



Theoretical journal
of the Socialist
Party of Australia

Australian Marxist Review

- ★ *The Soviet Union*
- ★ *A World to Save and a World to Win*
- ★ *New World Order*
- ★ *Grim Future for Farmers*
- ★ *New Developments for the*
- ★ *Peace Movement*
- ★ *The Peace Movement in the 1990s*
- ★ *Marxism and Morality*
- ★ *Petty-Bourgeois Ideology*
- ★ *Perestroika in the Soviet Union*

QUARTERLY
NEW SERIES No 28
September 1991
Price \$2

Australian Marxist Review

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

CONTENTS

The Soviet Union	SPA CC Executive 3
A World to Save and a World to Win	SPA CC Executive 7
The New World Order 9
Grim Future for Farmers	Vic Williams 15
New Developments for the Peace Movement	SPA CC Executive . . . 19
The Peace Movement in the 1990s 26
Marxism and Morality	Laurie Kiek 33
Petty-Bourgeois Ideology	Gus Hall 41
Perestroika in the Soviet Union	Slava Tetekhin 47

The Soviet Union

Statement adopted by the Central Committee Executive of the Socialist Party of Australia at its August meeting.

(Note: This statement was adopted before Gorbachev resigned as the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and some other associated events.)

We express our deep concern and protest at the mob attacks against the offices of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the suppression of the Party's newspaper, *Pravda* and Party organisations in the Russian Republic by the Yeltsin government. These events show that a tide of anti-socialist, counter-revolution is in full-flood in Moscow and is being whipped up by Boris Yeltsin and his supporters.

The objective of renewal and renovation of the socialist Soviet Union proclaimed by Mikhail Gorbachov has turned into a disaster of immense historical proportions for the people of the Soviet Union and of the world. The original aims of perestroika were supported and continue to be supported by the Socialist Party of Australia. However the policies adopted released anti-communist and anti-socialist forces which are gathering for an assault against the socialist system of the Soviet Union. The real coup is now unfolding. It is a right-wing, counter-revolutionary coup which has the objective of restoring capitalism and dismantling the existing Soviet Union as a unified state.

The attempted take-over of August 20th by the Committee of Eight, is only one dramatic incident in a spiral which will intensify the political and economic disintegration of the Soviet Union.

The Committee of Eight had the aim of stemming the tide of anarchy, disruption and lawlessness that is sweeping the country.

The statement of the Committee of Eight, pointed to real problems — the growth of the shadow economy, the transportation and fuel crisis, the need to act to save the harvest, the spiralling of prices, the housing crisis and so on. These are real problems that are seriously affecting the livelihood of the people and will remain after the present tumult has died down.

But those who established the Committee of eight failed to make use of political opportunities that were available and, instead, attempted to overcome the situation by means of a putsch and elitist manoeuvres. These means must be condemned, even though the stated objectives were justifiable. As the statement of the SPA CC Executive published in last week's issue of **The Guardian** pointed out, "The real task will be for the new leadership to win the ideological and political struggle for socialism in the hearts and minds of the Soviet people of all nationalities". They failed to do so, their adventurist actions and failure to rally the people, resulted in the opposite of their stated intentions, just as the policies being adopted in the name of perestroika are resulting in disintegration and not renewal.

In addition to the economic collapse and widespread lawlessness, a main issue is the rapid rise of nationalism and separatism in all the Republics of the Soviet Union. Inter-ethnic conflict has already led to considerable violence and loss of life. The new Union Treaty, which was to establish new relationships between the Republics and the central government will, however, in its present form, effectively dismantle the Soviet Union as an integrated state.

The Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, A Lukyanov, said in a recent statement that the new Union Treaty should envisage "a single economic space, a single banking system and the preservation as property of the Union the property that is required for its normal functioning as a Federal State". He went on, "These major provisions were not sufficiently clearly reflected in the published text of the Treaty". In a referendum of the whole Soviet people in March this year, the great majority voted in favour of maintaining the unity of the Soviet Union. This was also not reflected in the new Union Treaty.

Boris Yeltsin, the populist and demagogic hero of the hour, opposed a Yes vote in the referendum while A. Lukyanov who called for the democratic vote of the Russian people to be upheld has now been summarily sacked by Gorbachev, no doubt, because he strongly criticised the draft of the Union Treaty which Gorbachev was principally responsible for drafting.

Yeltsin, even before the Union Treaty is signed, has issued decrees declaring that all property is the property of the Russian Federation and that the military and security forces on its territory are to come under its control. The governments of the Ukraine and other Republics can be expected to follow this lead. The Ukraine government has already discussed a proposal to issue its own currency.

The industrial, banking, health, education, transport and communications structure of the Soviet Union, which has been built up over decades on the basis of the unity of the Republics will be disrupted. Such a course will tear the Soviet Union to pieces and will almost certainly lead to an intensification of inter-ethnic conflict.

Of extreme concern is the existence of thousands of nuclear weapons on the territory of the Soviet Union, up until now controlled by responsible leaders. In conditions of turmoil and in the hands of irresponsible and inconsistent leaders such as Yeltsin or some rabid nationalists an acute danger could be

created.

The economy of the Soviet Union has been rapidly disintegrating as a consequence of ill-considered policies already adopted. Nothing that has happened in the last week will contribute in any way to stem the plunge into anarchy. Economic disruption and decline have been accentuated by the adoption of the objective of establishing a "market economy". This is a code word for capitalism. Already mass unemployment, rapid inflation, individual profiteering and the other evils of capitalism have appeared.

Both Yeltsin and Gorbachev are receiving economic "advice" from the US Hoover Institution and the Harvard school. Naturally these "advisers" have the objective of "helping" the Soviet Union re-establish capitalism. The economic aid now being enthusiastically offered by the Western powers is being extended on condition that economic reforms, meaning transition to capitalism, and "democratisation", meaning the destruction of the Communist Party and of the socialist system continue. This aid is primarily being offered to the Republics with the deliberate intention of encouraging the break-up of the Soviet Union.

If this program succeeds the working people will again feel the heel of exploitation, repression and foreign domination, the very causes that led to the Russian revolution of 1917.

These are some of the reason for the vociferous support being given to Yeltsin and Gorbachev by the Western capitalist states. The governments of these countries which rigorously suppress strikes and popular demonstrations in their own countries are urging the people of the Soviet Union into such actions, provided they are directed against the Communist Party and the socialist system.

The developments in the Soviet Union, even before the events of the last weeks, were already having far-reaching consequences for the progressive and revolutionary movements around the world. For many years the solidarity and assistance of the Soviet Union helped to protect the newly won independence of the Third World countries from the pressure, interference and domination of the imperialist powers. That support and solidarity is now being withdrawn. Cuba, North Korea, Yemen, Afghanistan, Libya and others now face the revenge of the ruling circles of the United States, Britain, France and others.

In the Middle East, the mass migration of Soviet Jews to Israel has significantly helped the aggressive and racist leadership of that country to seize the land of the Palestinian people and to savagely repress the Palestinians. The partnership of the US and the Soviet Union in the crime of war against Iraq is only a foretaste of the consequences of the policies which have been adopted by the Soviet leadership in the name of perestroika and under the mocking slogan of "universal human values".

On a world-wide scale the ruling classes of the capitalist countries have launched aggressive economic and political attacks against the working people in all countries. Their objective is to take-back the advances in social

services, working conditions and rights won by the progressive and democratic forces and the trade union movement in the last few decades. Here too, the debacle now unfolding in the Soviet Union is making it easier for the extreme right-wing forces, the monopolies and trans-national corporations, to put their policies into effect.

None-the-less, we express once again our solidarity with the Soviet Union, the first land of socialism and our support for the communists of the Soviet Union who have been, for many years, cruelly misled and betrayed by a leadership which failed to meet its responsibilities.

We express our firm conviction that socialism remains the best and only system capable of meeting the needs of the working people of all countries. Only a socialist system is capable of eliminating unemployment and exploitation, doing away with the booms and slumps of capitalism by democratic economic planning. Only socialism is capable of extending and guaranteeing the democratic rights of the working people and the other progressive forces in society. Only socialist societies consistently uphold the necessity of preserving peace on our planet.

A world to save and a world to win!

Statement issued by the Central Committee Executive of the Socialist Party of Australia on August 26, 1991.

The actions going on in Moscow, Leningrad and some other Soviet cities led by Yeltsin, Gorbachev and a medley of others have the aim of smashing the communists of the Soviet Union and could destroy socialism and disintegrate the USSR. Their efforts are being loudly applauded by the enemies of the working people around the world.

The real communists, however, live on and will eventually find the way to resume the struggle for our noble cause. Communists came to be, not because Karl Marx wrote Das Capital, but because there was oppression and exploitation, inequality and colonialism, there was poverty and homelessness, culture was debased.

The Russians and the other peoples who made up the Soviet Union, achieved much despite the grievous errors and shortcomings. Let it never be forgotten that it was under the leadership of the communists that the guts were torn out of the Nazi armies in World War II. It was their leadership and the titanic efforts of the people which brought the Soviet Union to the position of world power.

This is the power that the policies of Yeltsin and Gorbachev are now tearing to pieces. They seem prepared to sacrifice the social gains of the Soviet people, reimpose the savage exploitation of capitalism and sell their country to the international enemies of the working people — Bush, Major, Kohl, Kaifu, Hawke and others.

Gorbachev now decrees the disbandment of the CPSU and the handing over of its property. Only the day before he was the General Secretary of this Party. His action is a crime and can only be seen as betrayal.

This self-proclaimed democrat single-handedly decrees!! He has the arrogance to tell a party of 14 million members that it must cease its existence. By

this act alone he stands before the world, politically and morally bankrupt.

But the communists were neither cowed nor smashed by Czarist prisons or the concentration camps of Hitler, Mussolini and the Japanese fascists. The McCarthyite repression in the US and the Menzies repression in Australia did not succeed either. Neither will the bans of Gorbachev and Yeltsin work.

The Party failed partly for the reason that for many years it was the party in power and did not guard against an influx of careerists and opportunists such as Yakovlev, Shevardnadze and Yeltsin. They took the name of communist simply because the party was the ruling party. But they were never communists.

They besmirched the name and finally betrayed the party and the people who put their trust in them when they were members of it. They now attempt to win favour by attacking it.

They are about to impose a heavy price on the Soviet people who do not yet suspect the evils that these people have in store for them. Their economic plans spell unemployment and inflation. The social gains in health, education and women's welfare will be lost. The profiteers and "entrepreneurs" are already let loose, creating new mafia millionaires.

The real communists will stand up and rally yet again as they have done so many times before. They will maintain the party and re-win the confidence of the people. They will learn from the shortcomings of the first attempt to build socialism and build it better the second time around.

The present events in the Soviet Union are, none-the-less, a severe setback and the right-wing enemies of the working people are overjoyed at their unexpected success. It will, however, bring grief and suffering to the people of many countries.

Bush, Major, Kohl and the rest are already launching their attacks against the people. No-one expects them to concern themselves over-much with the unemployed or workers' living standards, the rights of trade unions or peace and disarmament.

They talk about human rights ignoring the realities in their own countries. Will they fight for the freedom and independence of nations — except where, as in the Soviet Union, it could dismember a socialist or progressive state?

The people know in their hearts where these leaders stand. They will be forgotten soon. The traitors and turn-coats, however, will be cursed by those who suffer their betrayal.

But the people also know where the communists stand. They will be in the struggles of the people from the Soviet Union to South Africa, from Vietnam to Chile.

It is time for all real communists to stand up. There is a world to save and a world to win!

New World Order

The *Australian Marxist Review* asked a number of Socialist Party of Australia members for brief contributions relating to the concept of a **new world order**.

Comrade Pauline Mitchell

responded: The description “new world order” has a sinister ring to it — the phrase was used about 50 years ago by Hitler with his visions of a new Germany and world fascism.

Today, with the thawing of the Cold War tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union, the new world order holds a different meaning among the world’s people. Agreements on disarmament have brought the promise of a reduction in militarism and a gain for the civilian economies of the world, for example, a peace dividend.

The USSR visualised the new world order as the demilitarisation of international relations by mutual co-operation in security measures and the prevention of conflict by relying on negotiations and consultation, thereby excluding the use or threat of the use of force in world affairs and abolishing completely the threat of nuclear war.

It has now become clear that this concept of a new world order is not shared by the USA administration nor by the military industrial complex (MIC). Frightened by the thought of a potential loss of influence and a downgrading of US military power, generals and MIC politicians began to push the idea that the end of the Cold War did not bring an end to military threats or Third World upheavals that may challenge America’s strategic and vital interests.

In his State of the Union Address in February, President Bush outlined his view of the new world order and America’s role in it. He urged Americans to “prepare for the next American century”, saying that “among the nations of the world, only the United States of America has both the moral standing and the means to back it up ... we are the nation that can shape the future.”

This idea of an “American century” and a new world order based on mutual co-operation, consultation and respect are in direct contradiction. The US

version has already been demonstrated.

US military power has been used to depose a troublesome dictator in Panama.

The US has put troops into Central America under the guise of policing drug trafficking.

The US has re-installed a corrupt monarchy in Kuwait by waging a devastating war, creating a nation of refugees and hardship and poverty for Iraq's people.

Washington exploited the embarrassing Kurdish refugee crisis to establish "security zones" inside Iraq ostensibly to protect the Kurds from Saddam Hussein while preparing the ground for a possible permanent US presence there, undermining any political movements to advance Kurdish autonomy and checking any democratic movement that may arise in Iraq.

As can be seen, this US version of a new world order is selective — but all events have one thing in common: the advancement and consolidation of US monopoly capitalism and imperialism.

While the new world order implies relative social and political stability, these examples show that it must be compatible with America's vital and strategic interests of pursuing and controlling the world's valuable resources and ensuring the continued expansion of and exploitation by US transnational corporations.

Comrade Alan Miller

wrote: There are many shortcomings in the world today so who wouldn't want and new and better world order?

But the concept of the new world order immediately arouses in me a feeling of caution. Often seemingly benign concepts, against which no one at first glance would argue, are put forward to dodge around a class analysis of the world in which we live.

In a world divided along current antagonistic class lines, there can only be one new world order and that is a socialist order. The imperialists talk of a new world order, but actually it is the old world order of imperialism dressed up to make it seem new.

However, because the imperialists put forward a concept which they call the new world order, we cannot avoid dealing with the matter. Just what would their version of the new order be like?

Imperialism has always been noted for the drive to war and a feature of the system has been its use of the scientific and technological revolution for military purposes. In this, imperialism has been successful as the recent Gulf War shows. A pillar of the imperialist new world order then would certainly be a powerful military machine which would be used as an instrument of intimidation.

The drive to fascism is a feature of imperialism. As inevitable resistance to the new order grows and bourgeois democratic methods prove inadequate, the tendency will be towards more repression.

A marked feature of the new order will be the domination of huge multinational corporations operating on the basis of intense exploitation and making use of science and technology for this purpose. There would inevitably be a further polarisation of wealth.

All the social evils, such as racism, crime and decadence, with which we are familiar and which are basically due to the imperialist system will be aggravated.

However, the imperialist new order will not be automatic and there is no guarantee of success for it. Powerful forces are ranged against imperialism and, sooner or later, will be successful. Here I am referring to the socialist countries, the international working class and the national liberation movements. Despite the recent setbacks, the communist movement remains the most significant force in our present era and has the potential to unite the anti-imperialist sections and lead them to victory.

What about the socialist new world order? Certainly, the claim to be new can be sustained in the sense that socialist society replaces capitalism and so is new in relation to capitalism.

Communists underestimated the capacity of imperialism to reverse progressive social development for a temporary purpose by use of quiet counter-revolution, assisted by revisionism in the communist movement. However, the Marxist-Leninists will learn the lessons of this current difficult period and will come again, better equipped to lead the historical change to the socialist new world order.

They will know better how to advance the cause of socialism, struggle against imperialism and revisionism, and also how to self-critically analyse their own mistakes and shortcomings, including those of a dogmatic character because dogmatism can distort socialist development and the imperialist class enemy can take advantage of this.

The socialist new world order will end imperialist exploitation and, by doing so, will destroy the basis for war, fascism and other social ills. In its place there will be a society based on publicly owned means of production. A planned economy will benefit the masses and people will be encouraged to work in a co-operative way. Appropriate use of science in production will aim at an abundance of everything which is needed for an all round cultured life. A new morality of truly civilised behaviour will gradually take hold. Abundance, along with the new morality, will be reached in full in a classless communist society.

The whole process described above requires working class leadership and constitutes a fundamental deepening of democracy in which the masses truly run their affairs. The communist stage will see people doing this without any form of compulsion associated with class domination even in its most democratic form. In this sense democracy will lose its historical meaning.

To present the new order in the way I have in no way suggests that a transition period is not required between capitalism and socialism. This transition, in its early stage, will be anti-imperialist and democratic in character, but it will not be a third type of new world order. It will be the beginning of what will be the socialist world order.

Any new world order conjured up in non-class terms is only an illusion, a lapse into idealism. That is why I am cautious when I hear the term "new world order".

Comrade Ray Ferguson's

contribution began: The concept of a "new world order" is not new in principle. For decades many nations which are identified as developing nations have been constantly demanding and struggling for the need to restructure the world economy so as to provide a more equitable base for the future development of their own economies.

As far back as 1954, the United Nations adopted a resolution which called for the establishment of a "New International Economic Order" (NIEO).

While remaining on the statute books of the UN; world imperialism and particularly US imperialism have continuously opposed its application to the world economy.

If implemented, the NIEO would have a substantial impact on the structure of the world economy and the international division of labour and, through those changes, would create more favourable conditions for the future economic and political development of the Third World nations, particularly in the area of trade, foreign exchange, loans and credits.

However, this is not what President Bush and other spokespeople of world imperialism have in mind when they speak about a new world order. Indeed, what they have in mind is quite the opposite.

Instead of a more equitable distribution of the wealth produced by the world economy, a new world order under the Bush doctrine is part of a plan to shift the balance of forces even further in favour of US imperialism while at the same time US military forces are free to roam as the world's policemen.

Stark evidence of these plans can be seen in the US invasion of Panama, their massive military presence in the Asia-Pacific basin and, more recently, the US-led military actions in the Middle East.

Using the United Nations to launch their new world order in the Middle East, the US-led military action was simply a cover for US imperialism to regain control over the oil-rich resources of the area and, through that control, to impose their domination of the whole world.

Another feature of this invasion was to divide the Arab nations, thereby undermining the struggle of the PLO and strengthening the capacity of Israel which is the main ally of the US in the region.

However, despite the gains that US imperialism has made in recent times

in their quest for world domination, the contradictions inherent in this form of a new world order will, over time, lead to sharpening of the struggles by those nations which are trying to free themselves from the shackles of world imperialism.

The strategy of world imperialism and particularly US imperialism — to exploit the developing nations of Latin America and Africa for the supply of rich resources to feed the giant transnational corporations — is increasingly being resisted by armed struggle and other means.

Under those circumstances, any concept of a new world order which by design and application is intended to continue the exploitation of the poor countries of the “South” to feed the rich countries of the “North” can only result in strengthening the demands and the will of the people in their struggles for national liberation and a new international economic order.

Comrade Jim Henderson

wrote: In discussing a new world order, we must keep in mind that our starting point is the fact that we live in the decade preceding the beginning of the 21st Century.

That is, to see the world as it actually is because that is the world we seek to change, not the world of 50 or 100 years ago.

Marxist-Leninists see the world as in a constant state of change and development, hence we look to the future, to any new world order arising from changes of the past and present.

This means applying the principles of scientific socialism to the current situation — **new thinking** — contrasting to the application to situations no longer extant.

Marxist-Leninists are convinced that socialism is the system that will supersede capitalism on a world scale and work towards that objective. The starting point is the present situation where socialism and capitalism exist and compete, exist and compete in a world which for its very existence requires a nuclear-free era and the preservation of a correct ecological state of existence. This means the preservation of **universal human values** and the future of a socialist world makes this imperative.

There is no other alternative and in working for this socialists are not renouncing our socialist objective. Quite the contrary.

Thus in today's situation, a new world order must have both socialists and capitalists agreeing on essentially new relations. Basic contradictions will remain.

Even the most cursory examination of recent years will show that very important steps have been taken in regard to these relations.

Here the United Nations Organisation has a major role and its 18 world services cover some 30 very important activities such as feeding millions of hungry children daily (UNICEF). It has eliminated smallpox throughout the world

and has other health actions (WHO). Its worthy activities in practically every field of human endeavour are not sufficiently recognised.

This is great co-operation among all the 160 nations and should be seen as a firm step on the way to a new world order. This must be maintained and strengthened.

However, unless peace is preserved, all other activities, however important, will always be at risk.

This must be our chief consideration and the implementation of the very first words of the United Nations Charter must be worked for and implemented.

“To maintain peace and security and to that end: to take effective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace and for the suppression of acts of terrorism....”

For years, the major world powers — the USSR and the USA — were the chief protagonists in the cold war.

Perestroika effected the beginning of a fundamental change not only internally in the Soviet Union but externally.

At Geneva, the sides decided that a nuclear war should never be started and that nations must learn to live in peaceful relations. Students of Lenin’s works will be familiar with his very strong advocacy of this attitude.

The end of the cold war was ushered in and this was and is recognised the world over. The 1985 Geneva and 1986 Reykjavik meetings were the turning points on the road to a new world order.

There will be breaches in the implementation but we must see that the world position is marching in that direction. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the US-led military actions in the Gulf — both rightly condemned — do not negate the onward march for peace in a new world order.

Our task is to press forward in this desirable direction.

Grim future for farmers

by Vic Williams

The storming of Yaragadee tracking station by 100 farmers in the WA northern wheat belt made many aware of the desperate position of farmers in the present rural crisis. The action was in protest at US subsidies on wheat that were cutting Australian wheat out of traditional markets. This and other actions and protests have forced State and Federal Governments to make some moves to ease the pressure on farmers: the WA Government to guarantee \$150 a tonne for WA wheat, the Federal Government to put a further \$100 million into the Rural Assistance scheme.

But the rural crisis is far wider than wheat; it covers all aspects of agricultural production. There are some new factors that have intensified the present crisis: mainly the subsidies paid in Europe and the USA to agricultural production and lowering of tariffs to agricultural imports into Australia.

The crisis in Australian agriculture and internationally is a crisis of over-production. It has a long history with fluctuations in intensity. In 1969-70 in Australia, the rural crisis became sharper. Wool at the end of 1969 averaged 39 cents a pound; by March 1970 it was down to 32 cents and by August of the same year to 26 cents.

The auction market for wool, with the main buyers collaborating to force the price down, could have meant up to ten per cent cheaper than sales through a single wool marketing authority. The demands of the wool farmers finally forced the Federal Government to set up the Wool Marketing Authority, buying and storing wool below a fixed floor price.

In 1970, there was a 2,000 million bushel world carry-over of wheat, with the Common Market, the EEC, dumping wheat at low prices. The Federal Government's previous solution was to cut Australian production by setting a quota of bushels to each farm on a set of rules that favoured the big, estab-

lished farmers. In 1968-89, the overall Australian quota was 500 million bushels with a carry-over of 300 million bushels.

In 1970, the Common Market had a carry-over of over 200,000 million tons of butter and had dumped 100,000 tons on the world market. The returns of 60,000 dairy farmers in Victoria for butterfat had not risen in 12 years. Over 4,000 dairy farmers in Victoria had been driven off in four years up to 1970.

Fewer farmers

In the mid-50s, there were 250,000 farmers; by the 60s, 170,000; in the 70s, about 30,000 less. In the face of the sharpening crisis, those who were still on the land organised and protested to the governments. Ten thousand marched in Melbourne, issued the Rural Crisis Manifesto and demanded of the Governments to stabilise the rural industry so that landholders and rural workers would have reasonable income. Thousands also marched in Adelaide, Perth and Canberra.

But the erosion of the farmers and production continued. From 1972 to 1982, the sheep population dropped from 180 million to 130 million; cattle from 32 million to 24 million. Milk production was down by one third. The real value of farm production was down ten per cent. For the farmers left, it was get big or get out; get big both in area if possible, but bigger in use of capital to increase production by more machinery, more technology. By 1985, only a third of farmers were debt free; one-third had debts over \$100,000. Agribusiness moved into agriculture in a big way.

At that time, the US Government brought out their national farm plan. One provision was to reduce their dairy herd from 11 million to ten million and dump 150,000 tonnes of dairy products on the world market every year. It proposed to cut the minimum price for US wheat by 18 per cent. This affected the world price for Australian wheat.

Other costs hit the Australian farmers. From 1980 to 1985, interest rates had increased 84 per cent, taxes, electricity and fuel by about 70 per cent. The anger of the farmers at the squeeze between increasing costs and rapid slump in the market drove them onto the streets in protest. The marches in 1985 were bigger than before, with 30,000 in Melbourne, 40,000 in Canberra. There were 15,000 in Adelaide, 8,000 in Perth.

Lost wheat markets

But the position of Australian farmers at the present time is more desperate. First, the Gulf war cut Australia from its Middle East markets. The US subsidised wheat destroyed the Egyptian market. The Federal Government, facing a big carry-over and collapsing markets, dropped the guaranteed price for wheat. The protests in WA forced the WA Government to guarantee \$150 a tonne, challenging the Federal Government to do the same.

The wool marketing authority, that had been buying all wool not sold at the auctions at 840 cents a kilo, dropped it to 700 cents a kilo. But the authority's huge debt forced it to drop any guaranteed price and it fell on the world mar-

ket to around 400 cents a kilo, with some slight recoveries. The sheep farmers are reducing costs by slaughtering the poorer and least productive sheep. Wheat and wool farmers, the main agricultural exporters, are facing grossly overloaded markets. Many farmers are now at breaking point.

In South Australia, three-quarters have an interest burden of one fifth of gross farm income — an average debt of \$200,000. A third of them cannot meet liabilities, buy seed, fodder fertilisers and fuel. The South Australian State Bank demands that the farmers have 65 per cent equity in their properties before they are eligible for assistance. They have already foreclosed on 40 farmers on York Peninsula.

Australian farmers producing vegetables, dairy foods and fruit are among the world's most efficient producers. Mostly they look to the home market. In 1984-85, the gross value of agricultural production was \$15,400 million. The value of exports from agriculture was \$6,5000 million (\$5,2000 million in wheat and wool) and \$3,800 million in manufactured foodstuffs and beverages. Only \$670 million of vegetables, fruit and dairy products were exported, the home market being much the biggest one.

In 1984-85, food imports were \$1,380 million; by 1990, they had risen to \$2,170 million, with the biggest rise in dairy products, cereals, fruit and vegetables. This is 14 per cent of domestic demand, more than half from subsidised Europe.

Jarlsberg cheese from Norway is sold in Australia for a quarter of the price in Norway. Potato chips from Tasmania are much cheaper than chips from Holland and Canada but with subsidies are sold at less than growing costs. US multinationals Dole and De Monte now have 22 per cent of domestic sales with pineapple from South America, Thailand and Philippines. They sell at 41 cents a tin; Australian Golden Circle at 71 cents a tin.

The Australian Government's reduction of tariffs on fruit, vegetables and dairy products has made Australia a favourite dumping ground for the EC countries and others. The 40,000 Australian farmers who were producing vegetables, fruit and dairy products in 1985 are now under extreme pressure.

Food preserving is the biggest part of Australian manufacturing with 20 per cent of the industrial workforce and 25 per cent of manufactured exports. It has had very little assistance and is 70 per cent foreign owned. The financial collapse of Adelaide Steamship Company and its interlinked companies in the food industry have added to the problems and the job losses.

Growing protests

In the face of the deepening crisis, the farmers are moving and protesting. They are calling for an immediate moratorium on interest payments, with plans for collective pressure to enforce it.

Farmers in South Australia have threatened to actively intervene in mortgage sales to make sure that there is no bidding; that they will stop evictions of farmers by "whatever means morally at our disposal". They are

demanding that foreign multinationals in agri-business pay for alleviation of the crisis.

Some WA farmers have threatened to destroy US military installations if they do not get a guaranteed minimum price for wheat, because they see US wheat subsidies as the cause of their problems.

There are attempts to maintain Australia's overseas markets and to protect the home market against the invasion by overseas produced agricultural products. A main aim must be to help keep farmers on the land, although much of the assistance being offered by the Federal government has the aim of getting farmers off their farms.

However, the solutions so far proposed do not deal with the overall problem — massive world-wide over-production and the failure to bring agricultural foodstuffs to the millions in need.

The growing crisis could bring more massive protest marches and actions by farmers. They will gain support in other areas and among workers when the interrelations of the rural and the urban crisis become clear to workers and farmers.

The ordinary working farmers are facing a grim future and they need allies.

New developments for the peace movement

This resolution was adopted by the Central Committee Executive of the Socialist Party of Australia at its meeting on July 18 to 21, 1991.

As we enter the last decade of the 20th Century, profound changes are sweeping the world which reflect both positive and negative aspects in the struggle to preserve world peace.

At a global level, whole armies are being dispersed and nuclear warheads and their delivery systems are being dismantled and destroyed.

Forced by the combined pressure of constructive proposals from the socialist countries, particularly the Soviet Union, the efforts of the world-wide peace movement, and the deteriorating economic position of the USA, the Bush administration has reached agreement with the USSR for the dismantling of certain types of strategic nuclear weapons, cutbacks in convention and chemical weapons and some improvements in trade relations between the Soviet Union and the United States.

In addition, the Soviet Union and the United States have reached an historic agreement on a massive reduction in the number of troops in Central Europe which will bring about an overall cut of nearly half a million troops by 1992. The Soviet Union will withdraw 380,000 and the USA 80,000.

These positive developments have forced world imperialism, particularly US imperialism, to abandon the Reagan doctrine that portrayed the Soviet Union as the "evil empire".

However, despite these positive developments, there are a number of negative factors and trends with which the peace movement must contend.

In Europe, NATO is covertly planning to field a new generation of nuclear missiles which will more than compensate for its arms reductions and will greatly increase the West's nuclear strike capacity. The United States has reduced the number of its nuclear targets in the Soviet Union — but still has over 7,000. Plans for Star Wars are still being pursued by the Bush administration.

Militarily and strategically, the Asia-Pacific region remains substantially the same with an intransigent United States determined to maintain its military, economic and political dominance of the area.

The region is menaced by the presence of thousands of nuclear warheads on land and predominantly at sea. Despite requests from all sides, no negotiations are taking place to eliminate or even to limit naval nuclear arms. There are still over 500 United States bases across the region.

There is no withdrawal of the US "maritime strategy" which foresees an early escalation to nuclear weapons in the event of heightened tensions. The combination of no controls and aggressive strategies mean that the Pacific is still a nuclear powder keg.

US imperialism has not abandoned its long-held objective of world domination. The military and economic policies designed to achieve this aim have now been disguised as a "new world order".

The Bush doctrine of a new world order is being used as a pretext for US military forces to roam the globe as the world's policeman or, alternatively, to present the United States as the world's "peacemaker".

Over recent times, the US Government has intervened in a number of conflicts involving national liberation forces by setting the agenda at organised peace talks.

Whether in the form of "policeman" or "peacemaker", the underlying strategy of the new world order is to undermine and weaken the anti-imperialist and peace forces of the world and, through this process, to further shift the balance of forces towards the camp of world imperialism.

Stark evidence of these plans can be seen by the US invasion and continuing occupation of Panama, its continual provocation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, its trade sanctions against Vietnam and Cuba and, more recently, the US-led military action against Iraq.

Using the United Nations to launch its new world order in the Middle East, the US-led military action against Iraq was a cover for US imperialism to regain control over the oil rich resources of the area and, through that economic advantage, to strengthen its influence throughout the world.

Another feature of this invasion was to divide the Arab nations, thereby undermining the struggles of the PLO and strengthening the capacity of Israel, which is America's main ally in the region. Since the end of the Gulf War, the United States has been using Israel, Saudi Arabia and some other countries as bases to stockpile its own weapons.

After achieving its military objectives in Iraq, US imperialism is now acting the part of “peacemaker” in its attempts to have Israel make some minor concessions to the Arab nations at the expense of the legitimate demands of the Palestinian people.

Taking advantage of problems and differences among some of the national liberation movements and the acute economic problems confronting many progressive governments of developing countries, US imperialism has met with some success in setting the agenda at recent peace talks and dictating the conditions for economic aid.

For many decades, the socialist countries together with the national liberation movements and the progressive and peace forces around the world have been the barrier against the threat of nuclear holocaust and have protected the world’s peoples from uncontrolled oppression and plunder by imperialism.

The weakening and in some cases the destruction of a number of socialist states together with the political effects of these changes in many other countries have altered the balance of forces in the world in favour of imperialism. This creates a potentially very serious threat to peace.

The real aim of Australia’s foreign policy and military expenditure

As a middle size imperialist nation and eager to play its role as a junior partner in the US alliance, Australia’s foreign policy is becoming increasingly militarist in character.

While its main role at this stage in reducing the burden on the US is to perform the task of the South Pacific policeman, strategically Australia’s foreign and military policies embrace new horizons.

It is for these reasons that government leaders attempt to justify massive military expenditure by references to “defence”. In fact, the actual “defence” of Australia’s shores is a small consideration.

In addition to spending approximately \$7 billion dollars in 1990-91 on defence, over the next 15 years Australia will spend an additional \$25 billion on submarines, frigates, planes and other aggressive military hardware.

In particular, Australia’s military strategists are giving much attention to the development of a two ocean navy with Australian naval forces being permanently stationed in both the Indian and Pacific oceans.

The decision by the US to sell North West Cape to Australia for \$350 million is part of this strategy. In addition to North West Cape sending signals to US submarines, it will then also be used to send signals to Australia’s growing submarine fleet which will be stalking the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

The types of weapons being brought and developed by the Federal Government and the proposals to restructure Australia’s defence forces only make sense when seen in the light of Australia’s foreign policy which is

directed to the preparation of aggression against the socialist countries and the national liberation movements of the Asian area and the Indian and Pacific ocean. They make sense when seen as part of, and integrated into, the military forces of the US and as part of the global aggressive plans of US imperialism.

An example of this integration was revealed in the Gulf War when the Australian Government, in addition to committing naval and other military forces to the Gulf region under US command, also revealed that Australia's US military bases played a key role in the US command, communications and targeting system.

A more recent feature of Australia's foreign policy is the increasing drive to export arms in the Asia-Pacific region, and the promotion of military values in the community.

By promoting and increasing arms sales in the region, Australia's foreign policy is contributing to both increased regional tensions and insecurity as well as to the further development of a domestic military-industrial complex with all the reactionary political implications that inevitably accompany such militarisation of a society.

The Socialist Party of Australia supports legitimate expenditure for real defence needs. This can only be based, however, on a foreign policy which adopts the aim of international peace while upholding the national independence and sovereignty of Australia and other countries and promoting relationships between countries of equality, respect and mutual benefit.

Australia must play a positive and peaceful role in the region, become a champion of independence and a friend of the people.

By promoting the principles and practice of peaceful co-existence in the region, by conducting mutually beneficial trade relations with all nations, and by keeping clear of economic and military blocks through a policy of independence, Australia can make a considerable contribution to peace and stability in the region, thereby also contributing to peace in the world.

Build the peace movement

Although the threat of a nuclear war and the outbreak of military conflicts in Europe have subsided, this is not a reason for complacency or reducing the level of activities and influence of the peace movement.

The risk of large-scale conflicts with the loss of thousands of lives, massive destruction and untold damage to the world's environment as witnessed in the Gulf War remains high.

Billions of dollars are still spent every minute on armaments instead of being used for desperately needed global, regional and local environmental and development projects.

For some in the peace movement, what they see as the "collapse of socialism" and the end of the "cold war" are a cause for rejoicing. Influenced by

theories of equal responsibility for the arms race, it appears to them that if the socialist camp is weakened, a major cause of war is automatically reduced.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The weakening of socialism weakens the forces for peace on a global level, creates instability and removes a major factor which has restrained imperialism in the past.

Now is not the time to abandon the peace movement or to think that the world is secure from the threat of war. The adoption of principles of non-aggression, equality, non-interference and mutual benefits and the dismantling of all weapons of mass destruction remain distant goals which will not be achieved without mass pressure from the people of the world.

Three levels of the peace movement

During the last decade, the peace movement in Australia has undergone a quantitative change with the emergence of new organisations and the growth of new coalitions.

Despite a fall in active participation following the INF agreement, the campaign before and during the Gulf War emphasised the large number of groups and individuals who will become actively involved in peace issues.

Another development has been the growth of environmental organisations. A few of these have policies which complement and draw them into the peace movement but much more needs to be done to unite these two streams of wide public concern and action.

At its broadest level, the peace movement in Australia embraces the widest circles from the Socialist Party of Australia to church groups, pacifists, intellectuals, professionals, Liberal, Labor and Australian Democrat supporters and many other groups who are, for a variety of reasons, prepared to take part in the peace movement.

While the emergence of new forces has diversified the peace movement with different political aims and forms of action, experiences has shown that on many issues agreement can be reached and unity of action developed.

Evidence of this can be seen in the common aim to prevent nuclear war, to abolish all weapons of mass destruction and for nuclear disarmament by the year 2000.

Collectively these forces play an important role in preparing and organising for peace days of mass action such as Palm Sunday and Hiroshima Day and, in the past, have played a key role in mobilising thousands of people to demonstrate in support of peace and nuclear disarmament.

In addition, many of these forces joined together to form coalitions in opposition to the US-led Gulf War and Australia's involvement in it. They are also campaigning against Australia's growing militarism, to stop the arms trade, and for the removal of US bases.

The groups participating in coalitions or parallel activities in such united campaigns retain their differing positions which range from limited, reformist

aims to a clear anti-imperialist stand. Such differences also arise from time to time within the participating organisations.

In the past, it has been possible to describe three tiers of the peace movement in terms of organisations: the SPA, the anti-imperialist peace groups, and the wide range of groups active in the general peace movement.

There is a level of the peace movement which is anti-imperialist in character. To a large extent, it includes organisations affiliated to the World Peace Council but the current situation is fluid. Generally, the anti-imperialist level of struggle is carried forward by different groups in the course of different campaigns.

The SPA needs to be directly involved in the coalitions or organisations at the anti-imperialist and the general levels of the peace movement, helping to argue out the political and ideological questions which arise in any group which combines persons and organisations united around one issue but otherwise holding different views.

World Peace Council

Forced to restructure due mainly to international developments, the World Peace Council remains the biggest and most important peace organisation in the world.

As well as having United Nations observer status, various peace organisations from every continent and almost every country are affiliated to it. Many of the World Peace Council affiliates adopt a anti-imperialist, peace and solidarity position, declaring that the responsibility for the arms drive and the threat to world peace lies with the imperialist camp. This stand and the policies adopted by the affiliates helps to strengthen the overall position and policies of the World Peace Council.

As part of its restructuring program, the World Peace Council is regionalising its activities by setting up regional centres throughout the world. A regional centre has already been established in the Asian area.

Australian peace organisations which are affiliated to the World Peace Council will be able to play a major role in this project by giving assistance and support to the peace organisations of the Asian-Pacific region.

This form of activity will also assist in winning support for the policies of the World Peace Council within the broader peace movement in Australia, thereby lifting the peace movement to a higher level.

The independent activity of the Socialist Party

The Socialist Party of Australia has always believed that building the peace movement is a vital matter.

The SPA carries on its own work, activity and propaganda for peace. It expresses its opinion on the various issues and takes part in its own name in

the peace movement activities. Like other organisations in the peace movement, it has the right to express its point of view and develop its own activities.

The SPA has a consistent anti-imperialist position while explaining and defending the policies of the socialist states and the forces of national liberation. In fact, it is the Party which carries the main responsibility for combating anti-socialism which is the main weapon of imperialism in justification of their war drive.

The Party understands the necessity for relations of peaceful co-existence between states with different social systems and also that peaceful conditions are the best for the labour and revolutionary movements in their struggle for to-day's needs and tomorrow's demand for socialism.

At present, it is necessary to strengthen the Party's work for peace, both its independent activity and its participation in the activities of the general peace movement and specific peace organisations.

The peace movement in the 1990s

In its April 1991 issue, the *Peace Courier*, the journal of the World Peace Council, published a front page article entitled **Can peace movements survive the 90s?** A response to this, entitled **Can we survive the 90s without the peace movement?**, written by SPA CC Executive member Dr Hannah Middleton who is also national spokesperson for the Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition, has been submitted to the *Peace Courier*. Here the *Australian Marxist Review* republishes both articles.

Can peace movements survive the 90s?

The Gulf war has brought up several vital questions that demand urgent answers.

What did peace movements do vis-a-vis the most sordid event of the 1990 and its spillover? Hold demonstrations, meetings, public education campaigns, information exchange, seminars, roundtables? This we did even earlier, for years on end. What is new this time? And if there was nothing new, why not? Have we not been talking about new forms of activity, of re-orienting our work?

The fact is that in Europe, the USA, Canada and many other industrialised countries, the majority of people supported the Gulf war; they wanted Saddam Hussein and his military machine destroyed. In most Third World coun-

tries, the dominant public opinion was against the war and to give peace a chance. Both Saddam Hussein and George Bush were blamed for precipitating the crisis.

Vietnam syndrome

In the USA, peace movements exposed their serious weaknesses. Despite the coalition of peace forces and their campaign against the war, most people opted for Bush's hard line to trounce Saddam Hussein and get over once and for all the Vietnam trauma of a defeated military super-power. The anti-war slogan simply did not click.

The obvious conclusion; peace movements now, in the last decade of the 20th Century and on the threshold of the 21st, must be transformed. The world is changing radically and so must change all peoples' movements. Peace has to become an affirmative activity of many dimensions, and not simply a negative slogan-mongering. Peace action must be on the basis of mobilisation on a very broad scale, not **after** an event but **before** that event takes place.

This requires serious work, not post-facto propaganda campaign. Grassroots work is a very nice phrase. But what sort of work does it involve? How many peace movements are doing it? How much real information is being collected and disseminated for mobilising people for concrete work to prevent what is avoidable? How are peace movements raising funds to sustain useful activities?

Question of contact

How much contact do peace movements have at different decision-making levels to determine exactly what is being planned or what decisions, for example, the arms industry is taking or what interplay of forces and interests are going on at international and regional levels? Is there a public opinion build-up now against the planned sale of US weapons worth \$18 billion to the Saudis and some others? What about a public campaign against Third World governments, now dazzled with US hi-tech weapons, seeking to buy at least some of them, thereby setting off another arms race?

US Congressional budget officials say the cost of *Operation Desert Storm* will be closer to \$40 billion as far as the USA is concerned. The total expenditure of the entire multinational forces might be around \$70 billion. But the US administration seems to be heading towards a windfall profit. The US Congress sanctioned \$42.6 billion while the allies of the US pledged \$54.5 billion (and has already paid out half of the commitments). Is there an explanatory educative campaign? No!

Where is the peace dividend so much hoped for after the end of the cold war? The current US military budget allocation is \$334 billion. The fuel used by the Pentagon in a single year, not the 1991 Gulf war year, could fund the entire public mass transportation system for 22 years. About \$58 billion goes for development of hi-tech weapons, that is 70 per cent of Federal spending

on research and development.

Missing funds

Standing 19th in infant mortality rates, the USA has two to three million homeless people and 35 million more without health care. What are peace movements doing about these and other related issues? And why the USA alone? What about all other countries still lavishly spending on military matters?

What about the new world order now being talked about? Must it be what George Bush wants? But can it be totally dismissed as *pax Americana*? What about the changed political contours and conceptual shifts in a world where co-existence has become the key factor? Where do peace movements figure?

What is the role of peace movements in the 1990s in eliminating the lingering regional conflicts by mobilising all peace forces for positive solution, not just blaming this or that side for the impasse? What is our role in developmental work, environmental protection or in reconciling differences?

The time to re-mould is **now!** Otherwise peace movements, as anti-war movements up till now, stand no chance of surviving in a post-cold war era.

Can we survive the 90s without the peace movement?

I read the article entitled *Can peace movements survive the 90s?* (Peace Courier 4/91) with amazement and disbelief. It is hard to believe that the author was involved in the campaign against the Gulf War or is an activist in the peace movement. The assumptions made are incorrect and, as a result, the analysis reaches false conclusions.

The article lacks any historical perspective. The struggle for peace is a long one: it goes back thousands of years and has recorded achievements. In recent times, we can point to the positive impact of the early Ban the Bomb campaigns and the influence of the peace movement during the Vietnam War as two examples.

There is an assumption in the article that the peace movement is a homogenous entity. It is not. It is (and this is one of its strengths) composed of a variety of groups and individuals, drawn from many walks of life, with a variety of political perspectives and world views and with differing priorities and tactics.

No one would dispute that the majority of people in countries like Australia supported the Gulf War. However, the author's statement that "the obvious conclusion" from this that the peace movement "must be transformed" is neither obvious nor informed.

In Australia — and our experience was not unique — protests were organised when the first warships left for the Persian Gulf in the third week of August 1990 and continued until the ground war concluded. Peace and community groups in coalition are continuing to campaign on Middle East issues and an enquiry into the Gulf War will be held at the end of August this year.

The peace movement used every campaigning tool possible — from work in Parliament House to work in the streets — and hundreds upon thousands of Australians took part in activities including church services, street marches, candlelight vigils, lobbying, writing letters, buying advertising space in newspapers and so forth. On January 19, at least a quarter of a million Australians took part in rallies and marches against the war. Genuine, ordinary decency triumphed over the juggernaut of lies.

All this was achieved despite the fact that the peace movement had to contend with outright lies by governments and the majority of the media. Claims that sanctions would not work and that diplomatic efforts to find a negotiated solution had been exhausted were two obvious examples. These lies convinced many Australians, who believed that the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was wrong, that there was no alternative to resolve the situation except war.

Disinformation and censorship

At the same time, the censorship of news and disinformation practiced by the United States was repeated in our country, making discussion of the issues difficult and obscuring their complexity. The views and actions of the peace movement received little coverage in the mass media.

Academics in the media were subjected to smear campaigns when their objective analysis did not coincide with Government rhetoric and war fervour. Our anti-Gulf War group in Sydney lodged a protest with the Press Council over an incident in which a peace rally of thousands received a few lines buried on inside pages while a pro-war rally of under 100 people got front page coverage with two large pictures!

At a teach-in organised by the peace movement, a member of the governing Labor Party presented a paper and then responded to questions and discussions for over two hours without once mentioning the word “oil”.

Australians were **never** told, for example, that the US Congress voted only 50 to 48 in favour of the war; they were never told that the US bases in our country were far more important to the US military than the three warships Australia sent to the Gulf.

Inaccurate

To suggest that the peace movement has been guilty of “negative slogan-mongering” is both inaccurate and offensive. Where has the author been all these years? The peace movement has been making the links between disarmament and development, between peace and social justice, for jobs and economic development through conversion and much more for decades. This is the “affirmative action of many dimensions” which he is calling for but

somehow has not noticed has been happening.

The author says “co-existence has become a key factor” in the world (as though peaceful co-existence has just been thought of!) and speaks “of a post-cold war era”. From our perspective, this has a Eurocentric flavour that worries many of us in this part of the world.

Asia-Pacific region

Militarily and strategically, the Asia-Pacific region remains substantially the same. We are confronted by an intransigent United States determined to maintain its military, economic and political dominance in our region. Countries around the area are increasing their military expenditure at the expense of their people. Japan is a major player in an escalating regional conventional arms race.

More menacing still is the presence of thousands of nuclear warheads in our seas and the introduction of new cruise missiles by the US to “compensate” for the INF cuts. Despite many calls, no negotiations are taking place to eliminate or even limit naval nuclear arms.

There is no withdrawal of the US maritime strategy which foresees an early escalation to nuclear weapons in the event of heightened tension. The combination of no controls and aggressive strategies means that the Pacific is still a nuclear powder keg. The situation on the Korean peninsula is terrifying.

The Australian Government is developing its “new militarism”, spending billions on armaments and assuming the role of policeman of the south Pacific. Increased arms sales in the region contribute to both increased regional tensions and insecurity as well as to development of a domestic military-industrial complex with all the reactionary political implications that inevitably accompany such militarisation of a society.

The current campaign in Australia against the arms trade and a series of arms bazaars shows how uninformed many of the criticisms made by the author really are.

This campaign has involved widespread research into the role of companies and governments (including the publication of a 130 page book which includes information on 270 companies involved in the arms trade). It includes information kits on Australian arms exports arming repressive regimes, on the impoverishment caused in the poor countries of our region by the arms trade, the negative impact of the arms trade on the environment, conversion of arms manufacture to create more jobs and more socially useful products, a Christian perspective on the arms trade, and much more.

Grass roots campaign

The campaign is a grass roots one, involving campaigning in local communities and through peace groups, trade unions, women’s organisations, churches and religious orders, environmental and student bodies. At the same time, the companies involved have been contacted, links consolidated

with organisations in recipient countries in the region, and State and Federal Parliaments have been contacted in a number of ways. It is a campaign aimed at formal decision-making levels but is also based on the people, where we believe the strength is and where, as democrats, we believe the decision-making power ultimately lies.

We know this campaign is in no way unique or special. Indeed, to develop it we have found the support and information of peace movements around the world invaluable.

What part of these activities would the author of your lead article want "transformed" and to what? Perhaps the writer will tell us that s/he merely wants to provoke a discussion of the ideas presented. Of course we should (and do) discuss such matters in the peace movement but we must also get on with the job because far from the danger of war being eliminated, it remains very real.

The author suggests that the peace movement is not well-resourced. This is true but the assumption that this invalidates its work is not correct. Australia is probably typical — major effective campaigns are waged and our peace movement played its part in the world wide campaigns which contributed to the signing of the INF and START agreements. Yet we probably raise and spend in one year less than one per cent of what the Australian Government spends each day on so-called "defence".

The author also suggests we must campaign "not **after** an event but **before** that event takes place". To be aware of and responsive to political and military trends and changes is obviously necessary. It is not a new idea in peace movements but we could certainly become better at it. However, we will do well not to over estimate. We, as did others, campaigned for years against US pressure and interference in Central America but this did not stop the invasion of Panama.

Effective methods

Traditional methods of campaigning for peace — which the author suggests are out of date — are still effective and are used with great creativity by peace movements. They are also methods which reach out to the ordinary people, a factor which is extremely important. The point is not to dismiss them but to realise that there is no **one** way to work for peace. We have to use all the methods open to us and find the appropriate forms for each particular campaign. If we spend all our time in the corridors of power, we become isolated from the people; if we spend all our time on the streets, we become divorced from government and other decision-making bodies.

The deep distaste among many Australians following the carnage and suffering of the Gulf War and its aftermath is the nursery from which a stronger peace movement is growing. We need that movement. The author may think that the old enemies of peace have given up their ambitions. S/he is wrong, dangerously wrong, if s/he does. Those responsible for aggression show no real signs of being persuaded that they should scrap their armaments and

start looking after the hungry, the sick, the unemployed and the uneducated.

“Star Wars” proceeds apace, 70 per cent of the world’s nuclear weapons remain, naval nuclear weapons are untouched, conventional weapons arsenals are growing, poverty, injustice and repression have not been overcome, environmental disasters increase. We cannot survive the 1990s without a stronger peace movement.

Marxism and morality

by Laurie Kiek

The purpose of this article is to draw together some Marxist views on morality, elaborate them and draw some conclusions. This is a necessary practical exercise although it is a philosophical one.

Many people have become cynical about appeals on moral grounds. Soldiers have been called upon to make sacrifices in the name of “patriotism” when it turned out that the “cause” for which they fought was the enrichment of the armament makers and the oppression of small nations. Workers have been called upon to accept wage cuts “for the sake of the unemployed” but in fact for the greater profit of the employers. Women have been called upon to forego their right to work “to preserve the family” but in fact to keep the costs of child-care down and minimise the taxes on the wealthy. “Charity” has often been the throwing of a few crumbs from the exploiters to their victims.

The ruling class is more and more openly flouting the moral rules it lays down for others. It joins the anarchist in proclaiming the “rights” of the individual to do what s/he pleases, to avoid tax, publish pornography and avoid any scrutiny of its corporate swindling. Religion, the supposed mainstay of morality, has often continued to purvey a subservient attitude to authority and a reactionary political stance although there are notable exceptions. Some have drawn the conclusion that morality is simply idealist humbug, not worthy of scientific investigation.

Yet the socialist movement has always reflected the moral indignation of the masses about the corruption, injustice and hypocrisy of capitalist society. It has called on people to work and make sacrifices for the benefit of humanity. In practice, Marxists have been among the most self-sacrificing and bravest people in the struggle against fascism, war and the struggle for national independence. Yet even the most oppressed person can gain personal advantage by siding with the oppressor and many have done so.

It is time that Marxists examined the question of socialist morality, partly

because some people who claimed to be Marxists failed to observe Marxist morality, engaging in corrupt practices, self-promotion and, in some cases, dreadful crimes against humanity. The conclusion could be drawn that socialist morality is equally humbug, a device for deceiving ordinary mortals and persuading them to behave in particular ways.

Yet it cannot be denied that some notion of morality had and still has a pervading influence on human behaviour. Even those people who themselves have no intention of abiding by popular concepts of morality find it expedient to pretend to do so. For example, the United States President who authorised the invasion of Grenada and Panama found it expedient to use moral rules about the “rights of small nations” to justify his actions in the Persian Gulf.

We have to enquire, therefore, where this mass consciousness comes from and whether it has any basis in reality.

When one speaks of “mass consciousness” it must be recognised that the mass is composed of individuals who differ in their ideas about what is right and what is not. This is especially true in societies with different social strata and in which there is social mobility between groups. Morality is very much an internalised notion in each person.

What is morality?

What is the phenomenon to which the word “morality” refers?

The word “morality” is derived from the Latin “*mores*” meaning the rules of behaviour which were accepted as right and proper in Roman society approximately up to the time of Cicero, when the predominance of slavery and empire began to destroy the rules appropriate to yeoman farmers. The rules were binding lest the Gods be angered and people come to a bad end. Religion (the word “*religio*” meant “to bind”) and morality were thus connected.

For some, even today, the concept has not proceeded beyond the notion of obeying rules of behaviour. The rules supposedly are written down in the Analects of Confucius, the Bible, the Koran or similar writings by wise men, often supposedly inspired by God. Morality, they think, is a kind of Faustian bargain in reverse. Obedience to the rules ensures a good end, in this world and the next, whilst disobedience will lead to punishment.

A development of this theme is the notion of “natural law” and “natural justice”, now embedded in the legal system. This seeks to ground morality in the biological nature of human beings and their relation to the environment. The rewards and punishments for conforming or not with “natural law” are conceived as being natural consequences.

This view has a certain plausibility in relation to those moral rules which relate solely to biological functions and humanity’s relation to nature. For example, it might be argued that the mindless destruction of trees brings on the punishment of soil degradation. However, “natural law” fails miserably in relation to rules which have to do with social relations in a complex society. For example, it is difficult to find a punishment which follows naturally for the

undetected swindler.

Divorcing morality from its social context creates insoluble problems. Without wishing to denigrate the general wisdom of any rules derived from wise men or good judges, it must be said that the only rules which are clearly defined are very simple and even these are the subject of hot debate in their application. For example, the rule “thou shalt not kill” has raised all kinds of arguments about self-defence, executions, abortion and so forth, not to mention warfare.

The concept of morality and its application to social practice goes back to prehistoric times. Frederick Engels, in his book *Anti-Duhring*, applied Marx’s historical method to a study of morality. So did Kautsky in his *Foundations of Christianity*. They penetrated beyond the appearance that morality is simply a set of eternal rules and beliefs. They sought and found its social essence. Further information since their writing has not altered the general thrust of their work but it is now possible to develop their views further.

Sociability

Some intelligent feral animals, such as baboons, which live in groups, behave in a manner which creates solidarity in the group — sharing some food, sharing play, containing aggression, mutual grooming and the like. This trait we shall call **sociability**. It comprises those traits which enable the group to cohere. It is a necessary characteristic of group life — animal or human — for without it the group will not survive. Human beings have added some sociable traits to those exhibited by feral animals by virtue of the ability to communicate. For example, telling the truth, showing compassion and keeping promises. Most of the so-called “Ten Commandments” and the “golden rule” are sociable characteristics, necessary to group life.

Sociability is learned by methods which are familiar to educators, psychologists and parents. They include conditioning by rewards and punishments, identification with respected others such as parents, leading peers, siblings and group leaders. The desire to be accepted into the group is a main motivation for the individual to learn sociability. The family is the first instrument.

Sociability is indeed the foundation upon which morality can be constructed but it is not yet morality. Indeed sociability is, in some cases, in contradiction to morality.

Engels, in his pamphlet *The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man*, showed how humankind’s social and intellectual development went hand in hand with the use of tools and speech. This increase in possibilities increased social ties but also the range of possible behaviours. Every human society of necessity walks upon three legs — the production of the means of living (food, shelter, etc), the reproduction of human beings, and the social relations which are involved in both.

In every social formation of which we have knowledge, enormous social pressures are brought to bear to ensure that these processes are maintained.

The first of these is force of habit and imitation — the particular way of life takes on the appearance of a natural order of things. People's intentions are shaped by their language, tools and culture. Conformity is rewarded and deviance punished by an individual's peers. Every society has some method of rewarding and punishing departure from its laws and customs.

Yet human beings often contemplate and sometimes perform deviant behaviour, especially if it is possible to avoid the consequences. Because human beings are somewhat rational and cannot always be externally controlled, reasons have to be found for behaving as required and most societies spend time trying to convince the young of these reasons.

Traditional Australian Aboriginal society produced explanations as to why its members should conform to the eternal scheme. The mythology of the *Dreamtime* contains important facts and injunctions for survival, cast in poetic form. The *Dreamtime* myths also contain totemic rules for the preservation of the gene pool and imposing rights and duties in relations between people. The mythology and the rules were sacred and deeply felt as part of the identity of the individual.

We have now arrived at something similar to the Roman mores, something more than mere sociability, important though sociability may be. We have arrived at a set of rules which depend upon a set of principled beliefs, which are deeply felt by the individual and which may properly be called morality.

Morality and society in history

In some parts of the world, people were able to produce more than enough food and other things to maintain their existence. The creation of a surplus created the possibility of expropriating that surplus by the enslavement of some people by others. In Athens, for example, slavery developed fairly slowly and did not at first disturb the Olympian cosmology and ancient moral rules of Athenian society. However, slavery did create a leisured class which had the possibility of examining all kinds of questions, from mathematics to morality.

The new rationality carried with it a threat to the established beliefs about the Gods and a possibility of future development of science and technology. Furthermore, a social need was arising for a new set of rules and an ideology to sustain them in the moral area. Socrates began to develop them. He produced, among many other things, a rational basis for slavery. Justice, he said, consisted in each thing being used for its natural purpose. Slaves were inferior beings and should be subordinate and do the work so their masters would be free to do what they did best, think. Therefore it was just for a slave to be a slave. The ruling elite was not quite ready for Socrates and he was condemned for corrupting the youth, lest turmoil overtake the city. But Plato and Aristotle continued the work and set up the study of ethics as an academic pursuit.

The ideological side of morality has varied in different times and places. Even when, in European society, it came under the general umbrella of Chris-

tian doctrine, it continued to reflect the differing needs of the social formation and especially its ruling class.

The coincidence of the Reformation and the rise of capitalism was not accidental. Although this is a most involved question, it cannot be denied that the Protestant (Calvinist, Lutheran, Huguenot and English Puritan) ethic emphasised the virtues of thrift, hard work and strict commercial integrity and appealed, in the first place, to merchants and traders. This statement is not intended to deny the dynastic, national and other strands in the Reformation, most of which were also connected with the rise of capitalism, within the framework of the decadent feudal order.

Changes in ideology are not simple questions, related only to the economic needs of a moment. However, morality, along with other cultural phenomena, law, and systems of government constitute a “superstructure” on day-to-day economic life and react with it to produce change in every section of society. Generally speaking, there has been a time lag in adapting the superstructure to new needs.

Variable

Not only has the ideological side of morality been variable at different times and places but the rules also have been variable. Even the “same” rule has taken on different meanings. Engels gave the example of the rule “thou shalt not steal”. This rule would be almost empty of meaning in traditional communal societies, such as those of the Australian Aborigines, for there was very little property and a strong commitment to community sharing. When accumulation became possible, the meaning of property included other human beings — slaves and even wives. In due time, the social formation of slavery gave way, in Europe, to a feudal social formation and property took on a new aspect. Both the land and the people were linked by mutual obligations which legitimised the feudal lord’s appropriation of most of the surplus but did not give him unlimited rights over the land or over people.

Capitalism, in due time, dispensed with the obligations but not with the appropriation. Indeed, it allowed the direct stealing of land from the “natives” abroad and the peasants at home by redefining “ownership”, making it absolute, in the hands of the former fiefs. The working class in capitalist society tends to see the most abhorrent form of stealing as being corporate swindling by the financial oligarchy. To those with dawning socialist consciousness, the appropriation of the fruits of another’s labour is itself a serious form of stealing.

This example illustrates the point that moral rules have a class content but not only a class content. There has been a continuity, just as there has been in arts and law. Each new social formation refashioned the human heritage appropriately for new technical and social conditions. The moral heritage continued to include some notions of “sociability” on which it depended for its mass acceptance. The concrete form of moral rules necessarily enlarged the meaning of “sociability” to include the greater part of larger society but also necessarily distorted the meaning of “sociability”, especially in oppressive

societies.

For example, some notion of equality is implicit in sociability — others have rights equal with mine. The rules of Moses imply equal obligations within the tribe. This notion of equality was extended to all men by Jesus in his parable of the Good Samaritan. The internationalisation of the Roman world had made this thinkable. But slave society interpreted this to mean equality in the next world — not in this one. Feudal society, on the other hand, allowed the idea of equal enforcement of rights within the framework of rights and privileges established in the system. These rights could only be established at the expense of the previous slave-master who had to relinquish his absolute possession of his slaves.

When the rising capitalist class challenged the feudal system, it did so in the name of equality, equality of legal privilege, but failed to include equality of health care, education and many other aspects of life. The serf only gained legal equality at the expense of his right to land and a livelihood. Today, colonial and working people can only gain equality at the expense of the “rights” of the wealthy in the market place where “votes” are counted in dollars.

Summing up, it may be said that historical materialism makes the proposition that the moral ideology of a society is at once limited and inspired by the material life of society. The enduring elements in morality depend upon “sociability” as its base, but moralities of class societies necessarily contradict the rules of “sociability”.

Marx and Marxists on morality

It is against this background that the scathing attack by Marx and Engels on bourgeois morality in the *Communist Manifesto* should be read:

“... it is a selfish misconception that ... transforms into a law of nature and reason, the social forms emerging from your present form of production...”

Lenin in *Tasks of the Youth Leagues* put his position bluntly: “We reject any morality based on extra-human and extra-class concepts... We say that our morality is entirely subordinated to the interests of the proletariat’s class struggle.”

Or Lenin again, in the *Economic Content of Narodism*: “One cannot deny the justice of the remark that in Marxism there is not a grain of ethics from beginning to end: theoretically it subordinates the “ethical” standpoint to the principle of causality, in practice it reduces it to the class struggle.”

In current Marxist writing, we have Ilyenkov: “There is not the possibility of creating within Marxism a special subsystem dealing with moral values, existing autonomously in relation to the remaining scientific system of concepts.”

The rejection of ethics as a separate study involves the incorporation of morality as an integral part of human thinking and acting. Certainly almost every human decision is taken in a social environment and by a person who is largely a creature of his or her time and place. But Marx did not accept what he called “vulgar materialism” (positivism) which held that people are totally

pre-programmed. The moral questions remain in every situation — what ought I to do and why should I do it?

People of the same social category do not share exactly the same self-image and “conscience” for their life experiences are not quite the same and they do not have the same physical and mental characteristics. However, conscience is the product of interaction between a person and society.

(Here we have omitted a rather long and technical section of the original article dealing with the history of the philosophy of “ought” and a dialectical approach to the psychology and action of conscience and guilt. Readers can obtain this material in photocopied form from the author if they send money to cover copying and postage. Any excess money will go to the SPA — Ed.)

Change is continuous

Marxists assert that change is continuous: they do not accept a static view of a society and its morals. Marx’s analysis of history showed that human achievement tends to be cumulative. Very few inventions or new thoughts are lost. New ones, too, tend to be built out of the elements of the old, even though they often negate the old. Einstein would not have been possible without Newton or Newton without Ptolemy.

Every new social formation requires a new morality, a new ideology, necessary to its material and social functioning. Creation of such a morality may begin before the new social formation comes fully into being. That is how Ilyenkov’s objective of incorporating morality into a scientific system of concepts is accomplished.

There seems little doubt that the social formation of capitalism has come close to accomplishing its historic course and new moral imperatives are coming into being, new in the sense that they combine the old in new ways and with new applications. The new is being created in intense struggle, the struggle of working people and oppressed nations against the forces of great wealth and concentrated power. That is the meaning of Lenin’s statement that “in practice (Marxist) morality is subordinated to the class struggle.” The meaning of “being obliged to submit to ‘necessity’” is not just individual but also social --submission to the true imperatives as a member of a world-wide human race.

The full nature of the social formation that is emerging has not yet been seen. However, scientific studies based on the experience of both the capitalist and socialist world have demonstrated that some new necessities for humanity exist. They include:

- ★ The necessity to preserve the planet from human destruction, especially by war.
- ★ The necessity for mutual respect between people of different cultures.
- ★ The necessity for masses of people, especially the working people, the producers of the means of living, to be involved in decisions about what they do.
- ★ The necessity for a form of collective control over the economic decisions that are made.

There is no conflict between such a morality of peace and humanity and the need for resolute class struggle. The one implies the other. It is precisely the imperialists who wish to usurp the decision-making power to themselves, to pollute the planet, and to organise the economy for their own enrichment and, in the process, set nation against nation, destroying the individual culture of each, packaging all in a coca-cola bottle.

A new morality

A new morality has to be fought for as part of the ideological development of humanity. It is not a luxury we cannot afford but a necessity for human survival and further development. It therefore must also include:

★ The necessity for unity of all the forces which support the new ideas, and the international solidarity of all these forces.

It follows from what has been said above that sometimes these moral requirements may contradict elementary sociability. The rich, powerful and greedy will not mend their ways by people asking nicely for them to do so. Every effective way must be used to diminish and finally abolish the power which necessarily promotes evil, as we have defined it, but we must also be on guard that in the process we do not promote the very evils we seek to remedy.

The new morality will only be brought to reality by resolute action by millions of people, inspired by their own needs but also by belief in the "rightness" of what they do.

Petty-Bourgeois Ideology

by Gus Hall

This article by Gus Hall, National Chairman of the Communist Party USA, was first published in the April 1991 issue of *Political Affairs*, the theoretical journal of the CPUSA.

"In between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat there is another class of people, who incline first this way and then the other. This has always been the case in all revolutions, and it is absolutely impossible in capitalist society, in which the proletariat and bourgeoisie form two hostile camps, for intermediary sections not to exist between them. The existence of these waverers is historically inevitable and, unfortunately, these elements, who do not know themselves on whose side they will fight tomorrow, will exist for quite some time."

V.I. Lenin

The class struggle between the exploiting capitalist class and the exploited working class is the dominant and determining factor in a capitalist society. This does not mean, however, that all the people fit into the two main classes. There are sectors that do not fit into the primary class structure. And there are rather large groups whose economic status, in one way or another, is influenced by the struggle between the two main classes. Some refer to these as "the middle class". In the attempt to blur and distort the class reality, capitalist ideology works to convince society that skilled workers belong to a middle class.

In the world revolutionary movement, the most commonly used designation to describe this sector is the expression "petty-bourgeoisie".

The relative size of the petty-bourgeois sectors has increased, both in the

socialist and capitalist world. There are greater numbers in schools, laboratories, offices, small business and government bureaucracies. There are more doctors, lawyers, social workers and professionals of all kinds.

The growth of the petty-bourgeois influence on society has been facilitated by developments and advances in the fields of science, technology and communications. Because of these developments, the number of workers in communications, the sciences, the service sector and workers who do not work in mass production industries has also greatly multiplied. They are not petty-bourgeois. They are workers.

However, their lack of a direct relationship to conditions existing in mass production industries does influence their thought patterns. Because of the greater number of these workers it is necessary to increase our attention to these workers because of their numbers and their thought patterns.

Petty-bourgeois elements, with petty-bourgeois thought patterns, have become dominant in some of the socialist countries. They also have a bigger influence in some of the Communist and Workers' Parties in capitalist countries. They are the main source of right opportunism as well as of downgrading the role of the working class. They tend to support ideas and policies that move toward liquidating communist parties — ideologically, politically and organisationally.

The effects of this influence have surfaced in most of the socialist countries, especially in recent Communist Party conferences in which the number of workers has steadily decreased. In some cases they are nearly absent. The decline of working class internationalism and the rise of classless nationalism are a direct result of the increase in the role of the petty-bourgeoisie.

Negative developments

In the world socialist and communist movements, the negative developments can be traced directly to the growth of the petty-bourgeois sector and the relative decline in the role of the working class sector.

Some of the problems and weaknesses that led to the setbacks in Eastern Europe can be traced to the fact that the workers were slowly pushed to the sidelines, while the petty-bourgeois elements moved in to take over and monopolise the leading positions, in the governments and in the parties. Increasingly, the petty-bourgeois elements became the dominant force in those societies.

It is no accident that, when communist parties and socialist governments were restructured, one of the first steps they invariably took was to disband the Party clubs in the industries. This is an example of the petty-bourgeoisie's fear of the working class and its attempts to downgrade and diminish the influence and power of the workers.

In the socialist countries, the main support base for the concept of "privatisation" comes from the petty-bourgeois sector. The main source of corruption is in this sector. The greatest force pushing extreme nationalism and sec-

ession in the Soviet Republics are petty-bourgeois elements. These problems are directly related to the concept that under advanced socialism, workers have no special role.

Thought patterns

What is the nature of this sector that propels them to take backward, opportunistic positions? The main characteristic of the petty-bourgeoisie is that it does not have its own distinct ideology. It wavers between and borrows from the ideology of the two main classes. As a result, it is an unstable, unreliable force.

To workers, socialism — including its collective nature — is a natural solution to their problems which are collective in nature. There are no individual solutions to the collective nature of class exploitation.

In order to support socialism consistently, the petty-bourgeoisie must accept and adopt the collective experience of class exploitation because it does not have this experience in its own life style.

During periods when the working class movement is on the upswing, petty-bourgeois elements tend to lean politically and ideologically on the working class. Conversely, in periods when the working class is forced to deal with setbacks and difficulties, the petty-bourgeoisie seeks to find ways of adapting ideologically and politically to the positions and views of monopoly capital.

In such periods, it becomes more critical of the working class movements and adopts class collaborationist positions. Within its ranks, opportunism and accommodation replace concepts of militancy and struggle. And because they have a weak and wavering class partisanship and easily shift sides, they tend to be dishonest and deceptive about their positions.

Elaborate theories

In difficult periods, when the petty-bourgeois sectors lose confidence in the working class, they tend to become anti-working class. They often create elaborate theories to justify their anti-working class positions — mainly that the working class is not the leading force in the struggles for human progress. They accuse the working class of being influenced by the very weaknesses they suffer from — opportunism and capitulation.

Because the petty-bourgeoisie in a class society floats between the main classes, they also tend to float ideologically and politically. To evade the question of which side they are on ideologically, they declare all ideology null and void. As a cover for their real positions, they use a great deal of fakery and deception to give the impression that they are neutral.

For example, they try to appear evenhanded by arguing: “On the one hand. And, on the other hand.” But in the ideological struggle over ideas, there is no room for such a position. There is a right and wrong position and one cannot equate them. Any attempt to do so is to cover up support for the wrong pos-

ition. When supporting what is right there is no need for cover-up.

Petty-bourgeois forces view a strong, pro-working class position as too partisan, sectarian and even dogmatic, while they see their own wavering positions as flexible, creative and democratic.

Those who view things through the eyes of the petty-bourgeoisie swing and sway. They go through periods of optimistic highs and pessimistic lows. Because of their position in a class society, they do not have class logic or class consciousness. They do not view things from a clear class perspective and of course they do not have class discipline. Working through, in and for the collective is not part of their life experience and thus not a natural part of their make-up. Under pressure, the petty-bourgeoisie tends to place personal interests and needs above those of the class struggle and the Party.

During periods when the working class movements are in a decline, petty-bourgeois elements see signs of capitalist strength where there is none. They reject the idea that capitalism as a system is in a long-range general crisis. And thus they also reject the concept of the inevitable decay of capitalism and its inevitable replacement by socialism. This, in turn, leads to a rejection of the fact that history has a general, overall progressive direction.

Petty-bourgeois thought patterns are not rooted in a study of the laws of society. These forces have greater difficulty in understanding the subjective processes in society. They also have difficulty in distinguishing the short-term from long-term processes. For them, short-term setbacks become dead end, permanent setbacks.

Role of the working class

All these difficulties in petty-bourgeois thinking stem from their underestimation and downgrading of the role of the working class and their inclination to replace this role with non-working class forces. When they cannot belittle the whole class, they try to divide the class in a number of ways.

They downgrade the role of workers in basic and mass production industries and upgrade workers in the service and office sectors. They minimise workers in mass production, whose class position is sharper, and play up the role of workers who work more as individuals. They downgrade workers who are the direct producers of corporate profits and upgrade workers who are in the sectors of industry that distribute the products and some of the profits.

The thought patterns and characteristics of classes are rooted in their relationship to the economic structure. Workers' thought patterns and their class consciousness are rooted in the mass nature of their exploitation. Petty-bourgeois thought patterns are shaped by the individualistic nature of their jobs. The main element of petty-bourgeois thinking is opportunism, finding ways of accommodating to the constant pressures of the enemy, accommodating to class exploitation, to racism, to policies of imperialism.

Thus the main characteristics of the petty-bourgeoisie are: individualism, lack of working class consciousness, a weak commitment to honesty and

principles, a wavering sense of responsibility to the interests of workers, inability to be part of and work with collectives, ignoring and evading the discipline of collectives, self-centeredness and arrogance.

Petty-bourgeois ideology is very deceptive because it tries to maintain some working class features, but mainly as a cover for its own petty-bourgeois thought patterns. These thought patterns are more prevalent among non-working class sections of the people — generally the more middle class, professionals and academics — whose relationships in the workplace are not as collective, whose interests on the job are served by one-to-one relationships and where exploitation is not as direct.

However, petty-bourgeois ideology is not limited to non-working class sectors. Their influence extends even to the working class. And, furthermore, not all middle-class, petty-bourgeois elements are influenced by these non-class thought patterns.

However, petty-bourgeois pressures are the strongest among workers whose jobs are not collective, where the exploitation is more indirect and where the job is not directly related to corporate profits, where they do not confront the class enemy directly and daily.

Petty-bourgeois radicalism

Petty-bourgeois ideology and its effects have always been a big factor in the United States and thus a significant factor in people's movements and in the life of all left and liberal organisations. And it has always been a factor in the Communist Party. One of the forms this takes is petty-bourgeois radicalism. When these petty-bourgeois forces lose confidence in the working class, they substitute individual for united class action. They substitute efforts to organise mass actions for radical sounding rhetoric.

Petty-bourgeois elements tend to counterpose other struggles to working class struggles. They tend to place what is called "universal interests" above and in opposition to working class interests. They do this not because they are confused, but because this is part of their attempt to denigrate the role of the working class.

The contradictions between the two main classes are reflected within all nations, all nationalities and all peoples. All working class sections are a part of and make their main contribution to human progress as members of the working class.

The only revolutionary class

As is the case with everything in life, the history of the revolutionary movement is a history of change and development. It is a history of change and development in class relations, in science, theory and philosophy. But this does not mean it is a history of liquidating the past and starting from ground zero.

The history of the revolutionary movement is a history of rejecting all ideas

that are based on liquidation of the class struggle. The revolutionary movement has maintained the basic concept that as long as there exists a society based on class exploitation and class profits, there will be opposing class interests and the class struggle between them.

Based on the class nature of capitalism, the working class movement has fought for the concept that the only truly revolutionary class is the working class. This truism applies both in the struggle against capitalism and in the building of socialism.

Now it appears that the leadership of the Soviet Union has become aware of this flaw in the direction of their developments and has taken steps to correct it. In a recent speech, President Mikhail Gorbachev made an official apology specifically to the working class. He said: "We are guilty before the working class. I think all of us and I personally have to take responsibility." Gorbachev followed this with concrete measures, setting up a system of workers' committees:

The strictest workers' control will be imposed on the movement of food and consumer goods on all channels from the producer to the consumer to cut hoarding and spoiling of goods, theft and speculation.

These measures were made necessary by the increasing influence of petty-bourgeois elements in Soviet society, the corruption and backward ideas they inject into government, the Party, the mass media and society in general.

The working class of the Soviet Union is called upon to defend and, yes, to save socialism.

The struggle against petty-bourgeois ideology is not with the petty-bourgeoisie itself. The struggle is against its thought patterns and to win them over to the side of the working class. This struggle is an integral feature of the class struggle between the two main classes.

Perestroika in the Soviet Union

by Slava Tetekhin

In this article, specially written for *The African Communist*, Slava Tetekhin, a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and a consultant for the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, considers the significance and implications of perestroika.

Perestroika in the Soviet Union arouses wide interest in the world. The national democratic revolution in South Africa is also the focus of attention. Some observers consider the processes of democratic renewal in the Soviet Union and South Africa to be the most dynamic in the world at present. There are, though, also many expressions of concern. Do the changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe represent revolution or counter-revolution? Do they encourage the development of socialism or a reversion to capitalism? In what way will these changes influence the democratic movement in South Africa?

The answer to these questions would be incomplete without a brief review of how the Soviet Union emerged. Capitalism started to develop in Russia rather late. Serfdom was abolished only in 1861 and the absolute monarchy survived until 1917. Capitalist development was checked by the outbreak of World War I in 1914 which later turned into a still more devastating Civil War that lasted till 1921. Russia's economy was completely ruined and the country started building not from zero but, in a sense, from minus zero.

The proletariat that had just started to emerge was either destroyed during World War I and the Civil War or it became declassed as a result of industrial ruin. By the time of the revolution, the population of Russia was still dominated by the peasantry which comprised some 80 per cent of the population.

Russia was very far from the classical, highly developed society on the basis of which, according to Marx and Engels, the transition to socialism should be started.

New historic process

Did the Bolsheviks know they were initiating a new historic process under such unfavourable conditions? Yes, they did. But there was no adventurism in what they started and the popular support for the 1917 October Revolution proved this. The conditions for revolution were mature and the Bolsheviks' task was to lead and to guide it. Was there an alternative? Yes, there was. Power was about to be seized by the counter-revolutionary dictatorship which in due time might have passed along the "regular" path of capitalist development. But this would have slowed down the country's social development for many decades.

The Revolution of 1917 was accomplished in a country that represented a weak link in the chain of international capitalism. That made it easier for the Bolsheviks to seize power. But the late capitalist development impeded the task of building a new society.

At its very beginning, the Revolution suffered a great loss. In 1924, Lenin died. He had just started to create a long-term concept of a new society based on the situation as it was after the Revolution and the Civil War. Lenin's view of the Russia of the future was distorted by his successors. The strategy of placing prime emphasis on the development of heavy industry, to strengthen the country's defence potential (in view of the approaching new world war) was correct. But it was carried out at the expense of forced agricultural collectivisation and the virtual robbery of the peasantry. The consequences of agricultural destruction are still having their impact on our country today.

The administrative command system over the economy and over society at large had begun to take shape. The nationalisation of industry was a decision forced upon the Bolsheviks through acts of sabotage by big business. But the nationalisation process in Stalin's model did not give the means of production to the people. On the contrary, it alienated the means of production from the immediate producers. At the same time, working people were cut off from real political power. Stalin's purges took the lives of thousands of the most capable people. The Soviets, the organs of popular power, had power in theory. In practice, power was increasingly held by the bureaucracy.

The German fascist invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 once again resulted in tremendous destruction of the economy. 27 million people were killed. During the space of a mere 30 years (1914 to 1945), the Civil War and two world wars brought total devastation to our country.

Historical potential

But even in this new society, so remote from the Marxist ideal, socialism began to prove its historical potential. Famine and unemployment were done

away with. Free education and free health care were introduced. The Soviet Union began to take up an important position in the world economy.

Heavy industry had been developed within an extremely short period of time and this made it possible to defeat the industrial might of fascist Germany. It should be stressed that the victory of the Soviet Union in World War II was to a great extent a technological victory. Without belittling the mass heroism of the Red Army, by the end of the war the Soviet army had more sophisticated weapons than the Nazis. In 1961 the Soviet Union was the first country in the world to achieve manned flight into space and that was only 16 years after a devastating war.

By the middle of the 1960s, the faults of Stalin's model of socialism had already been felt. The attempt at perestroika (restructuring) by the then Prime Minister Kosygin was confronted by the bureaucracy, headed at that time by Leonid Brezhnev. For the next 18 years, stagnation and irresponsibility ruled. That meant not only marking time but going backwards. Stagnation destroyed even what had been achieved under Stalin's model of socialism.

And what about the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU)? During the Stalin purges in the 1930s, communists, leaders of the revolution and of the first years of socialist construction, were killed. The Communist Party, in the Leninist sense of its functions and tasks, was destroyed. It became part of the administrative command system. As such, it no longer needed the support of its social base — workers, peasants, intelligentsia.

It was the loss of this social base (and not primarily disappointment in Marxism and socialism, as some claim) that explains the unexpectedly rapid loss of leadership at the first sign of crisis by the Communist Parties in the East European countries. Some fraternal parties in Eastern Europe, to be frank, did try to start a process of perestroika already in the 1960s but their attempts were cut short by the leaders of Stalin's model of socialism.

Dogma or theory

The social sciences also have become major victims of Stalinism. A set of dogmas presented as "Marxism-Leninism" (but which had only a formal relation to this living and developing body of thought) constituted the ideological backbone of the system. Millions of people were, in fact, denied the knowledge of real Marxism-Leninism. Hence the stagnation in the theoretical understanding of modern developments and the confusion when faced with new tendencies. Hence, also, the related absurd accusation that Marx and Lenin did not foresee 100 and 150 years ago modern social processes. Marxism-Leninism was never intended to be a set of timeless dogmas.

The initial shock caused not so much by the collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe as by the collapse of our image of socialism is gradually wearing off. The shock ended the era of self-conceit and self-admiration that brought us to the crisis. Future developments may produce still greater problems, but it is already clear that one should have a calm and sound evaluation of the situation. And one should act.

If we recall the Russian proverb, more less analogous to the English one that “every cloud has a silver lining”, it is possible to point out at least two extremely important positive trends in modern developments.

1. The sharp rise in mass political awareness. Increasingly, the masses are realising that it is they who are the masters of their fortune and that it is they who would set history in motion.

2. The considerable increase in theoretical debate. What is particularly important is that the debate is going on at the grassroots level and not merely among professionals. Of course, the debate has produced a great variety of perspectives. One does, indeed, hear remarks like “Marxism is out of fashion” or “the socialist way is not for Russia”, which are a joy to the ears of Western propaganda, “proving the collapse of Communist ideology”. But it is exactly in the process of challenging such views at the grassroots level that a real theoretical understanding of the past and the direction for the future will develop.

Western propaganda

Today Western propaganda claims that Marxism has failed completely. There is nothing new in anti-communism. Attacks on Marxism began at its birth. “Throughout the civilised world the teachings of Marx evoke the utmost hostility and hatred of all bourgeois science (both official and liberal)”, wrote Lenin in 1908. In 1913 he stressed that bourgeois “science will not even hear of Marxism, declaring that it has been refuted and annihilated. Marx is attacked with equal zest by young scholars who are making a career by refuting socialism, and by decrepit elders who are preserving the tradition of all kinds of outworn systems.”

It is true that Marx and Engels did have notions which were incorrect, owing to the inadequacy of scientific knowledge at the time. It is true that they also had notions which were correct at the time but which are now no longer valid, owing to changed historic conditions. But in general their method retains its historic value.

One of the fundamental tenets of Marxist theory is that “the theoretical conclusions of Communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented or discovered by this or that reformer. They merely express in general terms actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from an historical movement going on before our very eyes”.

Marx and Engels never considered their views to be the ultimate truth. Engels wrote in *Anti-Duhring*: “... in all probability we are just about at the beginning of human history, and the generations that will put us right are likely to be far more numerous than those whose knowledge we, often enough with a considerable degree of contempt, have the opportunity to correct.”

It is clear now that the transition to socialism is not an easy thing. It will take much time. However, capitalism started in Italy in the 15th Century. The English bourgeois revolution occurred between 1640 and 1660. The great French Revolution started in 1789. The bourgeois revolution in Germany only

occurred in the middle of the last century. So it took capitalism nearly 500 years to triumph over feudalism. It would be pure idealism to suppose the transition from capitalism to socialism could be a smooth path, a triumphant ascent without a break. We ourselves invented a mythical image of a socialist society free of problems and crises. When confronted with problems, we rush to the opposite extreme.

In his work *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*, Engels wrote: "... wherever there is a revolutionary convulsion, there must be some social need in the background which is prevented by outworn institutions from satisfying itself... Every attempt at forcible repression will only bring it forth stronger, until it bursts its fetters. If, then, we have been beaten, we have nothing else to do but to begin again from the very beginning."

"Defeat" of socialism

To think that socialism is defeated and there is a future only for the capitalist way of production is as absurd as believing that the steam engine was the highest achievement of humankind. To think that humankind can make enormous qualitative leaps in science and technology and yet still accept eternal serfdom (even if in the shape of the "free" sale and purchase of labour) or still accept the existence of antagonistic classes with the minority flourishing at the expense of the majority — this is to deny the possibility of progress to humankind.

The problem is not with socialism or Marx. Marx systematised what had been achieved in the three most advanced countries in the 19th Century: German philosophy, English political economy and French socialism. In the middle of the last century, the historical limits of capitalism, a social model built on the exploitation of one person by another, became evident. Capitalism, to be sure, still retains possibilities for self-adaptation and renewal. But this does not mean that, from the longer, historical point of view, its prospects for survival have improved.

The capitalist propaganda machine tries to assert that the historic competition between the two systems (capitalism and socialism) is over, as if the end of history will arrive with the year 2000. In fact, we are still only at the beginnings of this competition. Temporary setbacks do not change the general process of history.

How then should one view the complex and painful changes that are now taking place in the Soviet Union and other East European countries? I believe this is the beginning of the transition period from Stalin's model of socialism, which has already outlived itself (and which was a blind alley from the start), to a model that will, to a much greater extent, reflect the evolution of humankind to a more just and harmonious social order. The roots of the problem are not in Marxism-Leninism but in the departure from its principles and in the failure to develop its theoretical and practical foundations.

We must get rid of the idea that socialism is the property of the Soviet Union or other socialist countries. We must drop the notion that Lenin is owned by

the Soviet Union and that it is only for us to judge the correctness of his conclusions. Marx, Engels and Lenin belong to all the people of the world. It is up to humankind to decide on the possible ways of developing their ideas.

Soviet model

It is good that we are getting rid of the idea that the Soviet model of socialism is the only possible one. It is precisely this notion that has opened the way to our class antagonists to crow about "the decline of socialism". Each country will find its own way to socialism, according to the particular historical conditions it confronts. On the one hand, this is likely to make the transition period from the old to the new society more difficult — there will be no ready-made blueprints. On the other hand, it makes it easier. It is better to work out your own model that will, in the end, really be viable than to adjust to a known but alien model.

Was it only the influence of the Soviet Union that led the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America to the socialist path? Surely there are intrinsic causes within their own countries that lie at the core of their choice. But the objective and subjective conditions in their countries often demanded their own unique paths to socialism, not the Soviet one. Uncritical borrowing of the Soviet model resulted in transplanting the shortcomings of this model into other countries.

The present changes in Eastern Europe, however painful and contradictory, will ultimately pave the way for a more sound social transformation than the dogmatic following of an outworn model. It is still to be seen whether the peoples of Eastern Europe will accept renewed capitalist exploitation and the disappearance of the social achievements of the last 40 years as easily as they accept the change of symbols and the rhetoric of their politicians.

Western cheers at the failure of socialism are a bit premature. Socialism needs restructuring just like any other social system. And that will strengthen it in the long run. The present capitalist system was formed in the course of a number of crises and in the face of a struggle against attempts to restore feudalism, a system that had been declared to be (like capitalism today) eternal and a God-given social order. Socialism will also go through a number of crises in the process of developing and perfecting itself. This is quite natural. Any historical process develops only in and through contradictions.

It is from this point of view that one must consider another development that is being presented as evidence of the crisis of communist ideology. This is the decrease in Communist Parties' membership and, in many East European cases, the loss of their leadership role. As a rule these Communist Parties had outsized memberships — in the Soviet Union with a population of 280 million the Party had 20 million members. But the Party was not supposed to be a front or broad social movement. It was, as Lenin suggested, meant to be a vanguard political organisation. Many people joined the Communist Parties, which were ruling parties, to make a career.

Loss of trust

The essence of the ruling Communist Parties' problems is neatly summed up by the Polish political activist, M Rakovsky, in an interview in *Pravda*: "... the reasons for the loss of trust in the party ought to be sought in the party's monopoly on power which was bound to corrupt. This is an historical law, and this is indeed what happened. This is not unique to socialism. The monopolisation of power, the conviction that "we know best" what is good and what is bad for the people, the underrating of the views of working people, while constantly assuring them that we are attentive to the people's voice, the bureaucratisation of the administration, especially of the party apparatus which was raised above the state and the people — these are the main reasons behind the growing public protests, and the reluctance of the people to continue following the party."

For some Soviet "intellectuals", capitalism has suddenly become a system without any problems. (And, in general, for such people perestroika means simply inverting all the old values, putting positive signs where there were negative signs before, and vice versa.) Capitalism has undoubtedly proved to be dynamic and adaptable and this has given it considerable strength in its competition with socialism. But, at the same times, its negative features have deepened and become accentuated. Lenin foresaw the new strategy of capitalist survival in his work *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*: "... capitalism has now singled out a handful (less than one-tenth of the inhabitants of the globe) of exceptionally rich and powerful states which plunder the whole world simply by 'clipping coupons'".

Too often the comparison between capitalism and socialism is based on a comparison between the European capitalist and European socialist countries. The living standards of Western European countries are indeed higher. But the question why is never properly answered. It cannot be properly answered unless we take into account the problem of very different levels from which these countries started out. But even more importantly, you cannot assess the wealth of Western Europe in isolation from the capitalist system as a whole. The difference in per capita income between the capitalist "North" and the capitalist "South" is ten to one. The difference between the richest and poorest country within the world capitalist system is 260 to 1. Can such a social order, based on such striking social inequality, a world-wide apartheid, last long?

What is the possible impact of the changes in the Soviet Union and in the East European countries on South Africa? Well, that is for South Africans themselves to decide. But it may be useful, as an outsider, to offer some thoughts.

In the first place, the apartheid regime and its Western allies are obviously doing everything they can to use the difficulties of perestroika to discredit or at least to lessen the inspiring impact of socialist ideas on many South Africans. Perhaps our difficulties here in the Soviet Union might have some impact on peoples' outlook in your country but they can hardly halt or disrupt

long-term developments. The dissatisfaction that the people of South Africa feel and their striving for a new society are not something imported from the Soviet Union.

Support for socialism

Support for socialism among workers and large sections of the democratic movement in South Africa is not something introduced from the outside. The attraction of these ideas for the people at large is determined by the conditions of their lives. These conditions inevitably push South Africans to search for alternative ways to develop their society.

Political awareness in South Africa is exceptionally high. If there were a mechanism for measuring mass politicisation, South Africa's would be one of the highest in the world. This is a fact that, more than anything, deeply worries the ruling group in South Africa and its allies in the West.

If we consider the degree to which both subjective and objective conditions have matured in South Africa today, then these may prove to be considerably more advanced than in Russia in 1917. This does not mean that the socialist revolution is immediately possible. The historical situation has changed since the earlier part of the century. The methods of imperialist adjustment have been perfected. But the existence of conditions for a quick (that is, from an historical point of view) and drastic transformation cannot be doubted.

Progressive ideas have been confronted by outdated social structures throughout the history of humankind. The great social goal of finally abolishing the exploitation of one person by another will not be achieved in a matter of several years or several decades. After all, societies based on class oppression have been existing for thousand of years.

But the future of humankind depends upon the achieving of this great goal. In our revolutionary impatience, we have been concentrating for too long on the question: When will socialism win? It is clear now that the fundamental question is not "when" but "how".