winning the minds of people to the ideas and values of the “New Right”.

The “New Right” hopes to re-shape the whole political agenda of this country.

## One import we can do without

“New Right” aims in Australia are expressed through a number of specific purpose organisations. These organisations all have one thing in common: their tactics and organisational structures have all been “imported from the US”.

Their counterpart organisations in the US have been credited with the decline of the trade union movement in that country and the overall lowering of the level of political consciousness.

If we consider the periods of emergence of liberal thinking in the US such as in 1919-21, 1946-50, and immediately at the end of the Vietnam war, we will see that right-wing business organisations were able to hold back the development of liberal thinking and eventually re-impose a business hegemony over US society. On each occasion the same propaganda and public relations methods were used.

## Enterprise Australia

One of the organisations in Australia called *Enterprise Australia*, which was established in 1976, consists of the largest groups of corporations and employer associations.

Initially it appears to be another employer lobby group created to promote the concept of “free enterprise” under the guise of being an objective educational body. It equates employers’ self-interest with the national interest and urges that everyone works together for the common good.

However, it attempts to enlist active support and involvement of the trade unions in the aim to destroy, or at least isolate, the trade union movement as a pre-condition for the achievement of employer objectives of establishing individual employment contracts. These contracts would mean that employers decide how much to pay their employees and under what condi-

tions employees would work. Employees would be left with the choice of accepting the offer or becoming unemployed. The abolition of unemployment benefits and other welfare payments, which is a simultaneous demand, would leave the working class with no choice at all.

The key targets of *Enterprise Australia* include:

1. Employee annual reports — whereby the employer ostensibly keeps his workers informed about how the company is performing. But, in reality, it has the purpose of destroying the credibility of union officials as a source of information.
2. Employer propaganda for school children — *Enterprise Australia* has created a “school and colleges program”, which has two aims: to inculcate school children with pro-management and anti-union values and to intervene in the development of school curricula so that children will be taught what management wants them to be taught.
3. Incorporation of trade union officials into management structures. Here the idea is to involve union officials as much as possible in management activities in order to legitimise what management is doing in the eyes of the union members. The trade union officials, however, have mainly token participation with little control over what is happening. Their presence is used to give credence to the concept of unity between management, union and government. *Enterprise Australia* also seeks to divide the trade union movement by supporting some sections of the movement against others, and by driving a wedge between full-time officials and ordinary rank-and-file members.
4. Guest speakers from overseas, used to spread the “free enterprise” gospel. There is no shortage of articulate right-wing speakers, especially from the US.
5. Trade union schools. These are conducted through the Trade Union Program at Harvard University, which provides four scholarships each year for senior trade union officials from Australia to participate in a thirteen week training course. The program seeks to equate employers’ self-interest with the national interest and urges that everyone works together to achieve management goals.

*Enterprise Australia* presently has a budget of \$12 million per annum for propaganda purposes in addition to donations of radio time. In 1979 it was worth \$1 million, in 1984, \$5 million. It has also spent \$500,000 to produce a “New Right” textbook for primary schools.

Alex Carey pointed out in his publication *Managing Public Opinion; the Corporate Offensive*, that *Enterprise Australia*’s principal audiences are school children, tertiary students, teachers, industrial employees and the general public. It has produced so-called “economic education” material for all these groups — pamphlets, videos, films, annual reports for employees (and in comic strip form for children), a secondary school textbook and even a sermon on industrial relations for use in the churches. They have also produced

a course in economic education comprising 640 coloured slides and supporting commentary, which is intended for use both in schools and with employees in industry. In recent years *Enterprise Australia* has given greatly increased attention to promotion of “human relations” type programs in industry, including employee participation, leadership training and quality circles.

## **The think-tanks**

The various “New Right” organisations, including *Enterprise Australia*, have at their disposal numerous “think-tanks”. There is the Centre for Independent Studies located in Sydney, the Centre for Policy Studies at Monash University, the National Institute of Labour Studies at Flinders University (wholly funded from outside), the Australian Institute for Public Policy in Perth and the Institute of Public Affairs in Melbourne. There are others which are supported by the chambers of commerce.

## **Types of propaganda**

At one level there is what is termed “grass roots” propaganda, which is aimed to reach large numbers of people directly and thereby change public opinion.

Another level is called “tree-top” propaganda. According to Alex Carey this is not directed at the person in the street, but is directed towards influencing a select audience of influential people, policy makers in parliament, the civil service, newspaper editors and columnists and economics commentators on TV and radio. Its immediate purpose is to set the terms of debate, to determine the kind of questions that will dominate public discussion — in a word, to set the political agenda in ways which are favourable to corporate interests.

This approach is designed, for instance, to have public discussion no longer assume that affluent societies have a responsibility to provide jobs for all who want them. The debate would be, instead, whether 6 per cent or 10 per cent is a “natural” level of unemployment. Similarly, the purpose is to have it no longer taken for granted that we have a right to clean air and, consequently, the debate centres on what cost to industry for pollution control is economically acceptable. The debate ceases to be about how far government should be involved in the economy and centres on arguments for reduced involvement and schedules for achieving this. The debate is no longer about whether unions have too much power — or even too little power — but about which is the best way to reduce that power.

“Tree-top” propaganda is a new phenomena and is going to be applied increasingly. At the moment, “New Right” organisations are spending in the vicinity of \$6 to \$8 million on “tree-top” and \$2 to \$3 million on “grass roots” propaganda per annum.

The irony is that the money spent on this propaganda is tax-deductible and, on that basis, workers are paying for the ruling class to brainwash them.

## Advertising

The “think-tanks” have what they call two approaches to advertising — image and advocacy advertising. In image advertising, the monopolies appear responsible and benevolent. They are seen to provide the people with current affairs programs, opera in the park, sporting events and so on. The “quiet achiever”, for example, is pictured as wanting only to be allowed to get on with the job of applying new technology, creating jobs and raising Australia’s standard of living without distraction or interference from trade unions or government.

Advocacy advertising is much more explicit. It directly attacks unions or the government. It often attempts through long-trying scare tactics and verbal devices, to identify policies which actually serve corporate interests with the public interest. Policies advocated are typically against union interests, the public interest or both.

## What can be done

There is an immense job to be done by all left/progressive organisations to expose the real meaning of the ideas being put forward and to prove convincingly that the ideology of the “New Right” is reactionary and against the interests of the working people. The ACTU is to conduct a \$1 million advertising campaign but the indications are that the ACTU leaders will use this money to sell its ideas about employers, employees and governments all getting together.

The SPA publication *Communists and the Trade Unions* stated that the real need is for very much more active involvement of the unions in political issues. It went on to stress the need to give a deeper political content to what might otherwise be only economic issues. There are permanent features of capitalism which, as they develop, will deepen the political content of the economic struggles and bring understanding to the workers.

In answer to the propaganda war being waged against the working class, the SPA pamphlet said: “There is already ample evidence of the need for more extensive actions in connection with political issues in a number of areas and inevitable developments will add to that need. **The capacity of the workers to take such necessary actions will be increased by the extent to which they are conscious of the class nature of the union struggle and the need for union involvement in political activity.**”

# The CPA and the “New Party”

by Spiro Anthony

**The CPA Congress in June 1987 adopted a document entitled *Socialist Renewal — Where to Now?* which is directed at the formation of a new political party.**

The document does not contain or reflect any changes in the basic approach of the CPA towards society and social change. The non-class approach continues; there is no pretense of particular interest in the working class or in the scientific theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism. There is no identification with the world communist movement.

However, the document does reveal a new expression in CPA thinking. Previously, there were moves towards a change of name to give the party a more “popular” image. This is now considered not only insufficient but irrelevant, for the party itself is considered no longer relevant.

The CPA has arrived at new definitions of what was and now should be the socialist movement in Australia.

This is introduced in the opening paragraph:

“On the eve of its centenary, Australian socialism faces a challenge to its relevance and its capacity to influence society’s political direction. It also faces an historical opportunity to renew itself politically, theoretically and organisationally, and to become a more effective force in Australian politics and society.”

The centenary referred to is not that of the Communist Party of Australia but the Australian Labor Party which was formed in the 1890s.

The call is now, **in 1987**, for Australian socialism to separate itself from the ALP. The reasons, as elaborated in the document, are the betrayals of the pre-

sent ALP leadership. There is no attempt to analyse the weaknesses of the CPA as the ALP is portrayed as being responsible for socialism and the reason for its failures.

The call is to redefine Australian socialism in the form of a movement based on a party “to the left of the ALP”.

There is a suggestion that the new party may not even have a declared socialist objective, because of the views of some participants in the new party discussions, but the CPA document at least still talks about socialism.

Thus, the CPA wants to start all over again with a movement that is new politically, theoretically and organisationally. The CPA foresees that it will dissolve itself so that its members and resources will go to the new party.

## **Social democracy**

The ALP could have, and still might, play a role in the development of the socialist movement in Australia. But back in 1913 V I Lenin was unequivocal in his categorisation of the ALP as the “unalloyed representative of the non-socialist workers’ trade unions. The leaders of the Australian Labor Party are trade union officials, everywhere the most moderate and ‘capital-serving’ element, and in Australia, altogether peaceable, purely liberal. In Australia the Labor Party has done what in other countries was done by the Liberals...Actually (the Labor Party) is a liberal-bourgeois party while the so-called Liberals in Australia are really conservatives”. Lenin *Collected Works* Vol 19, p 216-217

The founders of the Communist Party of Australia had no illusions about social democracy when they established the “party of a new type” in 1920.

Yet an obvious conclusion from the CPA analysis is that if the left of the ALP was in control of the party, and not the right, then Australian socialism would be fine and there would be no need for a new party. The document however, assesses that the left of the ALP has no chance. The CPA beckons left ALP members and disenchanting ALP supporters towards the new party.

Is there a confusion about the nature of social democracy or is the CPA now exposing in clear colours a real affinity towards a social democratic position?

Social democracy has had an enormous influence on the working class and progressive movements in Australia. It has fostered hopes and dreams about its potential, including the concept that social democracy in power is the first step towards socialism.

There is the idea that left-social democrats don’t really belong in the ALP. Yet the hard reality is that social democracy in Australia is, and has always been, made up of right and left sections, and other political shades as well. These groupings and trends together constitute social democracy. They are



part of social democracy.

Yet the CPA seeks not a break from social democracy, but a break from right wing social democracy. It seeks “a positive alternative to the ALP government’s betrayals of its commitments” in the form of a new party.

But while arguing for a party independent of the ALP, the tendency is to maintain an attitude of subservience, albeit critical subservience, towards the ALP. The document for instance puts forward a now familiar call to “help change Labor’s direction”, as if the new party will be a kind of self-appointed conscience of the ALP.

Elsewhere the document expresses again the CPA’s support for the Prices and Incomes Accord, an agreement which bound the national trade union movement to the economic and social policies of the social democratic party. The CPA supported the Accord and now blames the right ALP leadership for “betrayal”.

Far more is to be gained for the socialist movement from an acceptance of the real nature of social democracy. Social democracy is social democracy; the socialist position is something different.

The socialist movement must be built in its own right. The necessity exists for a truly independent socialist party that does not see itself as playing a role secondary to social democracy and dependent on it.

Acceptance of the nature of social democracy and a realistic appraisal of its positive and negative features, is in our circumstances, an important prerequisite for strengthening the socialist movement. A key task is finding more ways to co-operate with the ALP at all levels and in various spheres of activity. To this extent, co-operation with the left-ALP can facilitate co-operation with the ALP as a whole.

Conditions may exist for open support of the ALP in election campaigns. There is an ongoing necessity to seek co-operation with the ALP leadership, albeit right-wing leadership, on issues such as world peace. Flexibility of tactics is required to meet the given situation. Yet the imperative is to maintain the perspectives of the socialist movement rather than attach the movement as a tail or a conscience of the ALP.

## **Unity**

The CPA envisages that various forces to the left of the ALP will together form a unity. This will be achieved by a process of drawing together people from different spheres of activity and an evolution of the new party’s theoretical and political position and its organisational structure.

What type of unity is being aimed for?

Within scientific socialist strategy there are several types of unity. Recogni-

tion of them gives meaning to objective processes taking place within the realm of struggle and helps to chart ways forward within a theoretical framework.

Fundamental to socialist strategy is **working class unity**, which has three components: unity of the members of the working class **in action** around day to day issues of concern; unity on the basis of working class **ideology**, and **political** unity of the workers in support of the working class party.

The **united front of the working class** involves unity in action of the workers in circumstances where there exist ideological and political divisions within the working class.

**Left unity** involves co-operation between left political parties.

**Progressive unity** involves co-operation between progressive forces or movements.

The **popular front** is a term which applies to the unity in action of the masses of the people from various classes and strata of society.

Within such a framework, the CPA is aiming primarily at a form of progressive unity. "The CPA recognises that the decisive people to be involved in a successful renewal are the many activists in the unions and movements such as environmental, feminist, Aboriginal, and ethnic minority movements as well as in organisations and groups".

Thus the way forward in the immediate situation (and presumably in the longer term, for there is no mention of steps or stages) is not working class unity or the united front of the working class or unity of left political parties or popular front actions. These concepts apparently have no, or minimal, significance.

The concept of unity being advanced is the formation of a connection between movements of people expressing concern about specific issues. These connected forces will then constitute the re-defined "Australian socialism". The idea is that the CPA dissolve itself so that its members can operate at this level of unity.

Although CPA leaders talk about "left" forces uniting, their main concern is not the left political parties but the movements or people's actions not conducted in the name of parties.

This process started with the adoption by the CPA in 1967 of the concept of the "Coalition of the Left".

Then, as now, the concept entails devaluing the party's role in favour of the "movements". It is an expression of liquidationism while giving way to the spontaneity of the mass movements.

The present document refers to the functions of the new party not in terms

of giving leadership or direction in social change but in terms of providing a “link between diverse struggles” and a “forum for debate and reflection on social and political developments”.

In present day circumstances, the task of building progressive unity should not be underestimated. It is tremendously important that progressive people concerned with specific issues be united in their actions and that efforts be made to draw together the different sections of progressive activity into a common stream of demands. This would give much impetus to building popular fronts for peace and against the threat of humanity's destruction and for democratic rights, workers' rights and the rights of ethnic minorities against the neo-conservative trend. It could facilitate the building of left unity the united front and working class unity.

But is the CPA formula for progressive unity a sound proposition? Could it be achieved, in today's circumstances, within the framework of a single political party?

The document itself refers to problems with this concept when evaluating experiences following the Broad Left Conference in 1986. “However, it has been difficult to build any more enduring and developed form of broad left organisation or coalition because each section of the left has its own organisational and activity commitments, and left activists all have their own priorities of mass work and political involvement.”

These indeed are realities of our time, not immutable, but nevertheless, realities.

The fact is that each group or movement not only has its own organisational priorities, but has a particular political orientation. Analysis would also show that within each group there are likely to be other political perspectives as well as the dominant orientation. In referring to an electoral program, the document lists programmatic points which include “the demands of anti-nuclear and disarmament activists”, “labour movement demands” and “community and welfare sector demands”. But are there a set of common demands within the labour movement, for instance?

The aim appears to be a new party which will be “everything to everyone”, a free-for-all, a party that seeks to accommodate as many trends as possible.

Yet, progressive unity is a paramount task for socialists. It can be achieved, not with idealistic concepts but with realism. Where there are movements with different political orientations between or within them, progressive unity has the best chance of being achieved where there is agreement between left political parties, ie, left unity.

Agreement and understanding reached on the demands and campaigns of the various movements clears the way for united progressive action between

activists associated with this or that political line and guards against conflict and misunderstandings jeopardising the progressive actions. Through inter-party deliberations, the possibility for rational planning of demands, objectives and methods of struggle is created so that thoughtful purpose is given to otherwise spontaneous movements. Left unity also provides incentive and confidence for persons not politically affiliated to participate in united actions.

In the 1960s, the CPA was the major left party, such that left unity was not an issue of great significance. Nowadays, with the existence of several left parties and even though each is small in membership, the issue of co-operation between those parties has enormous importance and urgency for the progressive movements.

Entailed in CPA concepts about the progressive movements (shared by some others on the left) is that political parties inhibit and detract from the movements. Thus the strategy of devaluing the role of the organised political party in order to “de-politicise” the mass movements.

The fact of our society is that mass movements are influenced by, and express, definite political and ideological orientations. For a party to withdraw its influence merely hands over the influence on the movement to another political force.

Similarly, if the left parties do not collectively influence united progressive movements, such as that envisaged by the CPA, it is inevitable that such movements will attract the political influence from another source.

The question facing the socialist movement is not whether or not a party should seek to influence the people, but how it goes about its work and primarily, what the **content** of its influence is. To this extent the CPA membership (and the membership of other parties) would be much better served by a critical analysis of the actual political positions that their own parties have been projecting among the people.

Likewise, the essential task and indeed test of left unity in Australia will relate to the content of the ideas and demands put forward and how it goes about its work.

Progressive unity takes many forms. It can apply within movements and between movements, for short or longer term duration and call for various levels and types of activity. Is it realistic and appropriate in today's circumstances to have a political party as the organisational form of progressive unity? If what is envisaged is just a meeting place for the activists in progressive movements, why not call it that?

Even if all left parties agreed to participate in a new party the political positions, including Marxism-Leninism, would need to be renounced in favour of a formation based on the day-to-day demands of the various movements.

Such a formation could not be other than reformist in character.

The document points out that in the processes of forming the new party the CPA will advance its own ideas about the theory, policies and structure of the new party.

The position of the CPA in terms of its conceptualisation of Australian socialism, its appraisal of social democracy and the relationship with the ALP will no doubt find a place in the new party deliberations.

The document also contains a summary of CPA visions of social change. Such visions have remained basically unchanged since the late 1960s. The goal is “democratic, self-management socialism” to be achieved not through class struggle but “intervention by popular forces in all the issues of the day”. The fundamental question of ownership of the means of production is supplanted by “control”. There is strong opposition to centralisation and big government in favour of non-state co-operative ownership and “local autonomy”. Grass-roots democracy, the catchcry of the New Left in the 1960s still pervades CPA thinking.

Whether or not such perspectives prevail within the new party, if the new party eventuates, remains to be seen.

In acceding to the necessary demise of the CPA, the document winds up with a sentimental tribute to the “selflessness and loyalty of communists” over the years. The document records a decision to produce a video to “support the affirmation of our history” — which is to be relegated to the archives as the final act of political, ideological and now, organisational, liquidation.

# 1987 Mini-Budget

by Anna Pha

**While the Federal Government's May mini-budget was almost forgotten during the elections, its effects will be felt for some time to come. The budget, although called "mini" was quite significant for a number of reasons. It sets in concrete several very dangerous trends that run contrary to long held beliefs and interests of the labour movement in Australia. There has been little organised opposition to these developments. In fact there has been a large degree of passive acceptance or even support from some sections of the labour movement.**

The budget followed a number of other measures that all form part of the same pattern and have the same ideological basis.

This occurs at a time when trade unions face their most serious challenge ever in the form of Federal anti-union legislation, Queensland laws and the offensive of the New Right with an overall political climate that is shifting rapidly to the right.

Democratic rights are increasingly being violated and further dangers are posed by the proposed ID cards. Police violence, racism, nationalism, illegal surveillance and corruption are all on the rise.

Over the last four years there has been a considerable redistribution of wealth, resulting in record accumulation of wealth by a small minority. The number of people living in poverty has risen to around 2.6 million. Living standards have fallen for the majority of people.

Considerable deregulation has already been implemented in areas such as banking and finance, all contrary to ALP policy. The process of privatisation has commenced, but until the mini-budget this was mainly by less overt methods. At the Victorian ALP conference in August Mr Hawke called for discussion about privatisation but the sale of one billion dollars worth of Government property was always decided in the May mini-budget. Until May it was still being denied that Government enterprises would be sold.

Hawke's "togetherness" was, and still is, part of an ideological campaign to gain acceptance for wage restraint and sacrifice by the people "pulling together" for the nation's sake. In the name of "economic responsibility" the Government has openly admitted that the aim was to reduce living standards.

In the 1986-7 budget there were taxation reductions that principally benefitted middle and high income earners. These were paid for by such means as a delay in indexing of pensions, the re-introduction of tertiary fees, doubling the cost of prescriptions, means testing of pensions and family allowances, increases in sales tax and a number of other measures all contrary to ALP policy. The tax deductions were a trade-off for less than full indexation of wages and while saving the employers millions of dollars, were in effect paid for by the poorer sections of the community.

The May mini-budget was a pre-election budget, but it did not offer the usual handouts associated with the buying of votes. On the contrary, it took away from the majority of voters, by extending the concept of belt-tightening for the good of the economy. At the same time it sought to buy-off the money markets and impress big business.

Treasurer, Paul Keating, in his budget speech claimed the Government had to "balance the absolute need for savings against its commitment to fairly share the burden of economic adjustment across the whole community".

The outcome had little to do with sharing or fairness.

This "miracle cure" budget claimed to cut the anticipated budget deficit by more than \$4 billion. This would allegedly lead to a reduction in our foreign debt.

There were cuts in education, health, social security, welfare, housing, culture and recreation which will directly hit low income earners, youth, unemployed, the sick, aged, homeless and less well-off. High income earners and business were left untouched.

Other cuts such as those applied to Telecom and Australia Post and funding to the the States will be soon felt by the people. Already State governments have announced increases in the charges for services and the selling-off of public assets. Telecom and Australia Post are increasing charges for services. Thousands of jobs will also be lost in the public sector.

The other key area of deficit-cutting will be through revenue raised by the sale of public assets such as air terminals, Williamstown Naval Dockyard, Cockatoo Island, Government buildings and shares in the Primary Industry Development Bank.

Privatisation has always been strongly opposed by the labour movement, and is contrary to ALP policy. So too, were a number of other measures such as means testing, loss of dole for a section of the unemployed, and an authoritarian and police-state approach to of welfare recipients. The increase in "investigation" squads and other measures invading privacy will be used to intimidate and deny benefits to as many people as possible.

It needs to be asked how such an anti-people budget could be described as pre-election, as capable of returning a government to office.

Many of the cuts were chosen to affect people whom opinion polls identified as attracting little public sympathy, such as unemployed youth, or in areas that people were either not so concerned or would not see or recognise immediately the harmful consequences. Likewise State funding cuts will have only an indirect effect on perceptions of the Federal Government, and the State governments will more likely be blamed and receive the electoral backlash. The modest reduction in the rate of increase in defence expenditure might even have some appeal to the peace movement and traditional Labor supporters.

There can be little doubt that this Labor Government is taking for granted the vote of the majority of the working class, knowing full well that they could never bring themselves to vote for the Liberals and that there is no alternative to the left which has mass support.

Consequently, government leaders are wooing middle and high income earners, big business, the money market and in particular the all important media barons.

This budget set out to confirm to big business that a Hawke Labor Government could implement the harsh policies big business demands of it, and do so more efficiently and effectively than a Liberal government. The ALP Government pursues policies which the Liberal Party never dared to implement through fear of opposition and struggle that would come from the trade union movement and other progressive forces in the community.

Treasurer Keating also wanted to demonstrate that he could proceed with the co-operation of the union movement, or little effective opposition. He wanted the budget measures in place before the election.

This he has been able to do. Such a task is no mean feat. Four years ago it would not have been possible. During the era of the Accord, a strong ideological war was waged with the purpose and result of breaking down of class consciousness and increasing the acceptance of the ideas of social partnership and co-operation with employers.

Once unions pursue the path of subordinating workers' interests to those of capital, it is not a big step to convince unions that cuts are needed in living standards of workers.

In addition to its role in the lowering of living standards, the budget has also gone a long way towards meeting the demands of the monopolies which are pursuing economic policies of "small government" and deregulation.

The budget paper spoke of the need for a "massive re-ordering of government spending priorities to meet the huge collapse in our terms of trade". The aim is to cut imports and increase exports. The reduction in imports is apparently to be brought about by reducing consumption. However, it is not the wealthy who are having their incomes cut, because the Government hopes they will invest their extra dollars. Ironically, they are the ones who are more



likely to buy luxury imports, whereas low income earners will spend any extra cents on food, housing and essentials.

Keating says,

“... we must invest more in new industries to lift exports and to recapture home markets lost to imports.

“The cuts to Government spending I am announcing will directly make this possible.

“By reducing the Government’s call on Australian savings we free up those savings to go where Australia now really needs them, into plant and equipment for export expansion and import replacement.

“That is the whole point of the exercise.

“At this time we need money going into investment, not into increased Government works and services.

“In this way each dollar released from the Government sector can ultimately be put to work in combatting our trade problem.”

Already government policies such as wage reductions have resulted in massive increases in profits, and the making available of millions of dollars for investment.

But, at the same time, the Government has deregulated the financial sector, eased controls on foreign investment, takeovers and capital flows. It has steadfastly refused to bring in controls over prices and marketing of export products such as coal which is now being sold below cost in some instances as companies cut each others throats competing for markets.

The Government is doing everything it can to maximise profits, to please the monopolies. It is not prepared to legislate for the regulation and controls necessary to ensure those profits are directed to productive investment or job creation. Despite the super-profits there has not been any significant re-investment in new industries and Mr Keating knows that.

The economic strategy behind the budget aims to shift the burden of economic recovery even further on to the backs of the working class.

This is bad enough in itself, but there is another aspect that will have very serious and long term social and economic consequences if it is not reversed.

The massive re-ordering of priorities referred to above makes cuts in what is usually referred to as the social wage, with the aim of reducing significantly government expenditure and the taxation of companies and high income earners. In many respects this is similar in approach to Reagan’s cuts to welfare together with tax reductions for the wealthy.

The reduction in government spending and the reduction in the contribution to government revenue from the wealthiest and big business goes hand in hand with moves to privatise public enterprises and services.

Education, health, policing, telecommunications, postal services, trans-

port, housing, childcare and numerous other community services are being privatised. This trend has been developing for some time.

The changes in this mini-budget only accelerate them, particularly with the selling-off of government enterprises and other assets.

The social and economic functions of the state increased considerably with the development of capitalism. This was a necessary response to the changing nature of production as it became more centralised, concentrated and complex.

The responsibility of the state increased, and so did the expectations of the community. Services were primarily funded by a progressive taxation system that aimed at taxing those who could afford it at a higher rate.

Strongly held beliefs on questions such as health, pensions, education and unemployment relief are now being undermined and are no longer considered as rights by the Hawke Labor Government.

In the name of "equity", equity is being thrown out the window and being replaced with "user pays". In the past, the labour movement, including the Labor Party itself, has strongly rejected the "user pays" philosophy.

Keating said, "We are clawing back Australia's financial independence ...". More rhetoric. The reality is that the Government through deregulation, privatisation and "small government", is surrendering to the free marketeers and the multi-nationals.

The May mini-budget was used as a testing ground for privatisation and "small government". The Government no doubt feels successful in having gained acceptance for this radical departure from social and ideological traditions and working class interests.

The little opposition that there was to the budget came, in the main, from the young, the unemployed and welfare groups who were the immediate victims.

There were also a number of unions, particularly welfare and public sector unions, who expressed opposition and efforts were made to join with community organisations in demonstrating against the budget.

These actions were significant in developing struggle for the rights of oppressed and disadvantaged people whose very livelihood depends on state services. Yet it is important to recognise that the mini-budget was not a one-off event, but part of a firm and growing trend in Australia, or in other capitalist countries, towards the abandonment of people's rights previously honoured by capitalism.

The successful engineering of passivity among large sections of the people towards the mini-budget substantiates the view that worse is to come. It raises the urgency of developing better forms of propaganda and finding forms of united popular action to defend people's rights. The necessity also exists to develop awareness of and actions against specific government

policies which while not conspicuously or immediately affecting the workers and the people, are nevertheless systematically eating away at positive and necessary state functions in favour of neo-conservatism in economic and social management.

# Who we regard as allies

by James Stewart  
General Secretary, Communist Party of Ireland (CPI)

**It is clear to every Marxist that the working class can discharge its historical mission as the most consistent and advanced champion of national liberation, social emancipation and peace only if it succeeds in rallying around it all working sections of the population, all actual and potential allies. The creation of a broad anti-monopoly, anti-imperialist front remains one of the most important tasks for the working class party. Both past history and current developments prove that embodying the objective community of interests of the working class and the overwhelming majority of the people in concrete political agreements and alliances is a difficult but extremely promising undertaking. Its success is essential for the outcome of the struggle for the revolutionary transformation of the exploitative society, ie, for the attainment of the goals Marxist-Leninist parties have been established to reach.**

The Communist Party of Ireland operates in a divided country, the Northern part remaining under British imperialist rule. Besides extreme religious and national intolerance, sectarianism and irreconcilable political rivalries that often lead to bloodshed are also traditional, first and foremost in the Northern counties.

These are the difficult conditions under which we are striving to ensure the **unity of all democratic progressive forces led by the working class**, overcome their fragmentation, and expose the "divide-and-rule" policy of the exploiting classes.

The current stage of state-monopoly capitalism has produced an unprecedented aggravation of the contradictions between the ruling elite and the overwhelming majority of the population. The objective base of the anti-

monopoly movement is expanding, as is the number of the potential allies of the working class. However, this does nothing to diminish the historical mission and responsibility of the working class which, on the one hand, “emancipates all society by emancipating itself” and, on the other, “cannot emancipate itself without emancipating all society”.

As our 19th National Congress stressed in early 1986, the CPI advocates the creation of an **anti-imperialist movement based on working class unity and led by the working class**. It is the only class capable of leading the struggle against British imperialism to ultimate victory.

One must, however, admit that the necessary class unity and the leading role of the working class forces are yet to be achieved. This is what the wider unity of the people and the establishment of broad alliances will largely depend on.

### **Changes in the army of labour**

In Ireland, and throughout Western Europe, application of scientific and technological advances is broadening the composition of the working class. The sections which we used to consider as the pure working class — those concentrated in heavy industry and engaged in manual work — have, in many ways, narrowed, swelling the numbers of the unemployed. But at the same time we find that the sections we formerly called the white-collar workers, even extending into the civil service, are now identifying themselves as part of the working class, and this is reflected in the militant stand of their trade unions, especially on issues of jobs, conditions and social positions. Finally, these sections are now becoming more politicised in that they are taking part in action on the questions of war and peace and they are fighting racism. This positive development within the working class movement shows that **rather than witnessing a weakening of its positions, the army of labour is gaining strength**.

But we also encounter adverse trends. The development of the transnationals poses serious problems. Previously, communists usually worked at factories which manufactured the product from A to Z. Today, factories are producing components that may be assembled in another country. Objectively, this makes it more difficult for the working class to organise on the international scale and fragments the forces of our class allies.

One should also remember that acting through its governments, the bourgeoisie both in Britain and in Ireland has launched unprecedented attacks on the labour movement, combining them with the operation of a ramified propaganda system. We cannot forget for one minute the role of the bourgeois mass media, particularly television, constantly attacking the trade unions. And it is interesting that a tendency has developed to try and test the strength of individual trade unions one by one and to isolate them from one another.

Unfortunately, such attempts have not been without success. You can see individual unions making an agreement with the management for negotiating rights within the factory, excluding the other unions from negotiating rights. This is a dangerous tendency because our experience shows that trade unions can serve as a potential base for efforts to create broad alliances. I refer to the union because it is the very first organisation which workers of different views and political sympathies join to defend their interests. The unions are a good school for unity, class solidarity and getting rid of sectarianism.

We appreciate the fact that despite its division, Ireland has no trade unions that are either wholly Northern-based or wholly Southern-based, either solely Catholic unions or solely Protestant unions. The workers have successfully preserved a nationwide movement led by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. Of course, we have had constantly to defend this accomplishment; we have had to rebuff the attempts at setting up an Ulster Trade Union Congress. The existence of trade union branch organisations covering both Ireland and Britain is also important.

The problem of relations with the unemployed, particularly with unemployed youth, is a key issue for our working class movement. The unemployed are 22 per cent of the labour force in the North and 18 per cent in the South. Many unemployed young people have never worked at all and they do not identify themselves even as formal members of the working class. When there is no hope of employment, these young people become disillusioned, they become cynical, they become drop-outs in society, open to drugs and crime. Will they become a burden weighing down on the working class and progressive movement, or will they be a source of its growing influence? How can we keep them from falling under the sway of right-wing, reactionary parties and organisations? How can we reach youth who have never been trade unionists at all?

To answer these questions, we have established civic unemployment centres in Northern Ireland. These centres are directly linked with and funded by the trade unions. By conducting these forms of work, we help young people to develop into conscious workers rather than into a lumpen proletariat.

## **Community of interests**

Many mass movements in capitalist countries — those of peace activists, women, environmentalists, tenants and others — are described as new social forces. We are reluctant to agree with this description because they had been there in the 1930s and even earlier. Mass movements and people's organisations develop under specific needs. Trade unions develop because workers need to defend their positions against the employer, and these unions have their own tasks. The specific issues of women's rights have produced the women's movement which has its own limitations. This is also true of youth

and other organisations. Therefore, in defining our attitude to different forms of the masses' social activity, our 19th Congress made it quite clear that we saw the working class as the central and leading force in the struggle against imperialism, against capitalism. And questions of this struggle are obviously interrelated with the specific issues tackled by the broad democratic movements.

Take the women's movement. It is vital for the working class to participate in it in an organised manner; otherwise the movement will be left to the petty-bourgeois forces. They are our allies, of course, but if these forces alone lead and direct the struggle, women's organisations will never come to realise the actual contradictions of capitalist society, of imperialism.

The peace movement offers a similar example. If working class influence is strong within the peace forces, it can help them to move in the right direction. For several years there was a current within the peace forces in Western Europe and America claiming that the USSR and the United States had equal responsibility for the arms race. These concepts were advanced by petty-bourgeois activists, well-meaning but mistaken, who dominated many of these movements. But the very clear peace proposals of the Soviet Union are now destroying the last vestiges of misconceptions about the thrust of Soviet policy. These initiatives are in line with the **course pursued by the Irish working class**, and they evoke a response from those who previously argued about equal responsibility. **People come to realise that our position is right.**

Sometimes one hears it said that a stronger role of the working class means it wants to monopolise and dominate the leadership of mass organisations, that in this way we may scare away our possible allies among the democrats and the non-working class forces.

This contradiction can be resolved in practice. And the best practice is how the working class forces within the mass organisations operate. Our Communist Party recognises that these organisations are entities in their own right. Working in these movements, we do not conspire, manipulate or control. We strive to win people over to our side in debate, in joint struggle. It is by the practice of struggle that they can see that their interests coincide with the interests of the working class. This is also how we talk to farmers and small businessmen, explaining our critical attitude to the Common Market and to the Anglo-Irish Agreement.<sup>1</sup> "There should be no contradiction between the 'public' work of the CPI and the activity of its members in broad movements. This can only arise if, on the one hand, public work is seen as an abstraction unconnected with the work of winning people to communist policies in broad movements, and, on the other hand, broad movement work is in fact limited to politics that do not go outside the broad movement itself. If Party groups in particular organisations amount simply to vaguely leftist groups, concerned

only with issues and positions within the organisation, they are not communist formations at all, and the comrades within them are NOT carrying out Party work.” That was how our 19th Congress formulated the issue.<sup>2</sup>

## Let everyone have a say

The political consciousness of the forces than can join the common anti-imperialist struggle has not yet reached a sufficiently high level. Things are particularly difficult when the working class movement itself is unclear. The confusion arising from such a position always plays into the hands of imperialism.

However, if you have a clear position from the Left, a clear lead from the Left, then it is obvious that the entire democratic movement, from the trade unions to the labour movement in general, will strengthen its positions, and this will be reflected in the alignment of class and political forces within the country. **Unfortunately, in Ireland the divisions amongst the Left remain a very serious question, one we have not been able to overcome.**

Some parties are represented in the Dail (parliament in Dublin), while others, our party included, have so far failed to win seats there. There are differences in the attitude to the national question and to the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985. But the interests of the working class demand that **all the left forces participate in discussions aimed at ensuring the broadest possible unity.** What is needed is the mobilisation of all the forces — the trade unions, community and other civic groups and organisations, parliamentary and extra-parliamentary parties like the Communist Party of Ireland and, indeed, the progressive elements of the Provisionals.<sup>3</sup> There will, of course, be elements that will refuse to play their part. So be it. But the effort to build unity should be open to all.

Success depends on the skilful choice of slogans and demands capable of attracting broad forces which, at first glance, appear at odds with one another. Obviously, even within the trade union movement it is still difficult to raise the question of the Anglo-Irish treaty or present an alternative policy to it because of the serious divisions rooted in sectarianism. But what the trade union movement can do is raise the issues of democracy, civil rights, the struggle against discrimination in jobs, and the right to work free from intimidation in any form. For example, recent events in Lisburn (Northern Ireland) attracted widespread public attention. There, the Provisional IRA and the Unionist extremists launched a campaign of mutual intimidation. But, responding to a call from the trade unions, Catholic and Protestant workers moved resolutely to stop this intimidation. And this was reflected also in Belfast in both the Protestant and the Catholic areas. That is a significant development showing that the establishment of alliances whose participants rise above their religious differences is no utopia.



In November 1986 the Northern Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions held a conference at which questions of overcoming religious sectarianism and ending the intimidation of the people were sharply emphasised. Our Party held two seminars last year attended by representatives from trade unions and people's, tenants', community and unemployed organisations. At these seminars views were exchanged particularly on the question of how to unite the working class people and how to fight the spread of paramilitary organisations. The communists are planning further steps in this direction.

There is much that irrevocably divides the communists who advocate a united, free and independent Ireland and the Ulster Unionist Party which foments sectarianism and has long been an agent of British colonialism. But the confusion in this party after the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement has caused vacillation in its mass base.<sup>4</sup> The CPI addressed an open appeal to Unionist supporters which said, in part: "There is now a great new division in Northern Ireland society: not the division between Nationalist and Unionist, or between Catholics and Protestants. It is the division between those who want to see a way forward by peaceful means, and the fanatics who would bring us all down to chaos, death and the destruction of our future...So we call on you to reject sectarianism and the sectarian leadership of the Unionists. There can be no successful opposition to Britain's plans while working class people are divided".

The communists have their own vision of the future which is opposite to the Unionist view and which includes a distinctive concept of the future form of government for a united Ireland and of the ways in which it should be built. But we do not lay claim to a monopoly on truth, and we have therefore declared that the future form of government must be decided by the people: "It is not for us to lay down what that form should be, but everyone, including supporters of Unionism, must have a say in what develops...We urge workers — stand by your class, reject the fanatics who try to set worker against worker. We say to parents — don't let your children's future be a permanent battle field. We say to all working people; Unionist, Nationalist, Socialist, Catholic and Protestant — unite!"<sup>5</sup>

The Catholic Church traditionally wields great influence in Ireland. Naturally, the Communist Party takes this factor into account in shaping its strategy of broad alliances. Over the past two decades the views of the masses of believers and of the clergy have moved closer to those of the left democratic forces. The experience of the Irish missionaries who have been to Nicaragua and other Latin American countries has promoted the growth of anti-American, anti-imperialist sentiments within the church. These winds of change could be felt during the 1982 massive peace demonstration which was held in Dublin in connection with Ronald Reagan's visit. Taking part were the broadest possible forces, including communists and other left groups, but the

demonstration was led by priests and nuns. The struggle for civil rights in the North also developed and strengthened the radical sections of the priests and brought many of them into contact with the communists for the first time in their life. And that had an effect on their way of thinking and on their attitudes to us.

## **The broadest possible spectrum of forces**

In its struggle for anti-imperialist unity the CPI always proceeds from reality, not from wishful thinking. And the reality of the day is that there is tremendous confusion and disagreement among the left forces. At the moment there is no question of reaching agreement on all political issues, of us, as communists, and all these other left forces sitting down together and working out an agreed programme of action on a national basis. This is why we are trying to find common ground with other forces **on the Left on specific issues**; elements of the Left of the Irish Labour Party,<sup>6</sup> left labour forces in Northern Ireland, the Workers' Party,<sup>7</sup> the Left in Sinn Fein and left oriented forces within the Unionist camp.

Of course, **in doing that, in being flexible in tactics, the communists do not dispense with their principles.** For example, one of our problems with the Provisional Sinn Fein is the attitude to the armed struggle in Irish conditions. We are opposed to it not because we are pacifists but because it is counter-productive and plays directly into the hands of imperialism, helping it to maintain the divisions amongst the working class. We disagree with the Workers' Party on many issues, for example, on its support of Ireland's EEC membership and on the way it has moved away from the national question. We have disagreements with the people in the left wing of the Labour party. **Nonetheless, we try to find common ground with them, whether it should be in the trade union movement, community organisations or anti-war actions.** Many left forces have succeeded in organising effective co-operation within the Irish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Peace and Detente movement. Of course, difficulties arise here too, but we are determined to work to overcome them.

**In its policy of alliances, the CPI draws on the rich historical experience of the communist movement.** We have been recently recalling again the events of the 1930s and the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern. That forum summed up the struggle of the communists in different countries for influence with the masses and put forward the slogan of a broad popular front against war and reaction. Much of the ideological legacy of these years prompts new conclusions today, urging a reappraisal of the strategy of alliances in the light of the changes that have occurred on the international scene, and with due regard for the forms and methods of political work that are developing.

The record demonstrates that today, just as fifty years ago, the formula **"Those who are not with us are against us"** would be wrong. This attitude invariably rejects many allies who **could** be with us on certain issues. The fact that this approach is too narrow is particularly obvious now that we are dealing with the issue of human survival. The Seventh Congress showed that the Communists were resolved to be guided by the slogan "Those who are not against us are with us". Today it is becoming increasingly clear that we should go further and look for common ground, sometimes even with those who **are** against us.

We find many people who are anti-socialist but who sincerely want to see this world exist, they want to see the planet without the nuclear weapons. They are against us on the class questions, but they can be with us in the peace movement. People who reject the question of the emancipation of the working class and the construction of socialism can co-operate with the communists in many specific social and economic spheres. All this is borne out in the course of our day-to-day struggle.

For example, there are people who are with us on issues of democratic rights in the North of Ireland but who would not necessarily want a united Ireland. Do we reject those people? Of course, not. Our concept of alliances calls for the broadest possible spectrum of forces to participate in the civil rights movement. Or take the efforts to combat unemployment. Of course, the communists recognise that this problem can be effectively solved only by the building of socialism in this country and by getting rid of imperialist domination. But we are ready to join all who will fight for the right to jobs, for even a limited programme which can improve the employment situation, for immediate demands. You do not have only communists engaged in the fight to maintain the shipyards in Belfast; you also have Unionists from the Ulster Defence Association and you have the Orange Order — political groups which are our opponents on other issues.

Or take the attitude to the EEC. Today its policies run counter to the interests of different social strata. And so it is important for the communists not only to organise joint action by the working class but also to win support from farmers and small businessmen.

In other words, **the development of an anti-monopoly alliance around issues of democracy, jobs, economic development and prevention of war should not be restricted just to those forces who want to see society transformed.** Forces which could not be mobilised around the slogan of struggle for socialism can be mobilised on issues of defending peace, securing the right to jobs and upholding democratic freedoms.

## **Preserving our identity**

It is important to remember that while working vigorously together with var-

ious social forces, winning their confidence and leading them, the communists should be true to their fundamental approach even on limited issues, be it the unity of the country, defence of civil rights, attitude to the EEC, or preservation of peace. We cannot adapt to our partners in the Biblical spirit of being "all things to all men" and lose our identity in the process. We cannot turn into political acrobats doing somersaults. We present our position without dictating to people, and we make it clear that we will work with them whenever we can.

Unity is born of struggle. Struggle is what produces firm anti-imperialist alliances of the working class with other sections of the working people. Flexibility in building these alliances does not mean that the party becomes dissolved in broad movements. On the contrary, the emphasis is on **strengthening our ideology and our distinctive identity as a united communist party**. A communist party must not be allowed to turn into a conglomerate of ideologically divided groups jawing each other. The CPI at its 19th Congress laid specific emphasis on the principle of democratic centralism, on explaining to our members that there cannot be centralism without democracy, just as democracy is impossible without centralism. The unity of a communist party with other anti-imperialist forces calls for the unity of its own ranks on the basis of Marxism-Leninism.

## References

1. Under this Agreement, signed by the Prime Minister of Great Britain and the Irish Republic at Hillsborough in November 1985, London for the first time secured Dublin's recognition of the British "right" to maintain a presence in and to govern the Northern part of the country.
2. *Documents of the 19th Congress of the Communist Party of Ireland*, 1986, p 12.
3. The Provisionals broke off from Sinn Fein (Sinn Fein is a republican organisation founded in 1905) and are the political superstructure of the paramilitary Irish Republican Army.
4. For more details about the attitude of different political forces to the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement, see *WMR*, No. 5, 1986, pp 47-52 — **Ed.**
5. "An Appeal to Unionist Supporters from the C.P.I." in *Unity*, April 5, 1986.
6. Founded in 1912. the Labour Party is affiliated to the Socialist International and was Fine Gael's partner in the coalition government of the Irish Republic in 1982-1987.
7. Established as a result of Sinn Fein's evolution towards socialist slogans, the Workers' Party operates both in the Republic of Ireland and in the North and is represented in Ireland's Parliament. From 1977 to 1982 it was known as "Official" Sinn Fein to distinguish it from "Provisional" Sinn Fein.

# Towards an independent role in international affairs

by Stewart McCaffley

Senior Vice President, New Zealand Labour Party

*Not very long ago, New Zealand appeared to be lost in the sea of world politics, but after the Labour Party, led by David Lange, was elected to govern the country in July 1984, it hit the headlines: New Zealand dared to challenge the United States by closing its ports to all nuclear-powered and nuclear-weapon carrying craft. The Labour government proclaimed the country's nuclear-free status and took an active part in formulating the treaty setting up a nuclear-free zone in the South Pacific.<sup>1</sup> How is one to explain that New Zealand has become a "trouble-maker" in a region the United States regarded as perfectly reliable from the standpoint of its global strategic interests? How has the Labour Party advanced to its present positions, and what is it doing to turn the Pacific into a region of peace and security? Below is Stewart McCaffley's answers to these questions.*

**OVER its 70-year history, the New Zealand Labour Party's thinking on defence and security issues has had a number of constant themes:**

- a desire for greater independence in New Zealand's policy;
- a commitment to disarmament and to a peaceful resolution of international disputes;
- a recognition that New Zealand's security must be guaranteed by economic and social development in the Asian-Pacific region.

The Labour Party's thinking has never been isolationist. Its early identification was with worker internationalism, and the idea of broad co-operation within the British Commonwealth of Nations. It has always wanted New Zealand to play an active role in international affairs. Since 1945 we have looked

to the United Nations to develop its potential as a guarantor of security of its members, including the small states.

In the mid-1960s and early 1970s, our party recognised that New Zealand's security is not guaranteed by its allies<sup>2</sup> and that greater self-reliance in defence was inevitable. At about that time, our party began to conduct a policy aimed against nuclear weapons. The impetus was provided by French nuclear tests in the Pacific.<sup>3</sup>

The development of our party's thinking on nuclear issues has also had a dramatic impact on its attitudes towards New Zealand's alliance with the United States. It became clear to New Zealand Labour Party members that consistency required a condemnation of nuclear weapons in the Pacific, regardless of the state to which they belonged. Pressure was on the third Labour government (1972-1975) to break off the most immediate link New Zealand could have with nuclear weaponry — the visits of foreign warships bearing nuclear arms. Accordingly that government made it known that such vessels were not welcome in New Zealand ports and it is commonly understood that none came to New Zealand during the reign of the third Labour government.

Norman Kirk, who then headed the government, emerged as a powerful voice for an independent New Zealand role in international affairs. The call for greater self-reliance and independence of judgement and action by New Zealand was a constant theme in Kirk's speeches throughout his term as Labour leader. His successor as Labour leader, Wallace Rowling, endorsed these ideas and developed them somewhat further.

From 1978 on, specific mention was made in Labour's election manifestos of its intention, when re-elected, to close New Zealand's sea and air ports to all nuclear-powered and nuclear-weapon-carrying craft. This policy has had the full and enthusiastic support of successive Labour Party conferences.

By the beginning of the 1980s, however, the nuclear-free policy on its own was no longer enough for the party conference. Detente between the super-powers was at an end and the international situation was perceived to be deteriorating rapidly. There was a heightened desire among our people and within the Labour Party to see that New Zealand played no part in support of the nuclear strategies of any power. The New Zealand Labour Party's conference adopted a resolution which was incorporated in toto in the 1984 manifesto. It put the duty on the next Labour government to renegotiate the terms of our association with Australia and the United States for the purpose of ensuring stability in the Southeast Asian and Pacific regions, accepting as the basic requirement of such an updated agreement:

— our conditional anti-nuclear stance;

- the active promotion of a nuclear-weapon-free South Pacific;
- the acceptance of absolutely equal partnership on all issues handled within the terms of the agreement and all decisions taken under those terms are required to be unanimous;
- an absolute guarantee of the complete integrity of New Zealand's sovereignty.

These principles became the basis of the policy of the fourth Labour government headed by David Lange, which was formed in 1984. It voiced our determination to maintain our absolute independence and to conduct a policy which tells the world that our decisions will be made in Wellington — not in Washington, nor London, nor Canberra. The kind of independence which we will maintain under a Labour government will not be negotiable. Neither will our non-nuclear stance, which will be an important element of that policy. By voting for our party in the elections, a majority of the electorate supported its firm determination to maintain the country's firm resolve to conduct a foreign policy for a non-nuclear Pacific. But our government's very first steps made it clear that New Zealand has been put into a David and Goliath situation vis-à-vis the United States.

We were at once confronted with an extremely negative response from the United States to our stand with respect to the ANZUS treaty, which the Labour Party formulated in 1984. The core of our position is that New Zealand remains a member of the alliance, but will have nothing to do with nuclear weapons. The US administration, for its part, has claimed that we are destroying ANZUS. Our national dignity is being offended because we are being dictated to by the United States. We are objecting to the dictates of the super-power that is trying to make us abide by its terms in international affairs. The dictates of the United States are very, very strong, and it antagonises the New Zealand population, which has responded with even stronger support for the government's anti-nuclear policy. Public opinion polls show that 82 per cent of New Zealanders oppose nuclear weapons and want no part in any wars. The government has been supported by the trade unions, the growing anti-war movement, and peace groups of differing political persuasion.

Nuclear war is the greatest threat to New Zealand's and the world's existence. That is why the Labour Party wants New Zealand to play a positive role in the struggle for disarmament. We are very concerned with what is happening in other parts of the world. Of course, a small country like New Zealand, situated in a very isolated area, has a tendency to stick to its own problems. However, war doesn't recognise any boundaries and its repercussions are frightening, eventually for New Zealand as well.

The world is becoming a smaller place. Whatever happens in Europe or America has a direct effect on the situation in the Pacific region. On the other

hand, we cannot but be concerned with the plans to take war to outer space.

The party's firm stand for a nuclear-free New Zealand provides a firm basis for promoting regional and international disarmament. The Labour government has signalled its intention to join the United Nations Conference on Disarmament at the first opportunity. We believe that the non-nuclear weapon states have both a right and a duty to advocate separately and jointly nuclear disarmament. Nuclear weapons may be in the control of a few countries, but they threaten all of us.

The peoples of the Pacific have already paid too high a price for the development of nuclear weaponry. In French Polynesia, in the US Trust Territories, in the Northwest Pacific, in the South Australian desert, nuclear testing has been carried out at enormous cost to the local population. No amount of compensation can make up for the deaths and damage to human health caused by exposure to radiation from nuclear weapons testing. Yet while the suffering of the Pacific peoples has been immense, it would pale into insignificance alongside the effects of an outbreak of nuclear war.

Many people will wonder how a small state like New Zealand can make its voice heard on the major issue of international disarmament. The answer to that was provided by Norman Kirk years ago. He believed that small states acting together could come to exercise considerable influence in world affairs.

Our primary goal is to turn the Pacific region into a non-nuclear zone, and the first step here has been the Rarotonga Treaty, which provides for a renunciation by all the signatories of the manufacture, acquisition and deployment on their territory of any nuclear explosive devices, and bans all nuclear explosions, and the dumping of radioactive waste and other radioactive substances within the area covered by the Treaty.

The New Zealand Labour Party would like to see this Treaty strengthened and the nuclear-free zone extended to ensure a Pacific free of nuclear weapons, nuclear-powered warships, nuclear tests, the dumping of nuclear waste, in short, a peaceful Pacific free of nuclear-power intervention. We must push the nuclear powers to accept and respect the wish of the peoples of the Pacific and their region should not be a zone of conflict in the future.

Meanwhile, US warships with nuclear weapons on board still ply the waters of the region, and French nuclear tests are still being held. We intend to carry on a resolute struggle against these. In the early 1970s, the Labour Government took its case against France to the International Court at the Hague, and the court handed down a ruling in favour of New Zealand. But France has refused to halt its tests on Mururoa Atoll, and has merely changed the form by switching to underground blasts. We have been assured that these are "perfectly safe". Why then doesn't France stage them on its own territory? The



government and population of New Zealand have resolutely demanded an end to using Mururoa as a nuclear testing-ground. There was a storm of indignation in the country when about two years ago French secret services decided to blow up in Auckland Harbour the *Rainbow Warrior* belonging to the international ecological organisation Greenpeace, which opposes nuclear testing in the Pacific.

Our party regards as useful any steps aimed to strengthen security in the Pacific, and that is why we support Mikhail Gorbachev's proposals which he made at Vladivostok in the summer of 1986, notably the calling of a Helsinki-type conference for the Pacific region. Such a conference would be especially important for the small countries, whose voice is not being adequately heard in the world. If there is a war, these countries would be involved against their will; indeed, they would not even be consulted. The conference would give them an opportunity to voice their views on the struggle for peace and disarmament.

New Zealand's Labour Party now seeks to take a more active part in this struggle. As my party's representative, I attended in May 1986 the International Forum for a Nuclear-Free Pacific which was arranged in Tokyo on the initiative of the Anti-Nuclear Committee of One Thousand. This committee financially backed primarily by the Sohyo trade union movement, was formed in 1984 to create opposition to the seemingly rapid remilitarisation of Japan.

The conference left a strong impression. It was attended by almost 500 people. The panel had representatives from the socialist parties of Australia, the Philippines, South Korea, Guam, the United States, New Zealand and, of course, Japan. The audience was comprised of members from many different walks of life, factory workers, scholars, unionists, activists in nuclear disarmament, world peace groups, teachers, and women's groups.

Along with many other issues, the conference focused on how to stop French nuclear testing on Mururoa, how to ban ocean dumping of nuclear waste, how to reject co-operation with the "star wars" project, and how to establish a Pacific network of denuclearisation. I had an opportunity to set forth the Labour government's views on foreign policy, and these aroused much interest. Our party believes that measures like the Tokyo forum are highly important from the standpoint of exchanging information between the peace-loving forces.

When in Japan, I visited the city of Hiroshima. I have read a great deal about it, of course. It had a dramatic effect on me to see the destruction caused by the early atom bomb, knowing that hydrogen bombs today are hundreds of times more destructive. My visit to Hiroshima more than brought home how right New Zealand is in its consistent anti-nuclear stand.

I have visited many countries over the past several years, and I want to say

that most people there think as we do in New Zealand. Our party's approach to disarmament has ever greater support within the Socialist International. Let me note in this context that co-operation between us Socialists and the ruling communist parties in the USSR and the East European countries is improving considerably. One must recognise that in the past we had a great deal of propaganda in each country and I know about the new media propaganda we have had in New Zealand against the CPSU, but when we get to the Soviet Union and see the people, we find that the the peoples of the Earth yearn for peace.

*Editorial Note.* These answers were received before the Soviet government signed Protocols 2 and 3 to the Rarotonga Treaty for a nuclear-free zone in the South Pacific. On the annex to the Treaty are three protocols opened for signature by the nuclear powers. Protocol 1 provides for a commitment by the United States, Great Britain and France to apply the relevant provisions of the Treaty with respect to territories they control in the zone. Protocol 2 contains a commitment not to use nuclear weapons and not to threaten their use against the treaty signatories, and Protocol 3, a commitment not to test any nuclear explosive devices in the Treaty zone.

The USSR was the first nuclear power to join the Rarotonga Treaty and to commit itself to abiding by the nuclear-free status of the Treaty zone. The Soviet government statement at the signing of the protocols, said: "It is the Soviet Union's assumption that the establishment of such a zone in the South Pacific will be an important contribution to forming a reliable security system in the Asian-Pacific region, that it will strengthen the international regime of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and will help to realise the tasks of putting an end to nuclear weapons on the Earth once and for all. The Soviet Union has voiced its readiness to be a guarantor of the nuclear-free zone in the South Pacific in the hope that all the other nuclear powers will approach the initiative of the countries of the region with due responsibility, and will, for their part, do everything to reliably ensure and guarantee the truly nuclear-free status of the declared zone".

The New Zealand Labour Party delegation which visited Moscow in early 1987 thanked the Soviet Union for being the first of the nuclear powers to sign Protocols 2 and 3 to the Rarotonga Treaty, and gave a positive appreciation of the Soviet programme for eliminating nuclear weapons by the beginning of the twenty-first century and other initiatives aimed to strengthen peace. In the course of a friendly conversation at the CPSU CC, both parties reaffirmed their desire to continue and to deepen inter-party contacts for the earliest elimination of nuclear weapons and conversion of the Pacific Ocean into a zone of peace, good neighbourhood and equitable co-operation.

In February 1987, the People's Republic of China signed Protocols 2 and 3

to the Rarotonga Treaty and expressed the confidence that its implementation would favour peace and security in Asia and the Pacific region. Meanwhile, the United States, France and Great Britain have refused to join the Treaty.

### **References**

1. The Rarotonga Treaty on a nuclear-free zone in the South Pacific was approved at the 16th session of the South Pacific Forum (SPF), which was held in Rarotonga (Cook Islands) in August 1985. It entered into force on December 11, 1986, upon being signed by ten and ratified by eight of the 13 SPF countries. SPF includes: Australia, New Zealand, Cook Islands, Papua-New Guinea, Niue, Nauru, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Tonga, Vanuatu, Fiji, Western Samoa, and the Solomon Islands.
2. The states which, together with New Zealand, are members of ANZUS (Australia, United States) and ANZUK (Australia, United Kingdom).
3. France began its nuclear tests on Mururoa Atoll in 1966.