

# Political Resolution

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Communist Party of Australia.  
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## **Introduction**

The Political Resolution adopted by the 9<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPA held in 2001 declared that “the struggle between the people and the transnational corporations (TNCs) is intensifying. The situation in Australia and internationally is marked by this struggle, at the centre of which is the struggle between the capitalist class and the working class.”

This estimation has been borne out by subsequent events. Imperialism’s profound and unresolved contradictions have become more acute and numerous. This has resulted in more and more people being involved in struggle against global monopoly capitalism and imperialism.

For the people’s struggles to succeed in Australia and make gains we must build and strengthen active coalitions of left and progressive political, trade union and community organisations. These coalitions must be based upon the unity in action of the working class if they are to provide the basis of an anti-imperialist, anti-monopoly democratic government. Such a government could be a major step in the transition to a socialist society.

## **Part 1**

### **The general situation**

Since the end of the 1970s the developed capitalist countries have been hit by a number of cyclical recessions where large numbers of working class people were burdened by permanent unemployment or under employment. Over the last two decades capitalism and imperialism have launched an unprecedented campaign on all social, economic and political fronts against the conditions and rights won by the people in the previous two centuries. This has been aided by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the domination of the economies of some of the former socialist countries by international capitalism.

There have been a number of changes in the economies of capitalist countries although capitalism's basic characteristic of exploitation of the working people has not changed. The supremacy of finance capital over all forms of capital has strengthened. It has financed the growth of monopoly capital and the development of huge TNCs. They now span many countries and dominate all sectors of the economy and have accumulated huge industrial, financial, political and military power. International capital has created and controls the IMF and the World Bank. They grant loans conditional on the rights of foreign investors to privatisation in every sector of the economy, breaking down the safeguards of labour and environmental standards. They have usurped the powers of elected governments and have forced unpayable debts on third world countries.

The antagonisms between imperialist groups are indicated by the struggle between the US dollar and the European euro. The US dollar has dominated world finance since World War II, in trade, foreign investments and transactions in crude oil. High and continuing US budget deficits, growing trade deficits and the enormous cost of military adventures has made it the world's largest debtor and has weakened the US dollar.

The main European governments, to protect themselves, created the euro as a challenge to the US dollar and as a trade and investment currency. Iraq began trading oil in euros, in defiance of the US-imposed agreement that all OPEC oil sales be denominated in US dollars. The US invaded Iraq for several purposes including ensuring the primacy of the US dollar against the euro and maintaining the dollar's unique standing.

In striving to achieve domination over more and more markets the largest corporations have spread their tentacles into every corner of the earth.

Capitalist globalisation is a logical development of the monopolisation of all sectors of capitalist economies.

Corporate globalisation has resulted in:

- Far-reaching attacks on the living and working conditions of the working class and all working people. The scientific and

technological revolution which offers humanity the prospect of an enlightened, secure and prosperous future is, instead, used by capitalism to increase its exploitation of and control over people and the resources of the earth and space.

- Attacks on democratic rights that have been won in many decades of struggle. The open dictatorship of capital is usurping many of the powers of elected governments. This is being effected by contracting out and privatisation not only of publicly owned enterprises but also by the privatisation of government functions. All publicly owned sectors of the economy, including government departments, are being taken over in the process of deregulation and privatisation. Even the armed forces, previously the preserve of governments, are now being privatised. Increasing numbers of mercenaries employed by or hired from corporations are being used for military and paramilitary operations, especially in third world countries. At the same time, in places such as Iraq, members of regular military forces are being seconded directly to protect corporate interests.
- The militarisation of society and the strengthening of the repressive institutions of the capitalist state to enforce and maintain the economic and political power of the TNCs.
- Aggressive wars to plunder resources, impose “regime change” and suppress the struggles of the people of many countries against the new colonialism which ultimately bring savage exploitation by the TNCs.
- Attacks on progressive national and indigenous cultures. They are being replaced by the banal culture, much of it of US origin, promoted by the capitalist class.
- Fomenting ethnic and religious differences to divide the people. Racism and the repression of the people’s struggles go hand in hand. As the struggles of the people grow and begin to threaten the rule of capital, the big corporations resort more and more to open fascist terror to preserve their domination.
- The enactment of electoral laws which have the aim of eliminating progressive parties and individuals who challenge the policy

demands of the corporations while preserving the dominance of parties serving the monopolies.

- An attack on the national independence and sovereignty of all countries except the most powerful and dominant imperialist states. The laws and practices of independent states stand in the way of the unfettered domination of the TNCs which, in calling for “freedom”, mean freedom only for the big corporations to transfer finances and industrial enterprises to whichever corner of the world brings them the greatest profit.

The most negative impact of capitalist globalisation is on third world countries and indigenous communities around the world, resulting in starvation, poverty, rampant ill-health, unemployment, denial of education, exploitation and repression, engulfing millions of people.

Capitalist globalisation has resulted in worldwide and massive damage to the environment as the corporations pollute the water, soil and atmosphere, rip out the resources of the planet, and destroy its vegetation and the biodiversity of the world in their criminal drive for profits, irrespective of the consequences for the long-term survival of life on earth.

Capitalist globalisation means that the attacks by the TNCs and their subservient governments against all who struggle for a better and more democratic world will be intensified.

It is the evil face of capitalism and imperialism today.

The leaders of the capitalist and imperialist countries obscure their real aims through hypocrisy, lying and double standards. They claim they are for democracy, freedom, peace, security, progress and civilisation. In fact their real aims are the direct opposite.

They talk of peace but bring war, they claim to bring democracy and freedom but bring repression. They claim to be pursuing a civilising mission but impose barbarism on conquered peoples.

### **The modern anti-imperialist movement**

The ranks of those opposed to the barbarity of capitalism are growing as imperialism attempts to spread its *diktat* to all parts of the world. The desire of people to decide their own future, to participate equally

in economic and political affairs, to protect their environment and to live in peace is leading more and more people to oppose global monopoly capitalism and imperialism.

This worldwide movement includes the existing socialist countries, the governments of most third world countries and many working people, small farmers and peasant in all countries who are savagely exploited by big capital.

Even sections of the ruling class are joining this movement, the aggressive excesses of ultra-conservatives creating fear among them. The pursuit of economic interests, differing from those related directly to either the war industries or the plunder of other countries, are other factors causing this conflict in the ranks of the ruling class.

The struggles against the military, political and economic forms of corporate globalisation are the dominant and defining political issues for the foreseeable future. This movement is what is new, what is coming into being and what will be the fundamental determinant of this new century. The conditions for a new revolutionary wave stretching across the world are now coming into existence. The task in Australia is to establish the conditions conducive to the formation of a peoples' government.

A new civilised society to replace the rotting capitalist system can only be a socialist one.

## **Part 2**

# **Some new features of imperialism and key issues facing the people of the world**

In the past, imperialist control and exploitation took the form of military occupation, the establishment of direct administrative control over the colonial countries, the investment of capital and the building of roads and railways to rob the occupied countries of their natural resources. Their resources were exported for use by the manufacturers of the industrial societies of the colonial powers. These manufactures were then re-exported to the colonial countries.

After centuries of struggle the peoples of many colonial countries won back their independence and established their own governments. This was the significance of the national liberation movements which threw out the imperialist colonisers following World War II.

But the corporations never gave up their ambition to re-establish their economic and political domination of the former colonies.

However, faced with the successes of the national liberation movements, the imperialist powers were forced to change their tactics.

Today, new forms of colonialism are being implemented. Direct control has been replaced by indirect economic and political control. If these methods fail to stem the struggle of the former colonial peoples for real independence, they are threatened with military intervention and occupation in the name of “keeping the peace”, “maintaining law and order” or even “providing humanitarian aid”.

The occupation of other countries is accompanied by racist attitudes, imprisonment without trial and barbarous torture and humiliation of the people of the subject country. This barbarity is not new. What is new is that it has been revealed before the people of the whole world.

Nominally independent countries are controlled by unfair trade agreements, by withholding economic assistance or granting loans with conditions favouring the industrialised countries. As part of imperialism’s new tactics the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organisation and the World Bank were established. They remain under the firm control of the most powerful capitalist state, the USA.

These agencies cannot be effectively reformed. They are undemocratic and are effectively controlled by the major imperialist powers. They must be swept away and replaced by democratically structured institutions that implement policies which liberate rather than enslave, which lift living standards rather than create poverty, which extend democratic rights rather than destroy them and which preserve the environment rather than pollute the world.

Today, money itself has become a commodity rather than simply a means of exchange. By the use of new technology it is now possible to speculate in stocks, shares, currencies, and derivatives to make

vast profits. Such trading is parasitical in its nature and adds nothing to the goods and services needed by the people of the world.

New theories have been developed to justify the policies of imperialism. They include the ideas of “rogue states”, “failed states”, “terrorist states”, “pre-emptive strike” and the “war on terrorism”. All these arguments are being used to justify the occupation of countries by the military forces of the imperialist countries.

It is necessary to expose these new arguments which hoodwink people into supporting wars of intervention and aggression and to justify the long-term occupation of countries.

Another important feature of the world situation is the steady shift in the centre of world trade from Europe and the United States, to Asia where the rapidly developing economy of the People’s Republic of China is playing an ever-increasing role. This change and China’s entry into the WTO is assisting all third world countries and the people everywhere in the fight against the big corporations.

On the other hand, the dismantling of the socialist Soviet Union and other East European socialist states and the restoration of crude and criminal capitalism on the territory of these countries was a major victory for imperialism.

The environment is another victim of capitalism which sees nature as a commodity to be exploited. The drive of capitalism for profits and the unplanned, uncontrolled and irresponsible development of productive forces are evidence of the link between capitalism and today’s environmental crisis.

The governments of the US, Britain, Australia and a small number of other “allies” have torn up the Charter of the United Nations Organisation which was adopted following WW 2 to prevent further wars and brought hope for peace and a better life for the peoples of the world.

## **Imperialism and war**

The imperialist states continue to control immense economic, military and political resources and are the main threat to the peace of the world. It is the governments of these states which stand in the way of



the social and economic progress, security and stability that are desired by the people of all countries.

The central US goal is control of the planet, power to control resources, power to install governments subservient to its demands, power to privatise and deregulate the economies of every nation in the world and the power to inflict on peoples everywhere, “free market” corporate capitalism.

The manipulation of trade and the conclusion of unequal “free” trade agreements is another arm of the imperialist offensive. Examples are the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) embracing Canada, the US and Mexico and the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), which aims to embrace all the countries of Latin and North America. This agreement is being strongly opposed by many of the Latin American countries. The Australia-US FTA is part of this network of trade agreements.

These policies raise the danger of aggression and war to a new level. Combined with US imperialism’s willingness to use its massive arsenal of nuclear weapons, planetary destruction is becoming a real possibility.

Imperialism now commands military resources capable of wiping out humanity and has adopted radically new policies exposing its intent to develop, expand and use weapons of mass destruction. The US military budget is over \$US437 billion every year, larger than the whole Australian economy. At the same time, global poverty and inequality are getting worse.

Militarism is an essential part of the drive for world domination by the United States. The massive armed forces that are being continually built up are the military arm of globalisation.

The United States now has military bases in more than 100 countries, a fact which threatens the independence and sovereignty of all countries without exception. The US has over 30 military bases in Australia and is currently developing an additional three “training” bases. These facilities undermine Australia’s independence and sovereignty, make this country a potential nuclear target and make Australians complicit in US aggression. The Australian Government is also assisting the US in its efforts to weaponise space and to dominate Earth from space.

In the drive of imperialism to control the economies of other countries, the seizure of the oil resources of the world has emerged as a most important factor. This is apparent in the war against Iraq and the establishment of US military bases in several countries in the oil-rich Caucasian region of Asia and the fomenting of armed conflict in resource-rich West Africa with French, British and US intervention in the resulting conflicts.

In the last two decades developments in computer technology have led to a revolution in warfare. The US is perfecting many new, sophisticated high-tech weapons from unmanned planes (drones), mini-nukes and bunker busters, lasers and space weapons. The US is developing its “missile defence” program which is intended to give it the capacity to fire at terrestrial targets from space.

With the demise of the Soviet Union as a “common enemy” the aggressive imperialist states are once again separating into alliances of convenience. One camp is centred on the United States and Britain. The ultra-conservative Howard Government has led Australia into this group with the tacit agreement of the ALP.

The Zionist-led state of Israel is also part of this group of aggressor nations. It is a sledgehammer with the strongest military forces in the Middle East. It is heavily funded and used by the US against the surrounding Arab countries. Israel’s arsenal includes nuclear weapons.

The present government of Japan is also straining at the leash, in the face of strong opposition from the people of Japan, to once again embark on military aggression in the interests of Japanese TNCs.

Other imperialist countries, such as France, Belgium, Spain, Portugal and Germany are less inclined to become involved in US-inspired imperialist operations, except where it suits their own economic interests.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), which unites the European states and the US, has given itself a mandate to intervene militarily in any part of the world and is another arm of the imperialist forces used to control the world. At the same time, the European imperialist states are developing their own independent armed force.

Imperialism is beset by contradictions including the struggle between the main industrialised countries (the US, the European Union and Japan) for a greater market share for “their” corporations.

Another important difficulty for imperialism is that major countries — China, Russia and India — remain outside the close imperialist circle (the so-called G7 — Canada, US, France, Japan, United Kingdom, Germany and Italy) even though capitalist economies predominate in both India and Russia at the present time.

Although the power of the capitalist and imperialist states often appears to be overwhelming, they face worldwide opposition and their power is being challenged in all continents.

Capitalism came into existence as a step forward compared to its feudal predecessor but has now outlived its usefulness and its original progressive features.

Capitalism has become a monstrous system which bases its power on force, domination, lying, depravity and torture. It can no longer serve the interests of the people.

The time has come for it to be swept away.

### **Issues of struggle**

A number of main themes are apparent in the movements and struggles of the people around the world — for peace and national independence, for jobs, for working conditions and rights, to protect the environment, for democratic rights and much else. All these movements oppose the policies of the TNCs and conservative governments.

The actions of the people have taken many forms including demonstrations, strike struggles, worker occupations, expropriations, meetings, forums, leaflets, use of radio, television and the Internet and in some countries, armed struggle.

Peoples’ movements led by a united and determined working class, peasants and community organisations can successfully confront the attacks of corporations and conservative governments acting on their behalf. This is a major task for all working class, left and progressive organisations in the present period. The success of such united action would open new possibilities for substantial change for the better in the lives of all working people and undermine the foundations of

capitalist domination. It would create the conditions necessary for the working class and its allies to gain political power and restructure the economy.

## **World peace**

The highlight of the worldwide movement for peace and independence so far has been the huge demonstrations against the invasion and occupation of Iraq by a number of imperialist governments led by the US.

The peace organisations brought onto the streets some of the largest demonstrations yet seen. Millions demonstrated their opposition to the invasion of Iraq before the conflict even started. Never before has there been such a manifestation before a war had actually begun.

Opposition to the war against Iraq and its continuing occupation by imperialist forces remains strong as the cynicism and lies of political leaders become more and more apparent.

Militarisation is an essential part of the drive for world domination by the United States. The massive armed forces that are being continually built up are the military arm of globalisation. The movement for peace continues to campaign against the militarisation of the economy and society and against the presence of US military bases in many countries.

## **The war on terrorism**

The Communist Party of Australia unequivocally condemns terrorism and rejects it as a legitimate tactic in the struggle against imperialism or as a means to end the capitalist system and establish and build a socialist society. It is counter-productive in these struggles.

At the same time, we condemn any attempt to brand as terrorism the legitimate use of armed struggle or other forms of action in the struggle of the people for freedom, independence and a better life.

Since the “9/11” attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, the capitalist states and in particular the USA have used the existence of terrorism, which they have promoted and frequently helped to establish, as an excuse to justify new wars

and far-reaching anti-democratic measures against the people of many countries.

“The war on terrorism” is a convenient cloak under which imperialist states can wage war against all nations where “terrorists” are alleged to be operating.

The “war on terrorism” is being used to justify the re-colonisation of resource-rich and strategically placed nations. It is a weapon in the arsenal of neo-colonialism. It is not difficult for clandestine forces to foment terrorist incidents where necessary to be then used to justify intervention.

Imperialism — especially the US Government — condemns all armed struggle as well as acts of resistance against their interests as “terrorism”. However, in a number of countries the people have been forced to take to armed struggle as repressive governments and the rule of the corporations closed off all possibilities for advance by a peaceful political process.

The United States is the only state which has ever been condemned by the International Court of Justice for international terrorism.

More dictators, death squad commanders and torturers are given refuge in the USA than anywhere else in the world. And the US remains a training ground for terrorists who learn their “craft” at centres such as the US Army’s notorious Fort Benning in Georgia, formerly known as the School of the Americas.

Capitalism’s atrocities, perpetrated with all the force of the most heavily armed states in the world, are called “counter-terrorism”, “counter-insurgency” or “low-intensity conflict”, and receive little and/or distorted political and media attention.

Behind the propaganda lies the real terrorism: Over half a million Iraqi children died as a result of the US blockade; more infants died every month than the total number killed in the September 11 attack on the World Trade Centre.

As well as the state terrorism of imperialism, there are also individual terrorist acts which target specific members of governments or the state apparatus or else kill and terrorise ordinary people and their families. These actions generally impact negatively on the working

people and provide capitalist governments with excuses to curtail democratic rights and boost support for conservative political forces. Some are the work of imperialism's own *agents provocateurs*.

Nevertheless, acts of individual terrorism are increasing as more and more people feel the lash of capitalist exploitation, the suppression of democratic rights and the death and destruction which the imperialist states are imposing on other countries.

It is necessary to expose the real nature of the "war on terrorism" and fight against the attacks on democratic rights and the wars of imperialism which do not have the genuine objective of eliminating terrorism, but of advancing imperialism's own political and economic interests.

### **Democratic rights**

The struggle to maintain democratic rights and to defeat the moves in the main capitalist countries to increasingly adopt fascist-like measures has taken many forms, particularly against the anti-democratic legislation being introduced under the guise of the "war against terrorism.

The introduction of this often vague and sweeping anti-democratic legislation and the build-up of "security" forces, are not only intended to crush any form of dissent on the part of specific groups or individuals, but also have the objective of silencing the voices of democratic organisations which oppose the policies of conservative governments.

The trade unions of many countries continue to fight against anti-trade union industrial legislation which severely limits the right of trade unions to protect and fight for the conditions, wages and rights of working people.

The level of this struggle needs to be stepped up if anti-democratic government measures are to be defeated and real freedom is to be won by the working class and all working people.

### **Protection of the environment**

Many organisations throughout the world are in action to protect the environment from the ravages of corporate capitalism. This issue has brought the majority of nations together to adopt the Kyoto Protocols

as a necessary step towards limiting the output of greenhouse gas emissions largely responsible for causing global warming.

The United States and Australia have refused to ratify the Kyoto Protocols, fiercely resisting any limits on their own economic activity.

Their proposed alternative of carbon taxes is not a solution. It simply means that the rich countries, which can afford to pay the tax, can pollute and pay for it, whereas the poor countries, which cannot pay, will be forced to either cut down on their energy use or trade their carbon taxes.

There are also vital struggles for sustainable development, for protection and care of river systems and water supplies, for land care, to stop salination, for environmentally sound waste management, against urban and workplace pollution, to stop loss of bio-diversity, and for the protection of rain forests and old growth forests.

The livelihood of people affected by future protective measures must be protected.

The persistent campaigning by a multitude of mass organisations on these and other environmental issues, which have wide public support, has forced governments to make some concessions and adopt some measures to mend the environmental damage that has already taken place.

### **Mutually beneficial trade**

The use of trade as a weapon to pressure, stand over and control the economies and governments of other countries is now being widely implemented, particularly by the United States as it imposes trade sanctions against one country after another and thrusts unfair and unequal trade relations on others.

Opposition to trade sanctions and the so-called free trade agreements, which imperialism is attempting to foist on the under-developed and developing countries and even on less powerful capitalist countries, has been expressed in demonstrations in Seattle, Davos, Doha, Melbourne and other cities.

Many third world countries are strongly opposed to the trade policies of the imperialist countries and at international conferences have

refused to accept the unequal trade terms which the big powers have attempted to impose on them to control their economies and their governments. They call for fair and mutually beneficial trade.

Many governments oppose the attempts of the big corporations to impose new policies governing trade, loans, property rights and other policies through the IMF, WTO and the World Bank.

Not only will the governments and people of third world countries continue to oppose these unequal agreements but their opposition will become stronger as they develop their economies and their political structures are consolidated.

The people of industrially developed countries, led by the working class of those countries, will also struggle against the unequal and unfair trade agreements and the consequences of trade relations drawn up to serve the interests of the TNCs which undermine wages, conditions, jobs and living standards.

### **Sovereignty and independence**

A major issue for all the former colonial countries is the preservation of their sovereignty and national independence in the face of the relentless efforts of the imperialist states to control their economies and their governments by both direct and indirect measures.

The national liberation struggles by the people of Vietnam, Namibia, Colombia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), India, South Africa, the Congo, Zimbabwe and many other countries were all struggles to achieve national independence and sovereignty over their own territory. Many of the former colonial countries which retained capitalist economic structures were unable to complete their struggle for sovereignty and independence and remained partially the prey of the dominant economies of the industrially developed countries.

Their struggles for national independence will intensify as imperialist states attempt, once again, to completely impose colonial-type domination. The war and occupation of Iraq is the most recent example of imperialism's attempts to impose its domination by military, means not only on Iraq but on the whole Middle East area.



## **Religious fundamentalism**

Religious fundamentalism has become a major feature of the current international situation as the world is being dragged back to the religious wars of many centuries ago. Conflicts are being increasingly presented as taking the form of a struggle between those who profess Christianity and Islam.

Religious fundamentalism is based on a rejection of the scientific knowledge that gives a rational explanation of the world around us and of society as part of this world. Religious fundamentalists are intolerant and fearful of others with a different culture, religion, language or skin colour. President Bush has declared his closeness to a “higher being” and always calls upon god to bless America, but never the people of any other country — the poor, the homeless, the starving or those millions who have been killed in imperialist wars of aggression.

The fight for enlightenment, for acceptance of differences in the world, for tolerance, for solidarity between peoples, for community rather than individualism, for scientific knowledge, for peace, for humanity and civilisation is, at the same time, a struggle against religious fundamentalism.

In the struggle against the reactionary agenda of the religious right, the greatest unity possible must be built with the many progressive religious organisations and people.

The religious fundamentalists invariably pursue conservative values, have negative attitudes towards women and oppose women’s equal participation in social, political and economic life and condemn more liberal attitudes to sex and family relationships.

### **Many fronts of struggle**

There are many other fronts of struggle — students protesting against the steep rise in university fees, women struggling to maintain the gains made in their rights and conditions, farmers and growers who demand fair prices and more control over the marketing of their produce, indigenous people for land and recognition, doctors, nurses and patients who are fighting to preserve health services and teachers, students, parents and unions fighting to maintain the public education system or to provide educational opportunities where none exist. In many third

world countries millions are in struggle against poverty, AIDS, drought and wars. Their struggle is often one for survival. These are some of the issues that have brought millions of people into action around the world.

In all these struggles there is a clash between the interests of the overwhelming majority of the people and the interests of the corporations.

On a world scale the political consciousness of millions of people and their strong opposition to the policies of the corporations and their governments has never before been at such a high level.

The experiences of the people in action will lead more and more to the realisation that it is the system of capitalism that stands in the way of the adoption of policies that are in the interests of the ordinary working people throughout the world and that wars, exploitation, poverty, insecurity, lack of democratic rights are essential features of the capitalist system and imperialism.

The broad sweep of these movements is bringing into office in a number of countries popular and more representative governments that are implementing progressive policies and are resisting the demands of the corporations.

Governments with “people-friendly” policies have been elected in Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina and Uruguay. In South Africa the ANC scored a great victory in the 2003 poll. In Spain a government of the Socialist Party resulted from mass opposition to the war against Iraq. In South Korea the long run of conservative, pro-American governments has been ended and a government more sympathetic to the reunification of north and south has been elected.

These and other election results indicate that a new trend is emerging, resulting in important setbacks for the imperialist powers. Today, the capitalist system is being seriously challenged. A new revolutionary cycle, based on the actions of millions of people around the world and their developing political consciousness, is emerging although revolutionary change will take different forms to the revolutions of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

# Part 3

## The capitalist offensive in Australia

The situation in Australia has to be seen in the context of the global offensive of imperialism and the worldwide opposition to it.

The re-election of the Howard and Bush governments in the 2004 elections has led to the intensification of the capitalist class offensive against the working class and every other section of society other than the big corporations in the US and Australia.

These two governments are pursuing extreme conservative, reactionary and anti-democratic agendas and have succeeded in hoodwinking many voters of their respective countries by lies and by assiduous brainwashing through the monopoly controlled media.

Their legislative course has already been partly implemented — privatisation of public enterprises and government services, the introduction of savage anti-trade union industrial legislation, the extension of the working hours and of unpaid overtime, the casualisation of employment, the imposition of individual work contracts and stripping awards of clauses benefiting the working people.

Welfare rights previously won are being cut back. People receiving welfare payments are facing a more punitive regime. The eventual aim is to destroy the welfare system as we know it and privatise what is left.

The public health and education systems will be further attacked and Medicare and universities privatised.

The environment will continue to be neglected and the Kyoto Protocols ignored.

The indigenous people will continue to suffer and their plight will get worse.

However, the Howard Government has not limited its attacks to economic and social issues.

It has spread the most right-wing and conservative ideas, including religious fundamentalism.

The Howard Government promotes “individualism” and “choice” and encourages home ownership and share ownership to spread a capitalist outlook among the workers of Australia. But “choice” is not an option if one hasn’t the money while individualism cuts across the basic collective, social nature of all communities. Property ownership and the huge mortgages many owe to the banks are a means to discourage industrial action by workers who fear losing their homes or falling behind in mortgage repayments. Likewise, share ownership ties shareholders into the concept of unearned income and to the interests of capitalism.

The Government spreads the idea that welfare recipients are “bludgers” as a prelude to attacks on welfare services. The public is told that public enterprise is inefficient and that private enterprise is efficient and good.

Howard, his government ministers and some leading religious leaders are also promoting reactionary “moral” codes which entrench male superiority and the concept that a “woman’s place is in the home”. These concepts lead to opposition to women’s economic, social and political equality and enlightenment, opposition to their employment in the workforce and to the right of women to choose to have an abortion.

These concepts also reject a scientific explanation of both the world and humanity’s place in nature. They obscure the truth and keep many in ignorance. They have to be opposed and exposed as they do widespread damage to the advancement of society.

## **Militarism**

Jingoistic nationalism and militarism are promoted by John Howard and his government to support new wars of aggression being planned by the Bush administration and the Pentagon.

Wars waged for economic control by imperialism have caused untold suffering and cost exorbitant amounts of money which are met by the working people of the aggressor states and the victims of aggression. An estimated US\$1 trillion is spent every year globally on weapons. Australia, in 2005, is spending over \$60 million every day on the military.

Military expenditure reduces public and private investment, diverts funds and personnel from civilian research and development and negatively

affects economic growth and development. High military spending means money taken from employment, health, education, housing, clean water and other alternative consumption and investment.

The Australian Government has also adopted the concept of pre-emptive strikes against so-called “rogue” and “failed” states. Australian military, police, as well as economic and political “advisers” are attempting to take control of several countries in the Pacific region. These are steps towards the re-imposition of colonial domination and economic exploitation of former colonial possessions.

Australian corporations have their own colonialist ambitions in the Asian-Pacific region. Australian governments which support them also enthusiastically support the Bush administration’s drive for world domination.

A specific issue is the Free Trade Agreement between Australia and the United States. The FTA has been legislated into force but its negative consequences for the majority of the people both in terms of the economy and of national sovereignty will bring a strong backlash against the governments responsible for this reckless agreement.

The Australia-US Free Trade Agreement (FTA) will result in the destruction of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and the privatisation of health, education and water services, the further monopolisation of Australia’s media and film industries, a weakening of quarantine and customs regulations, the non-labelling of GM food on supermarket shelves, environmental destruction and many other changes to the detriment of the Australian people.

The Australia-US FTA is part of an international network of trade agreements. It includes clauses covering investment, competition policy and the environment which were defeated at the WTO. The FTA undermines Australia’s sovereignty and opens up the Australian economy to the direct, unfettered takeover and plunder by US corporations. It is seen as a model to be imposed on other countries by the US and the WTO.

### **Changes in the composition of the working class**

In the last decades there has been a steady decline in the number of workers engaged in manufacturing industries and other blue-collar

occupations. The number of Information Technology (IT), service and white-collar jobs has increased substantially. This process will continue as one technological change after another affects the composition of the working class. Unity and support between blue-collar and white-collar sections of the working class is needed.

Another significant change is in the large number of contractors (“self-employed”) who are not paid for public holidays, sick leave, long service leave, etc and who must pay for their own workers’ compensation, superannuation and other insurance. This can be seen not only as an attempt to increase the rate of exploitation of workers but also to fragment the working class and weaken the trade union movement. Contractors, however, remain part of the working class and can be won to trade union membership and a consciousness of class struggle.

Those employed for wages and salaries or as contractors make up about 90 per cent of the working population of Australia. Included in this figure are a large number of professional workers.

The number of small businesses has also increased while the number of small working farmers has sharply declined as agribusinesses take over more land in most areas of agriculture, horticulture, pasturing and grazing. However, the significant role played by working farmers in the economy should not be ignored.

These developments, together with casualisation and widespread part-time work, have increased the difficulties of recruitment of workers to trade union membership.

Another major factor affecting the recruitment to and activity in trade unions is the influence of Labor Party ideas among workers and trade union leaders, the absence of a clear commitment to the interests of the working people, the search for compromises with employers on all occasions and a marked reluctance to engage in any form of struggle to achieve the needs and interests of workers.

## **Trade unions**

The trade unions remain the primary class and mass organisations of Australian workers.

Trade unions include in their membership workers of different political conviction and undertake activities irrespective of these differences

and, thereby, contribute to the overall task of uniting the working class. It is with this in mind that the CPA places great emphasis on our trade union work and our work within the working class.

The scope of trade union activities extends beyond hours, wages and general economic questions although these remain basic issues for all trade unions. Social, democratic, solidarity and economic issues have all been taken up and continue to be pursued. The CPA supports the extension of trade union activities to include issues of national and international politics — the peace struggle, national independence and solidarity with the workers of other countries. Trade unions should be active in support of all issues affecting the interests of the working class and should vigorously act in the interests of their membership and the working class as a whole.

Some union organisations do refer to socialism as a goal but in practice they pay little more than lip service to that objective. It is the view of the CPA that the trade unions must be won to socialist ideas and to the support of fundamental social change in the interests of the working class outside the maintenance of capitalism.

The CPA supports the establishment of trade union rank and file organisations and believes they give added strength to the trade union movement. It is a task of the Communist Party and militants advocating the class struggle to promote the full and active involvement of rank and file union members. It is also important to have a correct relationship between rank and file workers and trade union leaderships. Where this relationship is strong, and trade union leaderships and rank and file organisations work together in a united way, trade unions will be at their most powerful.

Workers need to be on guard against trade union approaches that adopt class collaborationist policies and accept economic rationalist ideas. The 1980's Prices and Incomes Accord instituted by the ALP and the ACTU was one example of class collaboration. The Accord caused much damage to the movement. The influence of the Accord's ideas in the trade union movement still remains, although many unions have now broken away from such an approach. Class collaborationist thinking manifests itself in many forms. Negative features include highlighting to workers the false notion that there is a common interest

between classes in society and between the workers and their employers. It has also been characterised by an unwillingness to struggle even in favourable circumstances. The concept that all that is required is a place at the “table” and that results can be delivered purely by negotiation is another idea that can lead the working class in the wrong direction. Workers need to be on guard and fight against such erroneous concepts.

The ruling class, through its representatives in government, pursues an extreme anti-union agenda aimed not at minor setbacks to the trade union movement but at its destruction. Severe attacks are being launched currently by conservative forces led by the Howard Government to undermine the ability of Australian workers to collectively bargain and for trade unions to effectively represent the interests of workers. Reactionary industrial legislation is being introduced aimed at promoting individual contract arrangements as the dominant form of the employer-employee relationship. The CPA works tirelessly to uphold and strengthen collective bargaining for workers and will involve itself in the struggles opposing those who seek to erode the capacity of workers to bargain collectively. The CPA fights resolutely for trade union and workers’ rights.

The current attacks on the trade union movement present great opportunities for the development of a broad, united-front movement which at the same time can be the catalyst of an even broader people’s unity. Opposition to the destruction of trade union and workers’ rights by the employing class and the Howard Government has attracted considerable public support and the movement must be expanded and consolidated.

The CPA believes that the emerging mass movement against attacks on workers’ rights must have as its aim the development of a position that stops governments, of any persuasion, implementing policies which are not in the interest of working people. It is not enough to seek to replace the conservatives with a social democratic government. The aim now must be to build the people’s movement to take control of the situation and enforce the demands of the mass movement onto all governments.



## **Australian political parties**

**Communist Party of Australia** (See Part 6)

### **The Labor Party**

The Labor Party was founded in 1891 largely by the trade unions of that time. Having suffered serious defeats in the 1880s and early '90s at the hands of the employers and the then conservative governments, many workers and trade unionists believed that by electing worker and trade union representatives to parliament it would be possible to adopt laws in the interests of workers and ensure that the police, the military and the courts would not be used against them.

Since the foundation of trade unions in the 1850s, many bitter struggles for wages, shorter hours of work, trade union rights, the extension of parliamentary democracy, the right of women to vote, etc., had taken place. It was on this background that the Labor Party was formed.

The Labor Party's early platform called for the public ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange and many publicly owned enterprises and services were established by Labor governments in the 1920s and '30s. These included the Commonwealth Bank, an Australian shipping line, a national airline, publicly owned airports and a number of manufacturing enterprises.

The Labor Party supported the Federation of the Australian States, the formation of a Federal Parliament and the adoption of a Commonwealth Constitution.

Over time, Labor governments introduced progressive legislation in areas of education, health, transport, customs and trade. The Labor Party was responsible for introducing Medibank and then Medicare. In the 1970s a Labor government introduced free tertiary education and other reforms.

These reforms were a response to both the demands of the working people and the infrastructure needs of an expanding capitalist economy.

Although on paper the Labor Party retains a “democratic socialist objective”, it neither propagates socialist ideas nor does it make a class analysis to formulate its policies.

The over 100-year history of the Labor Party, during which time it has formed a number of both Federal and State governments (sometimes for many years), shows that the Labor Party accepts the continued existence of capitalism and presents itself to the capitalist class as a better manager of capitalism than the conservative parties.

In past periods of economic growth, the Labor Party has supported reforms which improved the livelihood of the working people. In periods of economic downturn it has shown no hesitation in attacking workers' conditions and rights.

The Labor Party is increasingly recognised as one of the alternative parties of capitalism which the ruling class is prepared to support and have elected to government in certain circumstances.

The leadership of the Labor Party shifted decisively to the right in the early 1980s when economic rationalist policies were adopted. This flowed from the basic ideological and political position always occupied by the Labor Party. The conditions and rights of the trade union movement began to be attacked, public enterprises privatised, deregulation and competition policies introduced. Many of the policies adopted in earlier times have now been thrown out.

Social democracy proved to be incapable of leading the working class in an organised, consistent struggle against the consequences of economic rationalist policies.

In foreign affairs, the top Labor Party leadership strongly supports the US alliance and most of the foreign policies of US governments.

While some environmental measures have been taken by Labor Party governments, generally the Labor Party puts the interests of companies ahead of the environment. Labor governments failed to deal adequately

with soil and water degradation, urban pollution, salination, logging of irreplaceable forests, woodchipping and loss of bio-diversity.

For many years it has been said by some left-minded individuals that the Labor Party is a “two-class” party, meaning both a workers’ party and one that serves capitalism at the same time. This concept helps to maintain the illusion that by concentrating on reforming the Labor Party from within and strengthening the genuine worker and socialist elements, it will be possible to turn the Labor Party into a genuine and committed socialist party.

The reality is that, although the Labor Party contains among its members a number of workers and others who work for progressive policies and some who are committed to a socialist objective, the party’s basic political and ideological position is one of a non-socialist party committed to the maintenance and continuation of capitalism.

Some support the Labor Party as the “lesser of two evils” or declare that there is “no alternative”. Both these ideas, while admitting the limitations of the Labor Party, hinder the building of a left and progressive political alternative committed to policies which really serve the working people.

Some argue it is necessary to elect Labor Party governments to “expose” them or that parliamentary struggle is irrelevant. These ideas harbour a sectarian and cynical approach which has not worked in the 100 years since the Labor Party’s formation.

Reacting to the consequences of the policies which have been followed by the Labor Party in government, many workers have become disillusioned and are increasingly looking for an alternative. Recognition of the need to build such a political alternative is slowly gaining ground among left and progressive political parties, trade unions, community organisations, single issue movements and among a number of progressive individual campaigners.

There is a place in such an alternative for members of the Labor Party who break with the right-wing, economic rationalist policies.

Members and some leaders of the Labor Party have played significant roles in many progressive mass campaigns and in the struggles of the workers. This must be recognised and Labor Party members encouraged to support progressive policies and struggles.

## **The Liberal Party**

The Liberal Party is and has always been the avowed voice of big capital in Australia whether of domestic or foreign origin.

By clever but hypocritical propaganda the Liberal Party presents itself as a party of the people and even claims to represent workers, often appealing to the “battlers”. Some workers have become members.

Nonetheless, the Liberal Party is anti-working class and anti-trade union in principle, regarding the working class as being subordinate to big business. The Party and the capitalist ruling class it represents regard themselves as the “natural” and “born to rule” leaders of society.

The Liberal Party fully supports economic rationalist policies and vigorously implements them. It supports wholesale privatisation, the removal of all regulation of private enterprise, reduced taxation for business enterprises, user-pays principles, the destruction of trade union rights and long held conditions won by workers, the re-establishment of a “master-servant” relationship between employer and employee. Their approach to the environment is exploitative and predatory, putting short-term profits before long-term human and environmental survival. In cultural and social matters the Liberal Party is extremely conservative and supports the most puerile and backward outlooks.

The Liberal Party has opposed any and all progressive change, regarding it as a threat to their power and class interests.

In the face of a rise in the popular movement, the Liberal Party is resorting to anti-democratic measures, particularly directed against

workers and their trade unions. The extreme anti-trade union legislation now being introduced exposes the real attitude of the Party to the working class and the trade union movement.

Internationally, the Liberal Party identifies with similar conservative and imperialist governments. It is a staunch defender of the US alliance and looks with suspicion and fear on the national liberation and revolutionary movements in former colonial countries. It is an open and enthusiastic supporter of the imperialist war agenda led by the US but is also prepared to have Australia act on its own. Its outlook is influenced by racism. The Liberal Party and its National Party coalition partner and the forces of big business which maintain it, are strong, not because of their policies, but because of the power of money and the control of the economy and the media by private enterprise.

In recent years the Liberal Party has sought support from sections of the working class based on racism, false economics and nationalist sentiments. This has dangers for the development of democracy in Australia. The Liberal Party has increasingly adopted the cultural and social approach of the US religious right.

The Liberal Party is a committed enemy of the progressive and revolutionary working class movement. It must be exposed and defeated if the working class and other anti-monopoly sections of the community are to make gains and implement progressive social, economic and political policies.

## **The National Party**

The National Party represents large farmers and graziers and agribusinesses, but finds its voter base among family farmers (both large and small scale) and the residents of country towns.

However, the National Party (and its Liberal coalition partner) supports deregulation, low taxation on businesses, privatisation of government services and public enterprises and has implemented measures that have forced many small farmers off the land.

The serious economic and social problems confronting many country farmers and workers have created widespread discontent among rural and agricultural workers. Unemployment, low prices for farm products, both drought and flood conditions, the closure of government and other commercial establishments such as banks and post offices in country towns and unsatisfactory telecommunication services, have created contradictions between the policies being followed by the leadership of the National Party and its voter base.

This discontent, however, often moves to even more right-wing positions rather than adopting progressive policies and establishing relations with the trade union movement and other working class organisations.

## **The Greens**

The recognition of the importance of environmental issues by the community and the many struggles which have taken place provided the basis for the formation of the Australian Greens. The Greens are both action oriented and participate in parliaments.

Each State and locality organisation of The Greens has considerable autonomy and sometimes, different programs. However, they are united on ecological sustainability, social and economic justice, grassroots democracy, peace, disarmament and non-violence. Green candidates have won representation in the Senate, the House of Representatives and in a number of State parliaments and on municipal councils.

The Greens party does not aim to replace capitalism but has played a significant role in the struggle against war, privatisation, the anti-trade union industrial legislation, for public education, for Aboriginal land rights, for women's rights, for gay, lesbian and transgender rights and it defends student unionism. A welcome development is The Greens co-operation with the trade union movement on relevant issues.

Its membership is multi-class, being won from the middle class, professional circles and other social groups as well as workers.

The implementation of their policies would contribute to bringing a new direction to Australian politics giving priority to the interests of the ordinary people.

The Greens do not always make a class analysis to formulate their policies. This has sometimes led to error and the adoption of policies at variance with working class interests. For example, increased taxes on leaded petrol were mistakenly welcomed by some as an environmental measure, not seeing such moves as revenue raising and impacting mainly on the working class. At the same time, many campaigns taken up by green groups challenge the rights and privileges of big business.

The campaigns of The Greens are helping to break the two-party system. In the 2004 Federal elections The Greens received about 750,000 votes.

### **The Australian Democrats**

The Australian Democrats were formed in 1977 as a small “l” liberal breakaway from the conservative dominated Liberal Party.

The Party sees itself as standing between big business and big unions, asserting that Australia’s economic future lies in the hard work of small businesses and farmers, not hampered by government regulation, red tape or “union bureaucracy”. The Australian Democrats work for a “fairer”, economically independent Australian capitalism, opposing the excesses of TNC incursions into the Australian economy.

The Party does not make a class analysis of society but has advanced some progressive policies on a range of issues including the economy, environment, foreign affairs and trade, women, health, Aborigines, ethnic affairs, agricultural and rural affairs.

The Australian Democrats do not have an ideological commitment to the public sector but oppose the sell-off of both public and private assets where there is “no guarantee of net economic benefit to Australia”. They do oppose privatisation where publicly owned

enterprises and services provide essential services or where cross-subsidisation is necessary on equity grounds. They opposed the privatisation of the Commonwealth Bank, QANTAS and Telstra.

The Democrats have played a mixed role and rely more on parliamentary work than on encouraging action outside Parliament. On industrial relations they have taken an anti-union stand. Their support for the Workplace Relations Act in 1996 and for the GST lost them a great deal of support from workers. Inner party struggles have seen them shift to the right and lose popularity with the electorate. They are a party in decline.

## **One Nation**

One Nation suffered a severe electoral backlash following the exposure of its racist, anti-working class and generally conservative policies. This was compounded by the Howard Government's adoption of many One Nation policies.

The Liberal Party had welcomed these policies because they prepared the ground for it to adopt more conservative positions, particularly relating to refugees and migrants.

Despite the party's decline, many of their demagogic policies and slogans continue to appeal to some sections of the community. One Nation is outspoken against the banks, Aborigines, migrants, refugees and "foreigners" and is hostile to the United Nations.

It appears unlikely at this time that One Nation will re-establish itself as a serious contender in the political life of Australia. However, the extent of the influence of its conservative and right-wing policies should not be underestimated.

The support of capitalist media barons Murdoch and Packer was a major factor in One Nation's rise and these reactionary sections of the bourgeoisie have not abandoned their ambitions to control the political process. Populist moves to rehabilitate Pauline Hanson and One Nation continue.

In addition, the emergence of other reactionary, nationalist and racist organisations could occur in certain circumstances.



## **The Family First Party**

A recent consequence of the rightward trend in Australian politics is the formation of the religious-based Family First Party. It developed out of the explosive growth of fundamentalist Christian religious denominations, primarily the Assemblies of God of US origin which attract large congregations in the outer suburbs of a number of the larger Australian cities.

The denomination offers simplistic, conservative personal “solutions” to the complex problems thrown up by modern capitalism and, unlike more established Christian faiths, openly glorifies personal wealth and ambition. It attracts young people to its activities largely through involvement in professionally produced Christian rock music and a concentration on recruiting high school chaplains.

Evangelical church ideas now have a political expression in the Family First Party. It is well funded and advised in the ways of parliamentary politics. At the 2004 Federal elections, it succeeded in getting a Senate candidate elected on the back of a preference deal with the ALP in Victoria, although its primary vote was very small. Prior to that, Family First won a seat in the South Australian State Parliament.

Family First has obtained a pledge from the Coalition Government that future major legislation will be subjected to a “family impact statement”. Their representative in the Senate is making much of his doubts about industrial relations “reforms” and public asset sales. However, like One Nation before it, Family First’s populist veneer is very thin and it will be a useful ally of the Coalition on the issues that matter to the corporations that dominate Australia’s economy.

Family First will assist the Federal Government in its attacks on women’s rights, particularly reproductive rights, and will in general work against the interests of frustrated, often working class electors who voted for them.

## **The Socialist Alliance**

The Socialist Alliance was formed in February 2001 by the Democratic Socialist Party, the International Socialist Organisation and a number of other small left parties all strongly influenced by Trotskyist ideology and tactics.

Besides the members of these organisations, the Socialist Alliance recruited a number of members who were not members of any of the original formative organisations. It is said that these non-affiliated members now constitute a majority of the members of the SA.

The Socialist Alliance has taken part in Federal, State and some Municipal elections but with little electoral success. However, many of its members are active in the various issue campaigns of the trade unions, solidarity and community organisations.

At the same time, the Socialist Alliance takes a contradictory attitude towards socialism, being strongly anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist while criticising and opposing some of the existing and former socialist countries.

In 2003 an internal debate took place within the Socialist Alliance around the question of it becoming a “single, multi-tendency socialist party” or of remaining a “united front” type organisation. A majority of members came out in favour of the Socialist Alliance being a “single, multi-tendency socialist party”.

The CPA declined to join the Socialist Alliance opting instead for its own continued independence and activity and the building of a “broadly based left/progressive democratic coalition”. The CPA was critical of the fact that the Socialist Alliance sees the way forward as dependent on only “a small range of left organisations”.

## Part 4

### The way forward

To fulfil the aspirations of the people for peace, security, jobs, for a first class public sector, for environmental repair, worthwhile productive work and cultural enjoyment, fundamental changes must be brought about in society.

In Australia, a broad democratic movement that unites all left and progressive parties, trade unions, community organisations and progressive individuals is needed to start challenging the existing structures of economic and political power.

A place in the democratic front has to be found for all the streams of opposition to what is being done to the working people, the poor, the working farmers, small business, pensioners and the aged, the professionally employed, the indigenous people, women, migrants and young people.

These varied social forces must be brought together to fight this struggle in a unified way. The Communist Party believes that a vital element of this broad front is an active and involved working class. Furthermore, the working class must adopt policies which win the support of other anti-corporate sections of society.

To those who say that cooperation is not possible, we point to the unity that has been forged in many trade union and community campaigns during which people with different political, religious, ethnic and occupational backgrounds join hands to achieve an objective that all agree on.

The recent huge demonstrations against the war in Iraq are another example. Earlier, about 250,000 people demonstrated in support of reconciliation with the indigenous people.

The Communist Party must, as a matter of priority, work to draw together all left and progressive parties and community organisations or elements in these organisations into a popular anti-imperialist, anti-monopoly democratic front transcending party and organisational boundaries. The aim of such a front is to build the widest possible unity of the people's organisations. At the same time, the working class and revolutionary parties must retain their independence and ideological integrity.

Within the front, differences on policies and tactics will inevitably exist. It will be necessary to negotiate policy agreements with other parties and groups in the front, to integrate as many forces as possible. Unity and breadth will be of vital importance to the success of a popular democratic front. The anti-imperialist, anti-monopoly unity should transcend any differences. Compromises must not lead the peoples' movement into dissolution or towards "managing" rather than changing the system.

The Party seeks both short-term and long-term agreements for joint action with other left and progressive organisations such as the Greens,

trade unions, progressive community organisations, social democratic parties, and other people's organisations. We lay stress on the development of mass action in which coalitions of organisations and individuals can play a major part in mobilising thousands and tens of thousands of workers and those in other social groups and classes who are anti-monopoly.

Policies which can be supported by a wide range of participants from different sections of this resistance movement need to be put forward. Struggles within the present system are necessary. Measures to keep the situation from worsening are urgent. Limited gains are important.

Only by learning, through experience, the limitations of this struggle will they be prepared to press the system to its limits and come to recognise that it must be changed.

### **Parliamentary arena**

The parliamentary arena is an important area in which coalitions or alliances of organisations can work together against reactionary policies. At the same time, parliamentary work has to be based on work outside parliament which encourages and supports the activities of Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), trade unions, professional organisations and others.

There is widespread recognition of the need for change but the main political parties do not offer a vision for a better future that is attainable, realistic and desired by the majority of the people.

The two-party system, which has dominated Australia's political life for more than 100 years, has failed. Experience over a long period of time has shown that whichever of the two major parties is in power makes little difference as both give priority to the interests and demands of the big corporations — banks, insurance companies, mining, industrial and others.

Their "economic rationalist" policies have created an expanding web of social problems, unemployment, poverty, homelessness, drug addiction, inadequate educational facilities, lack of medical care and environmental damage. There is a growing gap between the rich and the poor.

The common link between all opposition groups is that the interests of all are subordinated to the interests of the big corporations, which are always put first by the two main parties.

Many more left and progressive parliamentarians are needed at all levels of government. Respected, knowledgeable and active participants from left and progressive political parties, trade unions, environmental, peace, educational, indigenous and community organisations, health and democratic rights bodies, should be encouraged to stand for office.

A government made up of representatives of these organisations must be democratic, multi-party and answerable to the people. It is important that representatives of the working class form the core of the new type democratic peoples' government.

South Africa, Venezuela, Uruguay and Brazil all have united front governments involving a number of different political forces, showing that cooperation is possible and brings good results.

## **Part 5**

# **Issues of struggle. Policies for consideration**

The CPA puts forward the following policy suggestions for consideration by all left and progressive political parties, trade unions and community organisations. They could also provide a starting point for all in favour of the establishment of a broadly based peoples' government.

### **Medicare and health**

The maintenance and extension of Medicare to include dental, optical and other ancillary health services. The full restoration of a publicly funded national health and dental service providing care to all, including at home and in the workplace.

Priority to be given to preventative medical services including campaigns by governments to educate people about healthy lifestyles. Preventative medicine should also encompass restrictions on corporate advertising and on the production and sale of unhealthy products.

## **Progressive taxation system**

Government taxation policy and revenue raising to be based on:

Repeal of the GST and its replacement with a progressive tax system;

Personal income tax, to be levied on a progressive scale with no tax on incomes less than the minimum wage;

A tax rate on private profits of not less than 36 per cent.

Stricter legislation to minimise tax evasion and avoidance.

Profits from publicly owned enterprises.

## **Budget priorities**

An immediate reduction of 10 percent in military expenditures.

Instead of using taxpayer's money to give handouts to big business, this money be used to establish publicly owned enterprises and services in key areas of the economy.

Priority be given to public education, health and housing. Subsidies to private schools, private hospitals and private housing schemes to be steadily reduced.

Social welfare provisions to be maintained and improved.

## **The environment**

A comprehensive program for the protection and regeneration of the environment — including measures for the protection and care of river systems, land care, measures to deal with salination, desertification and deforestation including the protection of old growth forests, waste management utilising optimum recycling, measures to curb urban and workplace pollution, minimisation of greenhouse gasses, steps to halt and where possible, reverse the loss of bio-diversity.

A review of unsuitable and wasteful agricultural practices such as water-intensive and pesticide-intensive cotton and rice growing.

Urgent implementation of internationally agreed measures to control greenhouse gas emissions. Ratification of the Kyoto Protocols.

More investment in public transport and renewable energy.

## **Housing**

Increased government funding for public housing to end homelessness and provide housing for cheap rental and for purchase. State governments to exercise their powers to control rents and to plan development in response to social needs, not the wishes of profiteering developers.

The provision of more public housing will inevitably result in rent reductions and lower prices in the private sector.

### **Collective bargaining, awards and workers' rights**

The enactment of industrial legislation to guarantee the right of workers to strike and to act in solidarity with others, both nationally and internationally.

Collective bargaining to be encouraged.

The restoration of legally binding awards or other agreements covering all workers in an industry.

The restoration of fully indexed wages. A guaranteed minimum living income for all people of not less than the minimum adult male wage.

The repeal of the anti-trade union clauses of the Workplace Relations Act and Sections 45D & E of the Trade Practices Act. The repeal of similar State anti-trade union legislation.

### **Jobs and working conditions**

The implementation of comprehensive job-creation schemes in conjunction with substantially increased government spending on public works.

The immediate introduction of a 35-hour week without loss of pay. Hours of work to be progressively reduced to 32 without loss of pay.

The curtailment of casualisation, the imposition of limits on overtime and the protection and expansion of permanent, full-time employment.

The legal protection of workers' entitlements by the establishment of trust funds controlled by trade union and employer representatives.

## **Farmers' needs**

Priority support for the social and economic needs of small and family farms. Government support to assist the operation of existing, and the creation of new, cooperative marketing facilities democratically controlled by producers. Review of prices paid for all farm products by processors and supermarkets.

All large agricultural corporations to be publicly accountable for the preservation of the environment and the use of resources. Large privately operated agribusinesses to eventually become publicly owned.

The development of programs for land and water management that protect small farmers while ensuring sustainable use and environmental protection.

State and Federal departments of agriculture to be adequately funded so that they can re-establish and expand their networks of local and regional officers to advise farmers without charge on land care and best agricultural practice.

The banning of GM crops until proven fully safe for consumption and the environment.

## **Women's rights**

Equal rights for women with equal pay for work of equal value.

Maintenance in law of the right of women to have an abortion.

Provision of publicly funded before-school, after-school and long-day childcare facilities for all who need them.

Elimination of all types of violence against women.

## **Young people and public education**

A guaranteed right to education and to full-time work.

The provision of sufficient funding to provide free, secular and universal public education from pre-school to university. The phasing out of public funds going to private schools, colleges and universities.

Private universities should be denied recognition.



## **Indigenous people**

The recognition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original occupiers and owners of Australian territory and their right to land and to the resources both above and underground and in adjacent seas.

Financial and other support for programs to upgrade Aboriginal health, employment, housing and educational standards to be implemented under Aboriginal control.

Support for the maintenance and enrichment of the culture and beliefs of the indigenous people.

To fulfil these objectives, the struggles and unity of the indigenous people must be supported and encouraged to continue to develop policies and actions which enhance self-determination in social justice, land rights, cultural traditions, spiritual well-being and the national rights of all the indigenous people of Australia.

## **Economic directions**

The maintenance and extension of public ownership.

Adoption of a national investment policy and strict control over the movement of money in and out of the country.

Price controls on major commodities and services to be established.

Privatisation of government departments and publicly owned enterprises to cease. Services and enterprises already privatised to be progressively brought back into the public sector. The practice of contracting out the work of government departments and public utilities to be ended.

The Reserve Bank to control interest rates, credit policy and currency exchange rates. The Board of the Reserve Bank to be restructured to establish democratic control.

## **Publicly owned media**

Strengthen all publicly owned media. Make the raising of cultural and educational standards and the increasing of Australian content a requirement when allocating or renewing commercial broadcast licences.

An additional full-time ABC TV channel to be established and adequate funding for the ABC and SBS radio and television networks so that both networks can base themselves on and maintain standards of excellence, including scaling down the number of repeats and re-establishing their own in-house production facilities for both drama and documentary production.

The establishment of a new publicly owned body similar to the ABC to publish newspapers, magazines and books.

Assist and encourage the media of democratic and progressive organisations such as trade unions, environmental, cultural and other community organisations.

The Press Council should be an elected body and given power to enforce its rulings.

### **Multiculturalism and anti-racism**

The promotion of multiculturalism which recognises the contribution made by migrants from many countries to the cultural diversity and richness of present-day society. Provision for teaching the languages of migrant communities at public education facilities. English as a second language teachers and courses to be available free of charge in all public education institutions including schools and TAFEs.

The elimination of all forms of discrimination on the grounds of ethnic background, religion, race, gender, sexual preference, age, disability or parenting.

### **Migration and refugees**

Adoption of a migrant and refugee policy which gives priority to humanitarian and family reunion considerations.

The implementation of the rights for refugees set out in the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

The immediate cessation of mandatory detention. The holding of refugees in centres to be limited to the time necessary to process and determine applications for refugee status.

No children to be held in detention centres under any circumstances.

# Part 6

## About the Communist Party

The Party and its individual members are entirely dedicated to the interests of the working class of Australia while, at the same time, being internationalist.

From its first Manifesto published in December 1920 to our latest statements, internationalism and the struggle for a socialist society have remained the Party's unwavering commitment.

The 1920 Manifesto said: "We hold it as a fundamental principle that it is only by the mass movement of the working class as a whole that our emancipation can be won...[and that Party members] take an active part in the everyday struggle of the working class."

Today, the Communist Party's Constitution says that the Party is a "working class Party based on the concept that the working class is the only force capable of engaging in and leading other social forces in the necessary actions to wrest political power from the capitalist ruling class, establishing the power of the working class and achieving the revolutionary changes necessary to build a socialist society. The Party has no aims separate from those of the working class and all exploited people."

As a Party of activists it is essential that members of the Party have close connections with the working class and other exploited sections of society. This means involvement in and giving support to the struggles around the needs and interests of the people such as the struggles for public education, free health care, the welfare of families, protection of the environment, job security and the protection and extension of workers' rights, for employment, peace and all other issues affecting the lives of the people particularly the working class.

Members of the Communist Party are called upon to be active in their Party branch and in their trade union or in some community or solidarity organisation.

It is only in this way that the good policies of the Party can be struggled for and the Party's influence in the community increased.

Many Party members can and do undertake such activity and set a good example, winning the respect of others. The Party's leadership capability can only be demonstrated by involvement in the people's struggles on a daily basis.

Party campaigns are a main way of winning support for Party policy and encouraging others to be active with us and to join the CPA. Campaigning is more than just issuing a leaflet and should involve a series of activities which allow us to talk to people, to explain the issues and put our perspective. A campaign must be carefully planned, targeted and organised and must have an aim to which people are attracted and want to help achieve.

Working with others is a necessary skill that has to be gained by experience as the Party seeks to build alliances with other working class and progressive organisations and individuals as part of the process of political change in Australia.

The accumulated experience and knowledge of the membership of the Party is the basis upon which the organisations of the Party make their analysis of the political tasks and policies which the Party committees decide. This experience is combined with our understanding of Marxism-Leninism and its application by communist parties world-wide.

To the original writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin we can now add the knowledge and experiences of the socialist states and the accumulating knowledge being advanced by communist and workers' parties.

Without in any way departing from the tested theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism, new ideas and experiences are now at the disposal of communist parties. The world situation constantly changes and these changes have to be analysed and added to the sum total of theoretical knowledge and practical experience.

But it is not only in the mastery of philosophy, economics and class struggle that the Party members need to be equipped. Knowledge of history and culture and mastery of a range of practical skills is also essential for Party members. A new socialist society cannot be

achieved without the application of these skills as well as political science.

All Party organisations, from the members of the Central Committee to every branch member, should undertake regular study of theory, practical work, organisation and administrative skills to better equip the whole Party membership for its role in society.

Experience shows that success requires a great deal of initiative, resourcefulness, hard work and patience.

The present membership of the Communist Party of Australia remains far too small to effectively undertake many of the tasks and responsibilities that the Party faces.

Increasing the number of Party members remains an urgent task. The initiative of a number of members shows that recruits can be won, involved in Party life and given responsibility in higher Party organisations. The signing up of a new member is only the first step. Each new member should be involved in activity in some way, informed of the Party's structure, organisation and methods of work as well as the Party's policies and theory.

## Part 7

### Some theoretical questions

The Communist Party has maintained its adherence to scientific socialism as developed mainly by Marx, Engels and Lenin.

It means basing our analysis and work on the application of dialectical and historical materialism, political economy and the reality of the class struggle.

In the course of activity, new issues and problems constantly arise. Members will be able to find correct answers and work out the best policies if they have an extensive knowledge of Marxism-Leninism and are able to apply it to the specific circumstances being faced.

It is necessary at all times to combine theory with practice, testing theory and policies against daily events. Practice without theory is blind, while theory without practice is sterile.

Two main departures from Marxism-Leninism have often asserted themselves in communist parties and continue to arise. The first is dogmatism and sectarianism and the second is a rejection of both the class struggle and the need for a communist party.

The main hurdle to overcome at the present time is a narrow and dogmatic interpretation of Marxism with a point of view that refuses to recognise change.

### **Ultra-left, sectarian ideas and practices**

Ultra-leftists often reject the fight for reforms as a legitimate part of the struggle for fundamental social change.

One example of this is the idea that the struggle for reforms which are in the interests of the working people is, nonetheless, a “sell-out” or that it “sows illusions” because it does not change the social system from capitalism to socialism. Such concepts can take the form of a call to turn every strike struggle into a general strike or even revolution, irrespective of the circumstances and without preparation or building the necessary support for more advanced forms of action.

If “advanced” and “revolutionary” sounding demands and slogans are put forward which are beyond the understanding or willingness of workers to struggle for they result in confusion and retard the development of the workers’ movement. They can result in disunity and defeat.

George Dimitrov, the Secretary of the Communist International in 1935, referred to people who put forward simplified methods of solving the most complex problems of the working class movement as those for whom “mountains are mere stepping stones”.

Lenin also condemned this approach when he spoke of the “revolutionary phrase which leads to the death of the revolution”.

A variant of this idea is the concept of “permanent revolution” which often masks a rejection of the necessity for stages in the revolutionary process.

It is a denial of the fact that change takes place by both “evolution” and “revolution”.

The call for “permanent revolution” is often a call for the situation to be kept in a state of continuous revolution. This idea has nothing in common with Marxist dialectics.

Ultra-leftists and sectarians often refuse to work in alliances with non-revolutionary groups, claiming that alliances with reformists or sections of the middle class in particular circumstances and for particular limited objectives are “betrayals” of the revolution. This reflects a refusal to accept the struggle for partial demands or to work in alliances except with those who share similar, sectarian attitudes.

The different roles of the party, trade unions and community mass organisations are mixed up and an attempt is made to impose revolutionary objectives on any and all organisations, irrespective of their aims and objectives.

Some on the left refuse to work in a democratic manner and on the basis of mutual respect and equality with others who have a different outlook on some questions.

Another mistake to be avoided is to concentrate on what divides the left and progressive forces to prove the “purity” of one’s own organisation and policy. A principled approach to other forces entails giving emphasis to and finding points of unity around which action in the interests of the working people and progressive forces can be developed.

There is, on the part of some, a refusal to extend the mass struggle into the electoral arena. Taking part in elections is branded as “parliamentarism”, that is, a reliance on elections as the sole means of achieving change. We see the parliamentary arena as an important area of struggle against reactionary policies in which much can be done to unite the working class and other social forces. At the same time, parliamentary work has to be based on work outside parliament to build the mass movement. These two fields of work do not exclude one another.

Another error is to pose membership against leadership of organisations. This happens especially in attitudes to trade unions, where all trade union officials are seen as “bureaucrats” or “misleaders of the workers”. A correct approach to work in trade unions should

have the overall aim of strengthening the militancy and unity of the union as a whole. The strongest unions are those in which there is confidence between leadership and membership working together. This includes developing organisational structures that result in the full participation of members in all the affairs of the organisation.

Another serious issue is the development of nationalism. Some on the left raise national separatism to an absolute principle. The promotion of national antagonisms is a weapon widely used by imperialism against socialist and progressive governments. Nationalism, when raised to an absolute, downgrades internationalism and the necessity for international solidarity with those in the struggle against imperialism.

There is also the concept that there is only one correct path to revolution or that there is only one “model” of socialist construction that all should follow.

The path of socialist construction in the Peoples Republic of China has specific features which differ from the approach adopted in other socialist countries. However this does not represent a betrayal of socialism in that country.

Left-sectarian ideas reduce a Marxist-Leninist party to an isolated, narrow sect continuously shouting allegedly “revolutionary” slogans while failing to make a realistic analysis of actual circumstances.

Ultra-left trends have appeared in all countries from time to time. In the main the working class movement is repelled by sectarianism and narrow-mindedness. Ultra-left groups have never been trusted with the leadership of the revolutionary movement in any country, nor have they provided leadership for the victory of socialism in any country. On the other hand, they have often done great damage to revolutionary movements by building false hopes and misguided expectations which often result in burnout and cynicism.

### **Rightist ideas**

Rightist ideas are also present in the working class and revolutionary movements. They lead to the abandonment of the class struggle and the liquidation of the revolutionary party. Such ideas often arise from defeatism and are a capitulation to the economic power, influence and ideas of the ruling class. The class struggle is replaced by proposals



that society is motivated by “common interests” or “universal human values” which apply to all, irrespective of their class position in society. The class struggle is condemned as “crude”, “doctrinaire”, “mechanistic”, “confrontationist” or “outdated”.

The ruling class campaigns ceaselessly against recognition of the existence of classes in society. Such recognition would expose the minority status of the capitalist ruling class. It has, however, not abandoned the class struggle itself and continues to attack workers’ wages, conditions of work and the trade unions. It fights the class struggle while advocating that workers should abandon it.

Rightists idealise the democratic rights existing in capitalist societies and present them in a non-class way and as superior to the democratic rights existing in socialist societies. There is a failure to publicise the achievements of socialist countries for fear of being labelled as supporters of “undemocratic regimes”. This has not only weakened the struggle for an extension of democratic rights in capitalist societies but also weakened the struggle for socialism.

There are those who downgrade and belittle Marxist-Leninist ideology and theory, declaring them “out of date”, no longer “relevant” to present day society, or “dogmatic”. They advance as “new”, ideas that have been contended with in the communist movement even in the time of Marx and Engels. These “new left” ideas are non-revolutionary and a repudiation of scientific socialism. They originate from a non-class view of society and are an unprincipled compromise with capitalism. Some who advance these ideas become defeatist, adherents of social democracy or join the capitalist class as advisers.

Rightists abandon the class struggle, the need for a revolutionary party and the objective of socialism.

Some on the left and the right view history from the point of view of individuals rather than seeing individuals in the totality of their social role. No better example of this is the unending demonisation of revolutionary and working class leaders. What is needed is an objective analysis of historical circumstances and the positive and negative role played by individuals within this wider context.

The threat to the survival of humanity arising from war and/or environmental catastrophe calls for the widest possible front of

opposition, including not only the working class and its natural allies but also those sections of the ruling class that are opposed to the extreme reactionaries in their own class.

This is not to suggest that the threat transcends politics and class. The crisis is certainly common to all who live on earth, but it does not affect all equally, nor can it be solved by “common action” of all since those class forces whose actions have caused it are not prepared to change their present course towards disaster.

Failure to realise this and an insistence on a narrow focus on the working class alone, rather than the key role of the working class within the alliance of and for humanity, is a sectarian error that can contribute to the threat facing the world.

It is imperative to maintain a class analysis of society and to recognise the vital role of the working class in social change and to resist an exclusive, generalised and undifferentiated focus on “the people”. Of course, it is “the people” who change society and create history, but the value of Marxism-Leninism is its power to identify the political, economic and ideological processes of change based on a class analysis.

A non-class approach encourages a laissez-faire attitude in analysis, on the assumption that all social movements associated in any way with social change are positive. It departs from the fundamental Marxist-Leninist criterion of assessing social phenomena on the basis of whether the working class movement is or is not assisted.

This does not deny the importance of the working class acquiring allies in struggle and the importance of multi-class movements in social change. However, a broadness of perspective must not entail abandonment of a scientific class analysis. Furthermore, the tendency to be broad and all-inclusive can ultimately lead not to broadness, but to support for particular non-working class forces, as has been shown in a number of historical instances.

## **Social democracy**

In Australia at the present time, the main ideological influence in the working class movement is that of social democracy. It is the ideological

basis determining the policies and tactics of the ALP and similar social democratic parties in other countries.

The ALP holds the view that the only method of social change is by evolution and reforms. The reality that change takes place by both evolution and revolution, by both quantitative and qualitative changes, is rejected. Consequently all social democratic parties limit their policies and their tactics to achieve them, to reforms within the capitalist system. None of the social democratic parties have developed a theory, policies or tactics to mobilise the people in a struggle to change the social system and build a socialist society even though the ALP retains the socialist objective in its program.

This incorrect and limited view of the ways by which change can take place means that all social democratic parties endlessly compromise with the controllers of the capitalist system and do not alter the fundamental economic and political causes of the many problems that face the working people and their families.

Overcoming the influence of social democratic ideas is another main task in the ideological and political work which members of the Communist Party of Australia have to achieve before the working class movement adopts a more militant attitude in its protracted struggle with capital and advances more far-reaching objectives towards overthrowing the capitalist system and building a new socialist society.

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Modern society is at a turning point. Never has its division “into two great hostile camps, into two great classes, directly facing each other bourgeois and proletariat”, been sharper or clearer. But as the ravages of capitalism and imperialism eat at the very fabric of the planet, time is no longer on our side.

Much progress has been made and movements for change in many parts of the world have achieved significant and positive results in the struggle for the liberation of the people. Capitalism is being challenged extensively in many areas. Reactionary governments have been overthrown. National liberation and people’s movements have made significant advances. Anti-globalisation struggles are developing in every corner of the earth. The struggle for peace has swept every continent.

We declare that the 21st Century will be the century of socialism. That is the objective of our work and activity. But whether this is achieved cannot be taken for granted. It will depend on the successful outcome of the struggle against capitalism and imperialism. This, in turn, depends on the organisational, political and ideological maturity of the Communist Parties that must lead it.