

PROGRAM

Amended CPA 13th National Congress December 2017



**COMMUNIST PARTY
OF AUSTRALIA**

Program Communist Party of Australia

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In the name of those washing others' clothes
(and expelling others' filth from the whiteness)
In the name of those caring for others' kids
(and selling their strength
in the form of maternal love and humiliations)
In the name of those living in another's house
(which isn't even an amiable womb
but a tomb or jail)
In the name of those eating others' crumbs
(and chewing them in fact with
the feeling of a thief)
In the name of those living on other's land
(the houses and factories and shops
streets cities towns
rivers lakes volcanoes and mountains
always belonging to others
and that's why the cops and the guards are there guarding
them against us)
In the name of those who have nothing but
hunger exploitation disease
a thirst for justice and water
persecutions and condemnations
loneliness abandonment oppression death
I accuse private property
of depriving us of everything.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA – ITS OUTLOOK AND TASKS

The aim of the Communist Party of Australia is the establishment of a society that is fairer, co-operative, more democratic and far more enriching for the people than the present society. Such a society can only be a socialist one.

Our goal is the creation of a society that will resolve the problems inherent in capitalism – war, exploitation, environmental destruction, oppression, poverty, unemployment, ignorance, bigotry, racism and discrimination.

The CPA is a working class party. Its members include industrial workers, scientists, technicians, writers, farmers, progressives from many walks of life, women and men, young and old, and with different national origins. All who are united by a commitment to work for the interests and needs of the working class are welcome to join its ranks.

The Communist Party of Australia first came into existence in 1920. Its members have worked without pause since then in the interests of the working people of Australia. They have been in the forefront of struggles for democratic rights, for the rights of trade unions, for better working conditions, for international peace, for international solidarity recognising that the working people of all countries have common interests.

Communist parties throughout the world, with the support of millions of people, have won many achievements. A number of socialist countries led by Communist parties have been established, such as Cuba.

The Communist Party of Australia reaffirms its commitment to remain dedicated to the struggles of the working class and all progressive groups and classes. The members of the Party are committed to socialism, are closely associated with the working people and base their activities on Marxism-Leninism which brings an understanding of the laws of social development and the direction of events.

It is our aim to develop the Communist Party into a party capable of helping to educate, organise, lead, unite and fight together with all politically

progressive forces in building a broad people's movement for social change with the working class as its core.

The Party and the people

The Communist Party is confident that the working class is capable of leading the struggle to win political power from the capitalist ruling class and the agencies maintaining its power. The socialist reconstruction of society is only possible when the working class becomes the class which governs society.

Communists can play a decisive role in these tasks if they apply Marxism-Leninism to their daily activities. By high levels of organisation and discipline, Communist parties have proved in a number of countries, for example in Vietnam and China, that they are capable of conducting the struggle to end the rule of the exploiters.

These objectives are impossible, however, if the members of the Communist parties are not closely connected with the working people and, at all times, concern themselves with the daily as well as the long-term needs of the workers and other exploited social groups in society.

Political leadership must be constantly earned by effective policies, by dedicated work, by commitment, by integrity and honesty. It will not be bestowed or established by declarations or laws.

The Communist Party of Australia seeks to establish its political leadership by winning support for its policies and by earning respect for its members by their commitment, organisation and activities in the struggles of the working people. This in turn depends on our ability to work democratically side by side with others, arguing our position while respecting the views of others and, at each stage, helping to unify the politically progressive and socialist forces. The Communist Party's national newspaper, *The Guardian*, plays a central role in this process. *The Guardian* helps to educate and organise Party members and supporters to carry out activities, openly and honestly informing the workers of issues, free of control by vested interests. It helps to give guidance to the Party's campaigns. Our newspaper links the Party and individual members with the more class conscious and politically aware members of the working class and working people generally.

The Communist Party seeks to have all its members distribute *The Guardian* which must develop a wide readership among working class and progressive activists.

Scientific socialism

The Communist Party of Australia is guided in its work by applying to all issues of the day and to all problems the scientific socialist theory founded by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels and further developed by Lenin.

Marxism-Leninism is a living science and not a dogma. As developments take place and new problems arise in society and nature, ideology and theory must develop as well. Answers must be found to meet the new circumstances. Theory must, therefore, be a part of the everyday activity of each member.

The basis of Marxism-Leninism is dialectical materialism which recognises the primary existence of the material world and that interconnections exist between all material things and that all things are in a process of constant change and development. Changes take place as a result of the struggle between contradictions within all things.

Marxism-Leninism recognises the class struggle in present day society as the starting point for understanding social change and as the motivating force of that change. In Australian society the working class is by far the majority and upon becoming the class which governs society, will end the exploitation of one class by another and build a socialist future.

The Communist Party seeks to study and apply Marxism-Leninism in practice in the light of conditions in Australia. At the same time it recognises the universality of the general laws of scientific socialism.

Internationalism

The Party combines its struggles for the best interests of the working people and the independence and sovereignty of Australia with international working class solidarity. The Party sees itself as a part of the international Communist and workers' movement.

The Party bases its relations with other Communist and workers' parties on the principles of solidarity, mutual assistance, respect and friendship,

independence, equality and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. The CPA accepts the responsibilities these principles impose.

At the same time, the Communist Party of Australia is an independent political party which makes its own decisions and stands on its own feet. This does not mean that the Party is unconcerned about the activities, successes and failures of similar parties of other countries. Nor does it mean any neglect of other left or progressive organisations with which the CPA has friendly and cooperative relations.

The Communist objective of economic, social and national liberation of the people, although an irregular, complex and lengthy process, is the fundamental direction of our times. The historical period of the transition from capitalism to socialism on a world scale has begun.

Neither the difficulties of the moment nor the virulent campaigns by the bitter opponents of socialism prove that socialism has "failed" or that capitalism is the "natural" form of human society. The achievements of the socialist states and their impact throughout the world are immense and can never be erased from human history.

The successes in building socialist societies so far, despite the difficulties and setbacks, indicate that it is possible to change Australia and create a better society. It is this vision of a socialist society leading to a world free from war which motivates the work of the members of the Communist Party of Australia. But to change the world we must first of all know it.

Chapter 2

TIMES OF CHANGE

The decisive factor in this historical period has been and remains the unparalleled level of action by millions of ordinary people against the injustice and misery inflicted by capitalism and for reforms and revolutionary transformation.

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

There have been a number of changes in the economy of capitalism although its basic characteristic of exploitation of the working people has not changed. From simple monopolies the structure of capitalism has changed to one in which huge corporations now span many countries and dominate all sectors of the economy. They have accumulated huge industrial, financial and political power.

Although capitalism has increased production enormously compared to previous social systems, it distorts economic and social development, making it dependent on the profit motive. It uses and depletes natural resources irrationally and irresponsibly. The greed and arrogance of the transnationals and the military industrial complexes of capitalist states is the major obstacle to peace, disarmament, the independence of nations, social progress and environmentally sustainable economic policies.

The clear aim of the TNCs is super profits achieved through control of the world's strategic resources and labour force, a process that has already enslaved many nations and brought about massive poverty and unemployment.

In support of this process, rampant militarism is being encouraged and the imperialist use of force in international relations promoted as normal and acceptable.

Imperialism uses ethnic, national and religious differences and promotes divisions to weaken the unity of the working class and the people's struggles. The aim is the naked intensification of exploitation on a global scale.

The process of globalisation has been accompanied by a fundamental shift away from commodity production to the provision of services and to the finance sector, in particular, for financial speculation. Finance capital now predominates over industrial capital.

The process of globalisation is used increasingly to subordinate national governments to the dictates of transnational corporations. It has brought significant changes to the state apparatus, parts of which are being privatised and brought under the direct control of the transnational corporations. While government regulation of the corporate sector is being reduced to a minimum, the repressive role of the state is being increased. The strengthening of police forces and the training of "special forces", the use of troops in civil internal matters, and industrial legislation which places severe restrictions

on the trade union movement are examples of the increasingly repressive nature of the state in all capitalist countries.

The most striking contradiction is the gap between rich and poor which has reached appalling dimensions and is widening visibly year by year. This is taking place in an age of the unprecedented advance of technology and scientific knowledge that could provide the means to guarantee the welfare, security and a rich life for all. In more than 70 underdeveloped countries – or more than a third of all the countries on earth – per capita incomes fell sharply in the 1980s and '90s and are still falling.

While human labour assisted by technology has reached formerly undreamed levels of productivity, socially produced wealth has increasingly accumulated in private hands. We see since the global financial crisis of 2008 that accumulation not only continues but picks up pace and escalates during times of crisis as the wealthy are poised to take advantage. Between 2005 and 2016 the concentration of wealth went from the top 200 holding more wealth than 40 percent of the world's population to the top 62 holding more wealth than 50 percent of the world's population.

These gross and obscene inequalities reveal the inexorable consequences of the rules that govern capitalist accumulation and working class exploitation. They glaringly expose the economic irrationality and the moral bankruptcy of the capitalist system.

Capitalist globalisation causes 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 all forms of life on earth.

The capitalist system is unable to prevent the development of acute social problems or to resolve them. They include extremes of wealth and poverty, ignorance, racism, drug addiction, oppression, environmental degradation, international conflicts and wars. The application of profit-motivated solutions to social problems creates serious tensions and conflicts while the contradictions inherent within the system of capitalism inevitably produce booms and slumps in the economy.

Despite intermittent periods of relative prosperity capitalism brings widespread and long-term unemployment, reduced living standards, mounting personal debt, and cuts in public education, health, housing and

social welfare services. There is high taxation for working people, trade difficulties, budget problems, widespread corruption, financial speculation and instability.

Employers and capitalist governments are increasing their attacks on working people and their organisations, particularly the trade unions, hoping to force working men and women to accept reduced wages and working conditions leading to a lower standard of living. Basic democratic rights, such as the right to organise and strike, are under severe attack.

Women

Capitalism impacts negatively on all aspects of women's lives. The Communist Party of Australia believes in enhancing the position of women in society, particularly women who form part of the working class. Women overall continue to experience lower wages, greater job insecurity and higher levels of unemployment. Female workers make up a significant section of the workforce in industries such as food processing, hospitality, community work, nursing and aged care and as outworkers – all occupations where wages are low.

Through their labour, they are exploited like their male counterparts, but they are subjected to additional types of exploitation and hardships as well as being denied wage equity. The CPA calls for an end to discrimination in the workplace and labour market. It is important that trade unions look at ways in which they can recruit and facilitate the participation of women in their struggles.

In capitalist countries, economic oppression of women in the workplace is facilitated by the mass media that continues to portray women in subordinate roles to men.

The Communist Party of Australia fights for women to be paid an equal wage as men for work of equal value, but stresses that we cannot stop at this demand. The primary impediment to women's freedom under a capitalist system is their exploitation. Women should be afforded the real value of their labour, and not simply the same wage as the opposite sex which is also exploited under capitalism.

Many women are forced to abandon the workforce because they cannot afford early childhood education. Others are forced to return to the labour force too early due to inadequate maternity leave or the high cost of child care

and early childhood education. High costs of child care mean that women on low wages are gaining little financial benefit from their employment. Women in this situation have no choice but to pay these costs if they wish to raise children and maintain a job.

The CPA believes universal access to publicly funded before-school, after-school care for all who need them and for good quality, free early childhood education and care services, including after-hours, vacation and occasional care, in communities, schools and workplaces is a right.

Women all too often face violence in the home, and many remain in dangerous situations with their partners because of lack of domestic violence and legal services and affordable public housing. The CPA supports domestic violence leave.

As at March 2017, abortion remains the subject of criminal law in all Australian states and territories except the Australian Capital Territory. Variations across states range from abortion being a crime for women and doctors in Queensland and NSW unless a doctor believes a woman's physical and/or mental health is in serious danger to legal in the ACT if provided by a medical doctor. However, exclusion zones may be set at the discretion of the ACT Health Minister.

The CPA would legalise abortion across Australia. Abortion is not a criminal matter, but one of choice for a woman and a medical procedure, which should be carried out by a qualified medical practitioner with appropriate counselling and other services.

Capitalism cannot provide solutions to these and the many other problems that women encounter because the system as a whole is driven by the profit ambitions of private companies.

Only socialism promotes the dignity and value of all workers, including women. It promotes a balance between women's social contribution through work, their family life and their individual development. Only socialism is capable of structuring society to achieve this balance.

Racism and discrimination against the Indigenous peoples and migrants and discrimination against women, plus poverty, insecurity, homelessness and social breakdown remain characteristic for many in our society.

World-wide struggle

The great majority of the world's people live in Third World countries. Despite achieving nominal political independence the position of the people in most of these countries is desperate. They continue to face starvation, lack of clean water, poverty, insecurity, illiteracy and unemployment. The exploitation by the major imperialist countries is as harsh as ever and the economic and social gap between the industrialised and developing nations is widening.

The suffering of so many millions is made even more acute by global military spending which is an enormous waste of human, scientific, technical, natural and economic resources.

These features of capitalist society, its uneven and unstable development, the permanence of structural and conceptual crises in society generally are proof of the necessity for change.

During the 20th century, struggles by people in many different countries for liberation and social justice achieved victories of world-wide significance. Changes, opening a new stage in human history, began to be put in place and the political map of the world was qualitatively changed. This process of revolutionary transformation of society is still going on.

Communist parties, often in alliance with other organisations, have been in the forefront in these world-wide struggles. Revolutionary parties came into existence as organisations fighting for the interests of the oppressed and exploited, in the bitter and long struggle for independence, freedom and socialism. Where members were closely connected with the working people and were concerned with the needs of all the progressive social forces in the community they were supported and became influential. They became ineffective whenever they lost their close connections with the people.

The communist parties, with their scientific understanding of the world and the laws of social development, helped to guide the people's struggles. It became possible to anticipate the broad direction of events.

A new era opened as working people took the reins of power into their own hands and began creating societies without private ownership for profit and without exploitation and oppression of working people – socialist societies.

With the 1917 Revolution in Russia, the world's people saw that it was possible to create strong publicly owned industry and collectively owned

agriculture, to eliminate unemployment and eradicate illiteracy, to advance participatory democracy and promote national identity, equality and culture, and to provide free education and health care on an extensive basis, plus social services and housing for all at a minimal cost based on a very low percentage of total family income. New hopes and demands among the working people of the developed capitalist countries and the colonial countries were created.

The basis of socialism is the public ownership of the means of production, the planning of economic development and the elimination of the exploitation of labour for private profit. Socialism ends the domination of the capitalist class as the ruling class. The political leadership of society and political power pass into the hands of the working class supported by other progressive and democratic forces.

Socialism makes it possible to achieve equality of opportunity and the elimination of poverty, friendship between all nationalities, the extension of democratic rights, international peace and disarmament. Socialism is a humane form of society which replaces the profit motive with the fulfillment of people's needs and the development of people's abilities as the driving force of social development.

However, the world balance of forces changed in favour of imperialism following the overthrow of socialist governments in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The United States is now using its pre-eminent military and economic power to reach for global supremacy.

Capitalism and imperialism have launched an unprecedented attack on all social, economic and political fronts against the conditions and rights won by the people in previous centuries.

The US is working for a new military-centred global order where the share of markets, income and resources is decided not in the interests of the working people but by the TNCs and their political and military dominance.

Their campaign for global supremacy absorbs scarce economic resources, erodes social conditions and deepens social polarisation. In the US as elsewhere, the big corporations are intensifying their exploitation of the working people and increasing the pressure on government to expand their military campaigns overseas. Transnational corporations are the main beneficiaries of such campaigns, opening up the world for their plunder,

with little responsibility for the consequences of their greed, the deaths, the social dislocation and the impoverishment of masses of people.

Around the world, millions of fighters for freedom, democracy, workers' rights, national independence, peace, the environment and socialism are confronting capitalism. This struggle is an objective process and inevitably arises in response to oppression and exploitation. In class societies it takes the form of the class struggle. It is this struggle which is the motor of development of society and the guarantee of social progress.

The people of all countries constitute a power that has the potential to defeat the power of the big corporations and their governments. Such is the strength and vision of these people's movements that the conditions for a new revolutionary wave stretching across the world are now coming into existence.

All of these movements oppose the policies of the big corporations and conservative governments that promote war, economic rationalist policies, attack democratic rights and are responsible for environmental vandalism in their chase after super profits.

There is a widespread understanding that wars, poverty, insecurity, lack of democratic rights are a product of the capitalist system and imperialism. The political consciousness of millions of people and their strong opposition to the policies of the corporations and their governments is now at a high level.

Today, capitalism is being seriously challenged. A new revolutionary cycle is emerging.

Chapter 3

CAPITALIST AUSTRALIA

Foreign monopoly control of the economy has reached an advanced stage. The transnational corporations occupy significant positions in many key industries, such as mining, energy, food and agriculture, as well as in financial institutions.

Important sections of Australian capital are linked with foreign capital economically and share the same class interests. The Australian ruling class

has consistently played the role of junior partner to British and now, United States capital.

This dependence and pursuit of common imperialist interests has led to the establishment of a number of key US military bases on Australian territory and active co-operation between Australian intelligence services and their counterparts in the United States, Britain, Israel and other reactionary states. It is also reflected in the increasing militarisation of Australia, escalating military budgets and the absolute subservience of successive Australian Governments in following the military dictates of US imperialism such as involving Australia in the wars in Korea, Vietnam and Iraq.

The Australian ruling class is actively cooperating and coordinating its actions with the US in its drive to recolonise former colonial countries. Australian operations in the Solomon Islands, PNG and East Timor are examples of this.

The acceptance by Australia's ruling class of this role is also reflected in its consistent opposition to socialist countries and movements for national independence and sovereignty.

Both the Australian Labor Party and the Liberal and National Parties accept this subservience as the cornerstone of their defence and foreign policies. That basic position is not altered by some minor differences in emphasis by Labor Party leaders.

These policies carry with them disastrous economic, political and military consequences for Australia. The development of the economy is distorted, Australia's political institutions are subverted and the country's security is threatened by participation in the aggressive military adventures of US leaders.

While the Australian ruling class is an integral part of the world imperialist system, Australia's rulers also have their own economic and political objectives. They want to increase their own strength and influence by the export of capital and growing militarisation.

Australian capital has considerably increased its foreign investments in Southeast Asia, the Pacific, Britain, the US, Latin America and a small amount in Japan. Australia's imperialist policies are illustrated by its economic and military activities in Papua New Guinea and its attempts to play the leading role in the South Pacific.

From time to time, the interests of Australia clash with those of its partners. This is to be seen in conflicts on some trade questions but these differences are not yet reflected in any substantial demand for an independent position or the adoption of an independent foreign policy on the part of the Australian ruling class.

From the very earliest days of white settlement, a clash between the interests of the ruling class and those of the working people arose and has been expressed in many struggles during the two centuries of white settlement.

The movement which finally brought an end to the convict system was the first major political action for democratic rights. The 1850s were marked by the militant action of the Eureka miners who played an exceptionally important part in the earliest development of parliamentary representation against the largely military colonial regimes appointed by Britain which ruled the separate colonies at that time. The first Australian trade unions were also formed in this period.

The consolidation of the Australian States into a federation marked the beginning of transition to political independence from British colonialism. Federation reflected the growing integration of the economies of the States, the extension of communications and trade, and the emergence of an Australian national identity. Australia established a federal parliamentary system of government.

There were many actions by workers and their trade unions to improve working conditions, wages and the rights of trade unions. One of the outstanding democratic rights struggles was the “No” vote in the referendum on legislation which attempted to ban the Communist Party of Australia in 1951.

Issues of war and peace have also been a constant theme of mass action by the Australian people. Examples include the anti-conscription campaign during World War I, solidarity with Republican Spain and the movement against war and fascism in the 1930s, the post-World War II campaigns against nuclear weapons, opposition to Australia’s involvement in the war against Vietnam and in the wars against Iraq and Afghanistan, and the continuing struggle against US bases on Australian soil. Other examples are the peace movement campaigns for universal disarmament, the elimination of nuclear weapons by all countries, for peaceful co-existence and an independent foreign policy.

The actions of the maritime unions and the CPA, for example, hamstrung the attempts of the Dutch army to defeat the struggle for independence in Indonesia in 1946. This solidarity action is a foundation for friendly relations between the people of the two countries.

In more recent times, the campaign to implement multiculturalism is important because Australia has become a multi-ethnic and multilingual society. Multiculturalism enriches the new Australian culture which is emerging from the multi-ethnic and multi-national character of Australia's population.

These constant struggles on many issues represent the actions of the forces for peace, independence, democracy, social progress and security and they will continue in the future as well because these objectives can only be finally reached with the winning of socialism.

Regulation and Deregulation

The Australian economy is increasingly coming under the direct control of the ruling class. Some main features of the economy implemented by the ruling class are:

Following the devastating political and economic crisis of the Great Depression in the 1930s, some government control and regulation was accepted by the capitalist class as necessary to protect the system from the effects of unrestrained competition. Limited government regulation of banking, interest rates, currency exchange rates, borrowing and lending, the inflow and outflow of capital and even control of prices of some commodities were introduced.

However, in the 1970s and '80s, under pressure from the financial sector and major corporations and reflecting the growth of huge transnational companies, regulation gave way to deregulation. Governments reduced the use of or abandoned many of their regulatory powers. Current policy of the Australian ruling class is that there should be as little regulation as possible except where it suits their specific interests. They strive to remove any barrier to trade or investment or movement of capital, goods, labour or services regardless of the impact upon the people.

Free-trade agreements are a part of this process. Although they are invariably touted as "opening up trade" and "providing more jobs" they give major advantages to those countries with more developed and stronger economies.

The TNCs are strongly in favour of free-trade agreements as they break down barriers and remove restrictions on their products and their investments, thereby gaining access to those countries with weaker economies which have been protected by either tariffs, subsidies or environmental and health considerations.

The Australia-US free-trade agreement is no exception and will provide major benefits to the US economy.

The alternative to free trade is trade based on the principle of mutual benefit, that is, trade that is fair and takes into full account the economic interests of both trading partners.

Privatisation

The drive to sell off to private enterprise services which had formerly been provided by governments has become widespread in all capitalist countries. Banking, communications, transport, education, hospitals, housing, land holdings and even the work of government departments are being either contracted out or sold.

These and other structural adjustments strengthen the political and economic stranglehold of the TNCs and local monopolies over the economy while reducing the progressive role that governments can play in providing free, necessary and universal services to society. The privatisation of the Commonwealth Bank, Qantas, Telstra, transport systems, some health services, etc. have all weakened the government's ability to look after the needs of the people. Another effect is to reduce the flow of revenue coming to the government in the form of profits made by publicly owned enterprises.

Both ALP and Coalition governments have implemented the drive to privatisation thereby demonstrating their support for the capitalist system and the big corporations that become the main shareholders of privatised enterprises.

Attacks on workers' rights and conditions

As a consequence of the adoption of class collaborationist policies, particularly throughout the 1980s, the working class movement has been weakened. The theory that lower wages would create higher profits which, in turn, would lead to more production and hence more jobs became

widespread but has proven to be false. Promoters of these policies suggested workers would be more than compensated with improved services – the “social wage”. Class collaborationist policies have led to lowered standards of living for many workers, longer working hours, the elimination of penalty rates or their reduction, neglect of health and safety regulations, speed-up, widespread casualisation and part-time work, and many other changes that are unfavourable for workers.

Workers’ entitlements have often been stolen following bankruptcies, takeovers and closures.

Under-payment and non-payment of legal entitlements are on the rise, alongside the growth of sham contracting and phoenix companies.

As at 2016, 17.8 percent of workers over the age of 34 and 33 percent of those under the age of 34 had no access to entitlements.

At the same time, 19 percent of working people identified as “employees” did not have leave entitlements.

The collective principles of the trade union movement have been undermined by the introduction of individual work contracts as well as a ruling class ideological push towards individualistic approaches to work and life in general.

A series of reactionary anti-trade union pieces of legislation by both Labor and Coalition governments has made the situation for trade unions extremely precarious. The systematic destruction of the award-based system is part of this process. Awards have been stripped, severely limiting their ability to protect workers’ rights and conditions. The vigorous promotion of individual and non-union work contracts aims to re-establish a master-servant relationship in the workplace such as existed in the 19th Century.

Vigorous attempts are being made to exclude trade unions from workplaces. Severe penalties for individuals and unions taking part in industrial action have been imposed. Militant unionism is to be replaced by the creation of “yellow” unions or better still, in the eyes of employers, no unions at all.

Capital inflows, borrowings and currency manipulation

Following deregulation and a currency devaluation in the early 1980s, the borrowing of capital overseas by private companies and by governments contributed to a dramatic increase in Australia's overseas debt. Much of the private borrowing was used for speculation, mergers and takeovers. A large part of Australia's Gross Domestic Product now goes overseas as interest and repayments on the foreign debt. Australia's national debt is also being added to by successive adverse trade balances in which the value of imports exceeds exports.

Capital inflows and the levels of foreign ownership continue to increase together with the outflow of interest and principal repayments and the repatriation of profits to overseas owners often found in tax havens, avoiding Australian taxes and regulations. More and more industries, services, resources and land is being passed into foreign hands.

Taxation

In addition to the direct exploitation of labour, the taxation system is used against workers with wage and salary earners paying the lion's share of direct and indirect taxes. The introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) has even more severely shifted the burden of taxation onto the working people. There has been an equally marked decline in taxes paid out of company profits.

Many tax benefits are extended to companies to "encourage" investment by increasing profits. Tax avoidance schemes, use of overseas "tax havens" and other devices as well as outright corruption in business are widespread.

The attack on social welfare

At the same time, cuts in government spending are affecting social welfare, public education, health and housing programs and employment. A permanent pool of unemployed is deliberately maintained and the number of people living below the poverty line has increased.

One of the tragedies of modern capitalism is that increasing numbers of young people are marginalised by underemployment, condemned to joining the ranks of the "working poor".

Unemployment benefits as a right have been abolished, Medicare and the public hospital system have been undermined, and free tertiary education abandoned. The universal age and invalid pension scheme is also being undermined by the extension of the “means test” and the introduction of superannuation which is intended, eventually, to replace government paid pensions.

The idea of the community’s right to services has been replaced by the “user pays” principle. It is a means of increasing charges to householders and recipients of various government services, the costs of which should be spread across the community.

Property and share ownership, loans and interest rates

Working people, who formerly relied exclusively on wages earned, are increasingly induced to become the owners of property, particularly housing and shares. The cynical objective of the government is to blunt the class struggle by workers and to increase the influence of individualistic and money-making ideology.

Home ownership was popularised and this involved entering into substantial mortgages with banks or other finance institutions. The obligation to pay interest and repay mortgages has become increasingly onerous and becomes a restraint on workers taking industrial action. With a similar objective the use of credit card loans has also been popularised. While making purchasing easier, this also seduces working class families to get into debt.

Public housing, which provided rental accommodation for a substantial section of working people, also reduced the pool of tenants to be exploited by landlords. Today, public housing no longer serves either of these purposes. Restoration of substantial public housing would reduce rents generally and provide a buffer against loss of jobs through retrenchment and sickness for many lower paid workers.

The scientific and technological revolution and its impact

The scientific and technological revolution is a gigantic qualitative change in the development of the productive forces which has brought about an

unprecedented increase and acceleration in production. In the second half of the 20th Century, the world's industrial output more than quadrupled. Hundreds of new major industrial complexes appeared, the whole energy base underwent great change, industrialisation of agriculture made great strides, transport and communications were radically transformed.

This revolutionary impact has been largely confined to highly industrialised countries. Seventy percent of the world's people live in economically underdeveloped countries which have been effectively by-passed by the scientific and technological progress. Over 70 percent of all the families engaged in agriculture continue to use hoes and animal-drawn ploughs.

In contrast to the industrial revolution of the 18th and early 19th Centuries, this revolution does not stem from the invention and spread of machinery, but from the direct application of highly sophisticated scientific knowledge. Discoveries in mathematics, physics, artificial intelligence (AI), computer and other branches of science, have driven this process. Developments in chemistry provided the basis for fundamental changes in the technology of various production processes and led to the establishment of many new industries. Discoveries in biology led to profound changes in agriculture and medicine. Computers and AI have led to increased automation, displacing many workers while at the same time resulting in new industries.

The capitalist class has been able to harness the benefits of the scientific and technological revolution (STR) to stave off some effects of the system's inherent contradictions but at the same time has aggravated them.

Higher productivity through the use of improved and more efficient machinery and further intensification of the exploitation of labour make it possible for capitalism not only to maintain but even to boost profits while allowing some increase in wages to workers. It used these opportunities to influence other classes and social forces to support capitalist interests and solutions to problems.

Monopoly capital's pursuit of super-profits has led to a growing internationalisation of production and a new international division of labour. In Australia whole industries such as clothing, footwear and shipping have been virtually destroyed and the car manufacturing industry has closed down.

The STR has increased the concentration of production and capital in the hands of the biggest monopolies. At the same time, it accelerates the ruin

of non-monopolised and small enterprises that cannot afford extensive technological innovations.

Sections of the ruling class use scientific and technological innovations to exert influence on masses of people through communications, surveillance, and other means of control.

The clearest evidence of capitalism's abuse of the possibilities created by the STR is the unprecedented growth of high-tech armaments, electronic surveillance and spying, and the militarisation of space.

In the major capitalist countries, over two-thirds of budget allocations for science go into military research and development, involving thousands of major research centres and the great majority of scientists. There was a sudden surge in military spending after 9/11 in 2001.

The US budget saw an increase in military funding to continue Science and Technology (S&T) support of the more aggressive rebalance (pivot) to the Asia Pacific region and implementation of the Defence Innovation Initiative.

The Australian government adopted at the US's request a policy of allocating two per cent of budgetary expenditure to military spending – one trillion dollars over 20 years (2016 prices).

The arms race is not only a constant threat to the future of the planet but a criminal waste of vast material resources which could help to dramatically increase the prosperity of all the people of all countries without exception.

The STR has also significantly increased the productivity of labour resulting in huge increases in production but with many fewer workers involved. However, the main benefits flow to the owners of the means of production and the employers of labour.

The vast possibilities created by the STR can only be properly used in a planned socialist society liberating workers. With public ownership of resources and industry and the management of economic and social affairs in the hands of the people, the scientific and technological revolution can be fully implemented in the interests of working people.

This would provide the basis for the elimination of hazardous and repetitive work and for workers to enjoy a shorter working week with more time for leisure to pursue cultural, sporting and other interests.

The attacks on democratic rights

As a result of ceaseless struggles since the earliest days of white settlement, a number of important democratic rights were won by the Australian people. However, these rights remain under constant threat. As the problems of the system increase and the demands for reforms and change grow stronger, restrictions on existing democratic rights are imposed. This is particularly relevant with the incessant attacks on democratic rights following the events of September 11, 2001 in the United States and under the cover of the “war on terrorism”.

Nowhere is this more clearly seen than in the range of legislation introduced by both Federal and State governments which is intended for use against the trade union movement. Much of this legislation violates Australia’s obligations as an adherent to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions.

There is a rapid build up of computerised records of many aspects of citizens’ lives by police, banks, medical, taxation and other agencies, involving phone tapping and other forms of high-tech surveillance.

The private ownership of the mass media and its increasing concentration into very few hands raises another democratic rights issue. Concentration of the media ensures that the supply of news and information favours the interests of the ruling class. Distortions, lies, the selective presentation of news, the exclusion of information not favourable to ruling class interests and owner imposed editorial policies are examples of democracy denied.

The electoral system is also constructed in a manner which aims to keep government within the limits of the two-party system. Both major parties maintain the capitalist system and are interested in preserving the dominance of the present two-party system.

The top echelons of the State apparatus – the police, army, courts, government departments and publicly owned business undertakings are drawn from among those who will uphold the interests of the existing system. In all these ways, limits on the democratic rights of the people are imposed and maintained.

The emergence in Australia of the New Right, the maintenance of neo-fascist organisations in the shadows and the readiness of governments to quickly resort to force indicates that the rulers are prepared for even harsher

restrictions and the cancellation of other democratic rights should their interests be threatened by popular action supporting alternative policies.

Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders

Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders form two national minorities within the Australian state. They suffer racial discrimination and oppression, segregation and isolation, and many live in conditions of poverty and deprivation. Equally unacceptable conditions are imposed on the South Sea Islander ethnic minority in Australia.

Under the impact of over 200 years of colonisation, Australia's Indigenous people have been integrated into the capitalist system and the great majority have been transformed into members of the Australian working class.

While the process of class formation among the Indigenous people is predominantly one of the gradual growth of a black proletariat, the development of a middle-class is also part of the picture and is being encouraged by the white Australian ruling class.

The political and social struggle by the Indigenous people is centred on the issue of land rights. This campaign is not only a question of civil rights; it goes beyond this bourgeois democratic aim for it contains a significant revolutionary aspect, the demand for the return to collective ownership of part of the basic means of production.

The demand for communal and inalienable property challenges capitalism for it puts forward a case for the expropriation of private property. It creates an alternative to private land property and raises the question of social ownership by all the people, black and white, of land and other resources in a people's Australia.

Migration and refugees

Mass migration to Australia in the post-war period considerably altered the composition of society, including the working class. It introduced new factors into the struggle for democratic rights and for working class unity. Mass migration was introduced to provide developing Australian industries with the necessary labour force in the post-war years. It has been a source of cheap labour for the clothing and some other industries. Discrimination

against migrants and racist attitudes continue to exist and may be fanned during periods of economic difficulties.

Australia has become a multi-lingual and multicultural society. A new Australian culture reflecting the multicultural character of society is arising but this is not to be regarded as a mere adding together of a number of different cultures standing separate from each other. It is the outcome of the cultural interaction between the various groups without prejudices or discrimination. It will contain elements of all the individual ethnic cultures to be found in Australia. The new Australian culture must be national in character, and be unified and integrated, not the result of a process of assimilation. Multiculturalism enriches the whole of Australia's cultural life.

The struggle for migrant rights has an important role in the overall movement for democracy in Australia. Demands for equal opportunity, against racism and discrimination, the development of democratic and progressive culture all add to the democratic movement.

The millions of refugees now to be found on all continents are a direct product of wars and the savage exploitation, persecution and denial of rights by capitalist governments to the people of many countries. The Australian Government has attempted to criminalise refugees and has incarcerated many in detention centres, sometimes for years. This is a denial of the rights of refugees enshrined in the Refugee Convention of the United Nations.

Under both Australian and international law, there is no such status as an illegal refugee. It is a disgrace that Australia is the only industrialised country that imposes mandatory detention of asylum seekers while their claims are being examined. This policy, which is largely based on racism at government level, must be changed to one which accepts the legal rights of refugees and provides community housing and care while their claims are investigated.

Corruption

The frequent exposure of corruption shows that it has become institutionalised in Australia's economic and political life. Billions of dollars find their way from the public purse into the pockets of the government's corporate mates through subsidies, tax evasion and avoidance, government purchases, private company bail-outs and by other means. Companies hope to buy

favours by paying bribes and making donations to the funds of the major political parties which at present form the governments of Australia.

Corruption is widespread in the building industry as developers seek favourable decisions from municipal and city councils. At the Federal Government level millions of dollars in the Heritage Fund have been used to undertake projects which would assist their parliamentary representatives win votes in their particular electorates.

Corruption is an endemic feature of capitalism based, as it is, on money-making by all means possible and at the expense of others in the community as a whole.

Environmental crisis

A major feature of the multi-faceted crisis now besetting world capitalism is the climate emergency.

Protection of the environment remains a foremost task if planet Earth is to be saved from a possible climatic catastrophe.

Many serious problems have arisen including global warming, soil erosion, salination and desertification, the pollution of towns and rivers, deforestation and the loss of biodiversity. The impact of climate change on the Arctic and Antarctica is of grave concern. The nuclear industry adds to the environmental problems.

This is occurring at the same time as population growth is continuing, arable land is in decline, and erratic climate patterns and water resources constrain production in many regions with an estimated 1.8 billion people expected to be living with absolute water scarcity by 2025.

Growth under capitalism is at the expense of the environment and people. The need for sustainable use of and respect for the environment is overpowering.

Capitalism's belief in its right to exploit causes excessive and avoidable damage to the environment as corporations pollute the water, soil and atmosphere, rip out the resources of the planet, and destroy its vegetation and biodiversity in their criminal drive for profits, irrespective of the consequences for the long-term survival of all forms of life on earth.

Destruction of the environment is a crime against humanity. Protection of the environment must be a primary struggle of the working class and all people.

Today, the struggle for sustainable development is in essence a struggle to restrain and restrict capitalist corporations and to compel an end to environmentally damaging production processes. It is a struggle to fulfil human needs through more creative, democratic and ecologically respectful practices. The contrast with uncontrollable capitalist growth and exploitation of natural resources for profit is stark.

In the coming period, priorities are likely to include campaigns against coal seam gas and the expansion of coal and uranium mining and the issues around global warming and climate change and market-based “solutions” for the environmental crisis, as well as water usage and biodiversity.

Australia is the highest greenhouse gas polluter per person in the developed world. This pollution is produced overwhelmingly by profit-driven corporations, not by individual members of the community who mostly have a high level of consciousness regarding energy use, water conservation and recycling.

Australia’s electricity-related emissions are so high because the country relies primarily on coal for electricity generation and the CO₂ emitted from coal-fired power stations, because of its volume, is the most dangerous greenhouse gas.

Australia has some of the world’s best capacity for renewable energy – solar, wind, wave and geothermal. There are no technical barriers to moving to 100 percent renewable energy but this is blocked by corporations that profit from polluting industries. The CPA remains committed to opposing nuclear generated power.

In line with these corporate interests, state and federal Liberal governments have rejected the promotion of renewable energy sources in favour of expansion of coal mining and large-scale development of gas. However, coal seam gas extraction does grave environmental damage such as poisoning ground and surface water aquifers and destroying agricultural land. Energy from gas is a substantial greenhouse gas polluter.

The parliamentary political force that has consistently opposed the expansion of coal mining and coal seam gas extraction and promotes the development of sustainable renewable energy sources is the Australian Greens. They,

however, do not offer a satisfactory solution for workers in these industries. The CPA advocates that mining and resource jobs should be protected and converted into areas of environmental sustainability on no loss of pay.

Polluting corporations are working with governments to avoid regulations that may compromise their profits and challenge the economic system that created the environmental crisis in the first place.

In fact, state intervention in the form of a carbon tax is market fundamentalism, which the government used to divert attention away from the causes of the climate crisis, to protect the capitalist system and to protect profit levels. The only potential beneficiaries are the financial markets with their trading in carbon credits and the big polluters who can buy the “right” to continue to pollute. The CPA booklet *Hot Earth* makes it clear that the carbon tax was and is not a solution to global warming.

What is needed is the political will for a different form of state intervention that will use planning, regulations, legislation and penalties to enforce a reduction in Australia’s carbon emissions. This will only come about through an effective and sustained struggle.

It is crucial that the working class becomes involved in the struggle to save the planet from environmental catastrophe. Workers must be confident that protecting the environment is in their interests and the interest of their children and future generations. No worker must be worse off as a result of environmental protection measures.

In sharp contrast to the capitalist nations, socialist countries made huge attempts and advances in recent years to address environmental questions and support global measures to reverse global warming and other consequences of past practices. Cuba is a shining example in this regard.

Changes in the composition of the working class

Classes are groups of people defined by their relationship to the means of production (land, raw materials, machinery, factories and other production premises, transport and communications facilities, etc.) and the role they play in the process of production. The principal classes of capitalist society are the working class (which does not own the means of production and whose labour the capitalists exploit) and the capitalist class (the owners of the means of production and of the commodities produced).

Overall, the number of wage and salary earners and their proportion of the total number engaged in production have continued to grow. The working class remains by far the most numerous social class in our society.

The character and composition of the working class in Australia has changed in recent decades not only as a consequence of migration but also as a result of the scientific and technological revolution.

The proportion of manual and unskilled workers has decreased as a percentage of the whole. Workers with scientific and technical skills, clerical workers and intellectuals, teachers and workers in service industries have increased substantially. The proportion of workers engaged in manufacturing has declined relative to those in process industries and in services.

There has been a steady decline in the number of farmers while the number of small businesses and small producers has remained steady.

Globally, there is an ongoing population shift from rural to urban areas and in 2008 a historical milestone was passed when the number of people living in urban areas exceeded those in rural areas and that shift shows no signs of reversal. In Australia, the percentage of workers in rural areas fell from 20 percent to three percent in the 10 years to 2016. This trend is duplicated around the world including in developing countries. As an example, in the same period the percentage of rural workers in Africa and Asia dropped from 70 percent to 50 percent of the workforce.

The number of those involved as owners and managers of the largest monopolies and who effectively control the means of production, financial institutions, and the land and mineral resources of Australia remain a small fraction of the total engaged in production. They comprise the ruling class of Australia.

These changes have to be taken into account in determining the policies to be put forward in the course of the Party's work. The changes, however, have not altered the basic character of the working class nor its role in society. Not only is the working class the most numerous but it is also the best organised and is that class which has a direct interest in a progressive, democratic and revolutionary solution to society's problems.

The class struggle

The class struggle has been a feature of human society for at least the last 3,000 to 4,000 years and is the motive force bringing changes to society. It continues to play that decisive role in modern capitalist societies as well. In order to prevent changes which challenge its dominant position the capitalist ruling class undermines, diverts and attempts to deny the very existence of the class struggle. However, the main classes in modern society, the capitalist class and the working class are in continual conflict on economic, political, ideological and social issues.

Recognising that the trade unions are the main mass organisations of the working class, the capitalist class attempts either to incorporate them as partners in the state-monopoly capitalist system or to destroy them.

In 1983, the Labor Government negotiated a “Prices and Incomes Accord” with the leadership of the Australian Council of Trade Unions. This was an attempt to incorporate the trade unions as cooperative partners with capital.

The commitment of the trade unions to the Accord meant a radical turnaround on a number of formerly held fundamental economic and political policies. The argument that wage increases were the cause of price increases and job losses was accepted as was the argument that higher profits would lead to more investments and hence jobs. Adoption of the Accord marked the beginning of a period of class collaboration and retreat by the labour movement.

The ideological and political impact of the Accord was disastrous for it disarmed the majority of working class organisations.

The ruling class prefers to persuade workers and their organisations to give up their rights voluntarily. For a time, they were successful with the Accord.

In a continuation of their economic offensive against the workers, enterprise-based agreements, individual work contracts and enterprise-based unions are being promoted to cause divisions among workers and unions to continue the process of weakening the trade unions.

When persuasion fails and unions fight militantly for the interests of their members or act in solidarity with other workers, unions, their officials and individual workers face heavy fines and/or jail sentences. Employers take legal action against unions and even individual workers as a means of preventing strikes, picketing or acts of solidarity with other workers.

Other draconian measures have included the use of military forces in industrial disputes, the employment of scabs, and the declaration of states of emergency.

While the level of struggle ebbs and flows, the working class and other progressive social forces have, nonetheless, continued to wage struggles for reforms, for improved working conditions and in defence of their rights.

Based on the many-sided people's actions, a change has come to Australia's political life. It is shown by the emergence of a strong trend calling for and supporting political forces which are outside of the formerly mainstream political parties – the ALP and the Liberal/ National Party Coalition. This provides the basis for steps towards the formation of a political coalition pledged to implement radical alternative policies to those which have been followed by the major political parties in the past.

Chapter 4

AUSTRALIA IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

Australia is placed geographically in the Asia-Pacific region which contains the world's most populous countries with rapidly developing economies. Many of the nations have long continuous civilisations, histories and cultures stretching back for thousands of years. It is a region with rich material and intellectual resources.

In this context Australia has a developed middle-sized capitalist economy. Politically and culturally Australia's heritage is mainly European although the migration of tens of thousands of people from Asia is diversifying Australia's population even further.

Since WW2 Australia's ruling class has allied itself both politically, militarily and in terms of economic ties with the United States. This alliance has brought Australia into the imperialist wars against Korea, Vietnam and Malaysia. In collusion with United States' governments Australian imperialism, which has its own imperialist ambitions in the region, has been allocated responsibility for the South Pacific Island states, PNG, East Timor and to some extent, Indonesia.

The two major political parties – the L-NP coalition and the ALP – support the militarisation of Australia, pre-emptive strike invasions of other countries and the concept of “failed states” and “rogue states”. These are justifications for the recolonisation of the former imperialist colonies in Asia and interference for the purpose of establishing pro-imperialist governments everywhere.

A major objective is the overthrow of all socialist governments in the region including the government of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. The issue of nuclear weapons and the concept of “rogue states” are being used to cover the real intentions of the US, Japan, Australia and other supporting states.

A long-range objective is “regime change” in China and the destruction of its socialist construction. For this purpose an “independence” movement in Taiwan is promoted, Taiwan is provided with sophisticated weapons, and military threats made to prevent the reunification of Taiwan with China.

Imperialism promotes “independence” movements in a number of countries with the objective of causing internal conflicts, breaking up these unified states and, thereby, making it easier for imperialism to re-impose its domination. These include Aceh, Taiwan, Tibet, Nagaland, Tamils, etc.

It is necessary for the Communist Party of Australia to differentiate between genuine independence movements and those which are promoted by imperialism. The fundamental question is whether or not a particular struggle for independence weakens or strengthens the interests of the working class movement in a country, whether or not it is a genuine national liberation movement, whether or not it serves the overall interests of imperialism.

Following the defeat of German fascism in Europe and Japanese militarism, national liberation and socialist revolutions swept the region. China at last won freedom from colonial oppression. Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia won liberation from the French and then American colonialists. Cambodia rid itself of the murderous Pol Pot regime and has proceeded to establish a democratic and politically progressive system. Indonesia overthrew Dutch colonialism and India the British. The Japanese were driven out of SE Asia, China and the Korean peninsular. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea was established in the northern part of the Korean Peninsular defeating attempts by the United States to impose its rule. These were all genuine national liberation struggles.

The struggles for national independence and sovereignty, democracy and social progress are continuing. The most recent to win their political independence are the island nations of the South Pacific and Papua-New Guinea. The continuing struggles in Bougainville, West Papua and New Caledonia (against French colonialism) are led by genuine national liberation movements.

Following the success of their national liberation movements and the establishment of national governments, some Asian states took the socialist road, others the capitalist. Many of the Third World countries have a generally anti-imperialist orientation and cherish their independence.

The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) (with 10 member nations) was established to help the mutual development of their economies. It is an example of cooperation and peaceful coexistence in a number of fields of both capitalist and socialist nations on the basis of equality.

In response to these revolutionary and anti-imperialist developments the imperialist powers reacted with outright military intervention, economic and political pressure, the establishment of a network of military and naval bases and the formation of a number of military and political alliances.

The military interventions included the attempted Dutch recolonisation of Indonesia in 1945 and the US-led wars in Korea in the 1950s and in Vietnam in the 1960s. In each case, however, the imperialists were defeated.

From the 1990s onwards the US made special efforts to place bases in the Middle East and central Asia. The US bases range from large facilities hosting thousands of troops to small facilities located within the host nation's own military centres and facilities with a basic infrastructure which can be activated in times of conflict.

During and immediately after WW2, the US began expanding its bases and had 750 foreign military facilities in over 100 countries by the beginning of the 21st century. By contrast Britain, France and Russia combined had around 30 foreign bases.

Out of eight major military pacts which the US constructed world-wide after 1945, five were in the Asia-Pacific region. They include the ANZUS agreement, the UK-USA intelligence sharing agreement, and the so-called "defence" treaties with Japan and South Korea. Australia is party to another such pact, the Five Power Defence Agreement involving Britain, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore and Australia.

Asia and the Pacific are the only regions in the world to experience all the horrors of nuclear weapons beginning with the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, then nuclear weapon and missile testing, nuclear waste dumping, the deployment of nuclear weapons and the forced removal of peoples to make way for military bases.

Despite all attempts to re-impose the domination of imperialism, the countries of the region have continued their political and economic development in a progressive direction. The economies of a number of the Asian countries are growing apace and the aspirations of the people for peace, national independence and social and political progress and justice continue to find expression.

The Asia-Pacific region now generates more than one-third of the world's trade and an increasing proportion of its manufactures.

The general economic dynamism of the Asia-Pacific region is growing steadily leading to this region becoming the main world centre of manufacturing and trade. Although not yet the major banking region of the world, which is still dominated by the dollar and the euro, this development will also inevitably follow the growth of the Asia-Pacific as the major manufacturing and trade centre of the world.

The long-term decline of the western imperialist centres of Europe and the United States has begun.

People's Republic of China

With a population in 2017 of over 1.3 billion people, China was the world's most populous country. It occupies a vast territory with rich resources. The steady growth of China's economy, modernisation programs and opening up to the outside is exerting a growing economic and political influence in the region and the world.

Under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, between 1978 and 2011 China's economy grew by eight to nine percent each year, only falling below seven percent since 2015. This sustained growth is unprecedented in the world and demonstrates an alternative, less destructive model of economic development which involved a critical role for the public sector and greater government controls.

China overtook Japan as the leading Asian exporter in 2004, three years after its accession to the WTO. China surpassed the United States in 2007 and Germany in 2009 to become the world's leading exporter.

China's economic policies continue to evolve as the current administration seeks to reform the economy from one heavily focused on production for export, with one directed at producing to meet domestic consumption.

The colonialist occupation of parts of China's territories even after the establishment of the Chinese People's Republic in 1949, that is, Hong Kong and Macau, has been overcome by adoption of the "one country, two systems" approach. The territory remaining to be reunited with the Chinese mainland is that of Taiwan.

China's experience in constructing a socialist society, its rapid economic growth and the steady improvement in the living standards of China's huge population is of great interest to the world-wide Communist movement.

Its struggles against some of the influences entering the country along with foreign investment, its striving to overcome the legacy of underdevelopment and decades of ultra-left mistakes contain rich lessons.

The objective of the People's Republic of China is to have become a prosperous, strong, democratic, civilised, harmonious, and modern socialist country by the centenary of its founding in 2049.

India

India has the second largest population in the world and faces enormous economic, political and ethnic problems. Its economy is also now growing rapidly much of it based on the development of high-tech industries. However, the colonialist legacy has not yet been overcome. India took the capitalist path following its liberation from British rule even though it pursued a generally anti-imperialist foreign policy and maintained close relations with the socialist Soviet Union before its break-up.

The Indian economy is still largely based on agriculture with a large and impoverished peasant population. There is a continuation of landlordism with little done in the direction of land reform. Ethnic, religious and caste divisions are often fanned by reactionary and pro-imperialist circles to divide the Indian people and prevent a united struggle for much needed reforms and more far-reaching changes. The policies imposed by the International

Monetary Fund and the World Bank have, as yet, prevented India from entering the path of real national independence and development.

The considerable work to build left and progressive struggle by the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) plus other left forces is leading to building unity and progress in the struggle.

Japan

Japan is a major industrial power in the Asia-Pacific region and is, once again engaged in an ambitious program of military modernisation. Japan's reactionary parties are attempting to remove the constitutional restrictions which prohibit use of Japanese military forces outside its own territory. If successful, this would provide new opportunities for an aggressive Japan to expand its political and economic interests in the region. The Japanese ruling class has not abandoned its long held imperialist objectives.

Japan and the US have concluded a "security" treaty which underpins the common aggressive and expansionist aims of these two powers. Although not allied in the same way with Japan, Australian governments also subscribe to these same ambitions and do not oppose the steps being taken by the Japanese government to remilitarise and to change its "peace" constitution.

The legislation was opposed by the majority of the population but protest rallies by tens of thousands were ignored by the right-wing Abe government. It runs contrary to the Japanese pacifist Constitution.

Russian Federation

The breaking up of the former Soviet Union and defeat of socialist governments in Eastern Europe dramatically changed the balance of power and international relations globally. It was part of the US's agenda for global economic and military domination.

In terms of the former Soviet Union the execution of this agenda involves a number of stages.

The first was the overthrow of the government led by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and its replacement by a capitalist government allied with and subservient to the US.

The second is the breaking up of the former Soviet Union including Russia, into independent capitalist states. The various republics were broken off but Russia remained in tact as a large economic and military power.

The third is to surround Russia with military bases and facilities drawing on NATO and other allies. The US established military bases in a number of former Soviet republics and in the Baltic and other former socialist east European states, Germany, Britain and the Ukraine. The US and its allies are preparing for a nuclear war against Russia, and the US has declared its willingness to take first strike action.

Russia is the world's largest oil producer and second-largest oil exporter, but it is also the world's largest exporter of grain and nuclear power technology. It is as advanced and sophisticated a society as the United States.

Russians rejected the US's coup in the Ukraine and the US's aim of setting up military bases along the Ukrainian border with Russia. They strongly supported the decision of the people of Crimea in a plebiscite to become part of Russia again.

The US imposed sanctions on Russia over Crimea and Ukraine with the aim of weakening the Russian economy, but US allies France and Germany were reluctant to support them since the proposed sanctions adversely affected their own economies. In the end they only partially imposed them.

Russia has played a critical role at the United Nations using its power of veto on important questions and supporting the Palestinian people. Its role in the Middle East is critical to a resolution of the conflicts there, as seen when it intervened in Syria at the invitation of the elected government.

The US and NATO have transformed Europe into a frontline for war, possibly nuclear, against Russia. There would be no winners of a nuclear war with the US or NATO.

Russia is part of the BRICS grouping of major emerging economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). The five BRICS countries comprise 43 percent of the world population and hold regular consultations on finance, trade, investment, education, labour and agriculture and are working to increase their share of world GDP (30 percent in 2016) and world trade (17 percent in 2016).

The resumption of close relations with China, also under similar threat from the US, is important. The Russian Federation, as a Eurasian country, also

holds strong positions with enormous potential in Asia. The reopening of the Silk Road between China and Europe will facilitate travel and transportation of goods and energy between Asian and European countries. Within its framework a “cargo Hyperloop” is expected to be able to transport products and passengers at speeds of up to 1,200 km/hour.

The reopening of the Silk Road between China and Europe will facilitate travel and transportation of goods and energy between Asian and European countries free of possible interdiction by the US. This will be of strategic importance to Russia and China.”

Other countries

The Russian Federation, as a Eurasian country, also holds strong positions with enormous potential in Asia. Its return to the socialist path in the future will have world significance.

The slowly emerging bloc of powers made up of China, India and Russia is another counter to imperialist objectives. Political and trade links between these three countries are growing but even now their combined economic strength and political orientation is a counter to the US objective of world domination.

No fewer than four countries that form the eastern edge of the Asian continent have governments led by Communist Parties. They are the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the People’s Republic of China, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and Lao People’s Democratic Republic. The DPRK and Vietnam suffered invasion by the US but have maintained their independence and continue to build their economies along socialist lines.

In the building of socialism in several countries including China, Vietnam and Cuba the leading Communist parties have undertaken economic reforms with some similar characteristics. These reforms have involved market mechanisms and have been characterised by an opening of their economies to foreign investment. The Communist parties have argued that these reforms are necessary to advance towards socialism. As with all changes within socialist countries the imperialists have sought to utilise these reforms to attack socialism.

At the same time as the capitalist powers build up their military potential, attempts are being made to penetrate the socialist states and other countries

which follow an independent anti-imperialist course by “peaceful” economic and political means.

In the forefront of this are the campaigns for “human rights”, “democracy”, “freedom of the press” and so on. The aim of these campaigns, which make use of these widely held objectives, is to impose Western political, economic and social values on other nations, irrespective of their own histories, cultures, values, ways of doing things and priorities.

Policies

It is on this background of the fast developing situation in the Asia-Pacific region that the Communist Party of Australia advances the following policies:

- That Australia adopt an independent foreign policy and maintain peaceful relations with all countries in the Asia-Pacific region. That the concepts of “pre-emptive strike”, “rogue states” and “failed states” be rejected.
- That Australia support the principles set out in the Charter of the United Nations which call for peaceful relations between states and the settlement of disputes between nations by negotiation.
- That the present militarisation of Australia, Japan and the United States which has led to an arms race in the region be opposed and ended and resources saved be directed to the real needs of the people of the region.
- That all nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (including chemical and biological weapons), held by all countries be scrapped by international treaty.
- That all military alliances such as the ANZUS treaty and the US-Japan Security Treaty be disbanded. These aggressive treaties be replaced by a network of collective security treaties from which no country is excluded. Such collective security treaties to bind all signatory countries to refrain from interference, aggression or threats against any other country.
- That all foreign military bases on Australian territory be closed and removed.

- That support for the national independence of all countries in the Asia-Pacific region be maintained while differentiating between movements for independence that are promoted by imperialist forces and which harm the interests of progressive forces and genuinely based national liberation movements leading to independence from the remaining vestiges of colonialism and which strengthen the progressive forces generally.
- That Australia, the United States and other nations be called upon to take immediate action to implement their commitments made in the Paris Agreement and other international agreements to take steps to limit greenhouse gas emissions and deforestation which threaten to produce severe climate changes and have already produced climate instability across the globe. That Australia accepts future global warming refugees from the low-lying Pacific states threatened with inundation from rising sea levels.
- That Australian governments encourage cultural and scientific exchange with all countries on the basis of equality and mutual benefit.

Chapter 5

UNITY IS STRENGTH

Unity and co-operation between the different progressive social forces is a powerful force for change. Unity of the Left, working class unity and democratic/people's unity each has its own basis and characteristics. However, all forms of unity are interdependent, interconnected and influence one another.

Left unity

The political left is made up of those who recognise that class struggle is a basic feature of our society and that it must be fought in the interests of the working class. The left believes that the capitalist system is the cause of the present economic and social crisis and that it must be challenged and replaced by a socialist system.

The left defends and fights for the interests of the workers and does not shrink from the truth that the working class must pursue its interests by struggle against the employers and their political representatives.

The left is for peace and disarmament, democracy for the people, security and employment, equality for women, for the expansion of the public sector and many other issues.

Underlying the divisions which have occurred in the left are differences on questions of ideology, strategy and tactics. Personal impatience, opportunism and subjectivity have also played a considerable part. The situation also damaged the Communist movement as a whole and its individual parts.

The process of rebuilding and re-uniting the left can best start with agreements on issues and joint actions in support of policies held in common.

As experience and confidence grow, regular and structured coordination can emerge in support of an agreed upon program. This process creates better circumstances for ideological discussion between the left forces and opportunities for the eventual joining together of the left forces. What is needed is a single party which is based of the ideology and practice of Marxism-Leninism.

While each of the existing left parties has a certain influence and following, this remains, even in total, limited. This is demonstrated in elections when left candidates win small and often very small votes. For the left to become an alternative, it has to win support for its program and activities and demonstrate its capacity to lead the struggles for its implementation.

Co-operation in elections and the presentation of a united ticket would offer the people a much more acceptable alternative but even that is not enough. The left has a principal task of substantially increasing its mass connections and influence.

The left political parties have the responsibility to strengthen their co-operation, develop effective programs which reflect the interests of the working class and propose a strategy and tactics to achieve the program. Successes of the left parties in uniting workers in positive action will serve as an example and a stimulus to all progressive political parties and organisations.

The left parties (and a coalition of the left parties) have to win the support of the workers which will be reflected in votes for left candidates in elections

for trade union positions and for parliament, in the actions that the workers are prepared to take, in the greater numbers who will join the left parties, and so on.

Left unity does not stand on its own, isolated from other forms of unity. Left unity, the unity in action of the working class, and the unity in common struggle of the working class and the other progressive and democratic social forces in society are interdependent processes.

Working class unity

Wage and salary earners make up over 85 per cent of all those who take part in production and provide community services. This provides an enormous social base and potential for the development of working class unity.

The united front of the working class means the establishment of unity in action by all sections of the working class in support of their economic and political interests. It is also a political concept, the essence of which is unity of those forces favouring a revolutionary change to socialism with those who, as yet, limit their political concepts to the struggle for reforms.

Most of the struggles which occur in society are conducted by workers as they fight for their interests on a variety of issues. They have waged many campaigns and strike struggles for higher wages, for jobs, for a shorter working week, increased compensation payments, safety in industry, increased social services and against the penal provisions of anti-trade union legislation and other issues.

Other struggles include those for democratic rights, a peaceful foreign policy, environmental protection and regeneration, taxation reform, a greater say in production, for nationalisation of key industries and so on.

Building the united front of the workers means advancing policies, demands and slogans which workers will actively support and which will strengthen the struggle and organisations of the working class. It means seeking the widest support and involvement of all workers to achieve the policies decided on.

It means being prepared to work with other political organisations and individuals willing to advance the cause of the working people irrespective of other differences.

The united front can be facilitated by agreements between working class organisations and parties to achieve certain policies. It is desirable that agreements lead to joint action by the workers.

The Communist Party is an essential element in the united front and it works unreservedly for the aims of the front and for unity. The development of united action by the whole working class is a complex and uneven process. It involves overcoming racial, cultural, ideological and political difference, sex and age divisions and divisions arising from different kinds of work and roles in the economic processes.

The ruling class recognises the importance of the working class as its opponent and makes strenuous efforts to split the working class. It tries to persuade workers and their leaders that their interests are better served by collaboration with employers. However, the continual attacks by employers, the attacks on wages and living standards, the loss of conditions and jobs and attacks on union rights show the error of such collaboration.

One of the more recent threats to working class unity is the growing influence of Christian fundamentalist churches among working people. Congregations are consciously united around conservative issues such as anti-abortion and at election times are delivered en masse as votes for conservative candidates. Such tactics are being imported from the United States, where they have been successfully employed.

Democratic or people's unity

All progressive and democratic sections of society take up campaigns against the effects of socio-economic crisis, the drive to war, the betrayal of Australia's independence and sovereignty, the attacks on democratic rights and living standards and so on. Workers are not alone in attempting to achieve a better society.

A range of progressive movements already exists which involve workers, intellectuals, professional workers and other social groups.

While there are overlapping memberships and organisational links, these movements, in the main, remain unstructured, but provide a realistic basis on which to build a broad and active people's unity in support of progressive issues and demands. In fighting together for programs in the interests of the working class and other social groups, a cohesive democratic unity

can come into existence directed against the most reactionary big business circles.

In many of these mass movements, workers and working class organisations play a part but their participation is often limited and does not fulfill the need for the working class to play the leading role which their size, experience and organisation calls for.

In assuming leadership in the struggles for peace, national independence, democracy, economic security and progress, the working class must also give specific support to the needs of the other anti-monopoly social forces.

Principles of unity

In strengthening the various forms of unity there are some principles that need to be adhered to. They include:

- Every organisation and the individuals involved must approach others on the basis of equality, mutual respect and honesty.
- There must be consultation at each step of the unity building process to ensure agreement on policies, tactics and actions.
- An atmosphere must be created in which the results of agreements and steps taken are frankly discussed and evaluated. Mistakes will be made and they should be recognised and corrected during the course of work.
- Agreements by co-operating organisations must be reached by consensus. Voting should be resorted to only as a last resort and be limited to procedural matters.
- Where agreement is not reached on an issue, this issue must be put aside with each organisation free to express its view on the issue using its own facilities.
- Once agreements are reached, all organisations must help carry them out.
- Ideological differences should not stand in the way of cooperation on issues held in common.
- A contest of ideas between co-operating organisations is natural and inevitable. This contest or any criticism of one organisation by another should be stated in a manner which does not undermine the

unity achieved on agreed issues but should contribute to clarity and to strengthening the developing unity.

- Each organisation must be free to publish its views and carry out activities in support of policies which are not the subject of agreements.
- Discussion and agreement at leadership level must be backed up and deepened by co-operation at all levels of the organisations involved.

As the different forms of unity are integrated with each other, the stronger the progressive forces will become.

Strong unity in action by the left, the working class and other democratic and progressive forces is essential if the economic, political and social problems facing the people are to be overcome and changes made to the root causes of these problems, bringing about lasting solutions and starting to build a new kind of Australian society.

Chapter 6

THE PROCESS OF CHANGING AUSTRALIA

So we must fly a rebel flag,
As others did before us,
And we must sing a rebel song
And join in rebel chorus.
We'll make the tyrants feel the sting
O' those that they would throttle;
They needn't say the fault is ours
If blood should stain the wattle!

Henry Lawson

The CPA is of the view that society will change from its present capitalist mode of production toward socialism through a series of stages. We

contend that society will progress through an antimonopoly, anti-imperialist democratic stage prior to the working class winning power and creating a socialist state.

It is real life experiences which cause women and men to organise and take action around day to day problems and issues. For over two centuries, the Australian people have struggled on many issues and won valuable reforms. They include the struggles against the transportation of convicts to Australia and the use of convict labour, the political reforms demanded by the Eureka stockaders, the formation of trade unions, the federation of the states into a commonwealth, for voter franchise, for democratic and social rights, for multiculturalism, against militarism and war, for preservation of the environment, for secure living standards and much else.

The significance of the various issues may alter as the mass struggle unfolds. Some issues persist for a long time while others arise suddenly and are resolved in a short time. They may multiply or reduce in number and the intensity of the overall struggle will ebb and flow.

These struggles have not, so far, had the objective of changing the social system. Much more needs to be done to develop and link the separate campaigns into a powerful and unified mass movement striving to achieve agreed upon policy objectives. Alternative policies and the ways and means to achieve them must be popularised.

Despite the apparently democratic political system, none of the elected State or Federal governments, irrespective of their political complexion, challenge the control over society by big business. The two main political forces have repeatedly disappointed the Australian people and have not overcome many of the deep-rooted economic, political and social problems facing the people.

The control of the economy by big business, its influence over governments and legislation prevent workers from making secure, lasting gains. More fundamental economic and political changes are needed to do that.

The existing two party system in which government is alternately shared between the Liberal-National Party coalition and the Australian Labor Party obscures and protects the dictatorship of capital over economic and political life.

The Communist Party regards parliament and parliamentary campaigns as having an important place in the whole process of the struggle to advance

the interests of the people, provided that parliamentary activity is combined with vigorous struggle by the people outside parliament.

The CPA sees the task of uniting the left/progressive organisations and individuals as a major objective in the present period. With this in mind we see the main aim of the Party in the present situation as working to develop left unity and working class unity. The development of a united front of the working class will greatly assist building the broader people's front unity that is required for the progressive forces to successfully achieve the anti-monopoly, anti-imperialist democratic government that we identify as the first stage of revolutionary change.

While it is possible for the various forms of unity to be developed simultaneously a people's front will not succeed as a contribution to the revolutionary development of society without being based upon the unity in action of the working people which must be at the centre of the broader form of people's unity.

While never ceasing to place the main emphasis on the development of working class unity, it is necessary to build a left-oriented, politically progressive people's front, strong enough to challenge and break the two-party monopoly. This alternative must be the aim of and arise out of the demands and mass actions of the working people and other classes and social groups that oppose monopoly domination.

As the level of struggle and political consciousness develop, a broadly based left/progressive and democratic movement or coalition, fighting for a program of constructive demands, would bring benefits to the Australian working people, the disadvantaged and other social groups. The situation shows that an alternative political force which commands substantial public support could be created.

No one political party as yet represents progressive and democratic opinion adequately enough to be able to command sufficient support to form an alternative government at Federal, State and local Council level. But a coalition could. Coalitions have proved effective and powerful and are capable of winning much support and generating enthusiasm.

This coalition's aim must be to win government so that its policies can be implemented. It must not see itself as merely a ginger group pushing existing governments to implement better policies.

With the victory of the people's forces, parliaments and councils could be transformed into institutions which take decisions and adopt laws expressing the will of the overwhelming majority of the people and become, thereby, more democratic.

The new type of government envisaged can arise in situations of political crisis when the ruling class is no longer able to cope with the rise of powerful mass movements. The former government and the state apparatus become disorganised and paralysed to such an extent that the people's movements can form a democratic, people's government.

In this process, the working class and other progressive social forces would begin to take control of political life and the economy and introduce measures to alleviate some of the worst features of the capitalist system.

These changes will take a considerable time to bring about and cannot be implemented simultaneously. As more and more of them are introduced and consolidated, the present dictatorship of capital will be substantially eroded and the power of the working people, expressed through a popular government, will begin to expand and develop.

Government of People's Unity

The CPA will fight for a government of people's unity with the following approach.

Such a government, a People's Government, would be democratic and multi-party. It would be made up of the political representatives of all the progressive, democratic and patriotic forces, from socialist and labour parties, trade unions and progressive community organisations of all kinds, small working farmers, professional and middle class circles. It would include all who are concerned to overcome the consequences of the exploitation and domination imposed upon the nation by the present regime of state-monopoly capitalism. It would be the embodiment of the people's front but would only be successful if it were driven by a united and determined working class.

It would take steps against the overseas and Australian monopolies and implement a program of policies in the interests of working people. A high level of action by the working class and the broad progressive forces is a fundamental condition for success.

The formation of popular organisations would be encouraged to give voice to the views of the people, support the popular program and to defeat the inevitable attempts by reactionary forces to destabilise and sabotage the new government.

The new government would need to begin a process of democratisation by introducing laws and altering the administration of justice making it answerable to the people's needs, not the interests of big capital. Amendments would have to be written into Federal and State constitutions to facilitate the introduction of the necessary political and economic policies. These would also need to be campaigned for.

New Democratic Economic System

The People's Government would introduce economic policies and take on a much greater role in areas of social welfare, national development, public works, trade, commerce, banking and other areas. Central planning combined with regional and local initiative and accountability would begin to be combined with market mechanisms in the economy.

Immediate objectives would be to provide fulltime jobs, overcome the crisis in health services, strengthen the public education system at all levels, provide cheap public housing for rental and purchase, act to protect the environment and take other measures to lift the living standards of the poor and provide economic security for all.

The work of government requires maximum efficiency, strict observance of economy in the use of resources (finance, labour and materials) and must be subject to regular review and audit to ensure firm control over the size of the administrative apparatus. It also requires vigilance to prevent corruption and the growth of an unnecessary, self-serving bureaucracy.

Public or co-operative ownership of rural industries and land used in production by big landowners and companies would be encouraged. Land used for housing and small industries would remain as private property. This includes small farms. Land would be returned to Aboriginal communities with the transfer of communal, inalienable title to groups on the basis of traditional ownership, long association and/or need.

A People's Government would give emphasis to strengthening the public sector. At this stage a substantial role for the private sector would remain, while the economy would be developed using a combination of planning

and regulation and use of the market forces of supply and demand. The People's Government will need to challenge monopoly domination at every opportunity, creating the basis for ongoing class struggles. With a developed working class movement these struggles would provide the basis for the further progressive development of society leading to the consolidation of revolutionary forces and would be the catalyst for revolutionary socialist changes.

The successful application of people's government financial policies such as implementing strict control over the movement of money in and out of the country, prohibiting speculation and preventing the transfer of money to the detriment of the nation's economy would require the active support and participation of the masses. So too would the implementation of strict government control over interest rates and credit policy in the interests of the working people.

All foreign investments in Australia would be controlled by government legislation. This does not exclude fully owned or joint venture enterprises under terms and conditions determined by the government. It is essential that national control of Australia's economy be a government priority.

The people's government would need to strive to have trade developed on the basis of mutual benefit. The use of tariffs, import quotas and preferred nation treatment would need to be applied to areas essential for the success of the overall national economy, consistent with the need to preserve jobs and industries and to protect the economy from damaging foreign competition.

Development of the Australian economy depends to a considerable extent on the maintenance of stable international conditions and is therefore related to foreign policy. Australia's economic well-being, security and national independence require a foreign policy which upholds peace and supports disarmament and is based on the principles of peaceful coexistence of states with differing social systems.

In accordance with these principles a major objective for the united people's front Government would be to terminate Australia's subservient military links with the United States or similar alliances with any other country, ending the ANZUS Treaty and removing US bases on Australian territory.

A people's government would alter Australia's military strategy to provide an adequate defence without threatening the territory of other states. An independent, peaceful foreign policy that requires adoption of a defensive

strategic doctrine would enable cuts in military spending. The “peace dividend”, flowing from this policy could be used for investment in job creation and in socially useful and environmentally sustainable areas of the economy.

Monopoly capital is in many instances directly to blame for irreparable environmental destruction and depletion of 58 resources. The motive of profit above all else, the unplanned exploitation of resources, the sanctity of private land ownership, unbridled individualism and the authoritarianism of bourgeois governments produce an uncaring destruction and distortion of the environment. The struggle of environmental organisations has raised public consciousness about humanity’s relationship with nature, stresses social responsibility and the need for democratisation of decision making about environmental issues.

It is important to build the connections between working class organisations and environmental activists and to solve the contradiction between jobs and protection of the environment.

Public ownership of industry and resources, their democratic control and comprehensive planned development which must necessarily take into account environmental factors is the basis for the satisfaction of the justified demands of workers and environmentalists and the future needs of all humanity.

The successful struggle for the above program would bring considerable change for the better to the life of the Australian people, setting the country on a new course. These and other policies reflect the many progressive demands put forward by the working class, all the working people and other progressive, anti-monopoly sections of society. Some of these aims might not be achievable under a capitalist mode of production but they will form the basis of the struggles leading to the development of the second phase of the revolutionary process.

Implementation of the above policies is likely to take a prolonged period of time, will not be free of setbacks and can only be achieved through struggle by the people. Progressive achievements can be cancelled out by the activities of those who demand that society return to former conditions and also by ill-considered policies which try to artificially accelerate social change. Ideological, economic and even military pressure from capitalist forces and external intervention by their allies must also be anticipated.

THE MOVE TO REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE

Conditions in Australia and experiences in other countries make it clear that the process of change to a socialist society is likely to pass through at least two and perhaps more lengthy stages.

The people's government stage in the process of transition to socialism would weaken the power of monopoly and extend the democratic rights and participation of the people. But it cannot end there. Social change is a continuous process and the need to construct a socialist society will inevitably arise.

The socialist stage requires the replacement of capitalist class power with working class power and further steps to break the control and ownership of the economy by capitalism. In this stage working class control of the state apparatus will be achieved. The state itself would have to be rebuilt to ensure that the needs and interests of the working class can be fulfilled. A working class government would commence the restructuring of political and economic relations along socialist lines.

In the second stage, the alliance of forces established to challenge the power of monopoly must be consolidated to achieve new targets. The working class must act not only on its own behalf, but also demonstrate that it is capable of playing the leading role in social development by recognising, supporting and developing the political and economic demands of the other progressive anti-monopoly social groups.

The process of change will be strenuously opposed by those forces whose privileged position is being challenged. The defeated capitalist class will undertake ideological and political manoeuvres and apply pressure, a flight of capital will be organised, sanctions imposed, sabotage and other activities undertaken to make the process of transition complex and difficult.

It is necessary for the revolutionary movement and the working class to master and be prepared to use all forms of struggle. Any limitations on forms of struggle will create weaknesses which will be used by the ruling class to retain its hold.

The best defence of the gains won by the people is the activity and unity of the working class and the unity of the working class with all other progressive forces. Equally vital for success is a close and dynamic relationship between the members of the Communist Party and the people involved in struggle.

However, not everyone who takes part in the struggle for reforms supports the socialist objective. Some sections of the petty bourgeoisie may withdraw from and come to oppose further social change. Those who support further improvements in conditions, democratic rights, the environment and peace, and recognise the need to go further, will continue to support the consolidation of socialism.

It is not sufficient to state the aim of establishing a socialist Australia and put forward a program. It must also be worked and fought for.

Chapter 8

PEOPLE MAKE HISTORY

Around the world, millions upon millions of people are taking action on a great variety of issues. This is a positive factor of great historical importance for it is the people, above all working men and women who are bringing about progressive changes. Their activities and struggles are the guarantee of social progress.

There are many examples. The global movement against the war in Iraq has helped to isolate the aggressor nations and exposed the plans of imperialism, especially those of the US. The many years of activity by the peace movement has created strong support for peace in the community. There have been many struggles to preserve and extend democratic rights by the Communist Party, the trade unions and other organisations. They helped to achieve the democratic rights that now exist. The campaigns of the environmental movement have put the preservation of the environment firmly on the agenda. Various social forces have taken part in these struggles.

While the working class is the only force with the social and economic power to overthrow capitalism, even in a country like Australia where the working class is the vast majority of the population, it needs allies if it is to challenge the ruling class and bring into existence a new People's Government. The allies of the working class include professional workers and intellectuals,

working farmers, small business people and the Indigenous people. They can be won as allies of the working class because they too are exploited by the transnational corporations and also share many of the same policy objectives as all working people.

The working class

In the capitalist countries, the working class is the principal, but not the only, driving force of the democratic and progressive movement.

Working men and women are in constant struggle against capital for jobs, working conditions and democratic rights. The working class is at the centre of the economic life of society because their work as the producers of goods and services is essential and is not performed by any other class or social group. Compared to the working class, none of the other progressive and democratic forces in society have the same opportunities for organisation or experience the exploitation of capital so directly. None of the other classes or social groups has such a decisive effect on the production processes taking place in society.

The fact that large numbers of workers are brought together in the production process helps to create a spirit of common collective interest and develops ideas of mutual aid and support. This encourages the growth and unity of workers' organisations such as trade unions and working class political parties.

Furthermore, the working class is the class which is most interested in the abolition of the system of private ownership and its replacement with public ownership of the means of production which brings an end to the exploitation of their labour for the profit of the private owners of the means of production.

It is the responsibility of the working class to come to the head of society and to liberate itself as well as all other classes and social groups exploited by big capital.

It is for these reasons that we speak of the leading role of the working class in society.

The Australian Labor Party

The major political and ideological influence in the working class remains that of the Australian Labor Party.

The ALP was founded to protect the working class from attacks by governments representing the capitalist class and to advance instead the economic well-being of the working class. The ALP embraced reform and concepts of social justice. The party supported the federation of the Australian States and the formation of a central Commonwealth government and the adoption of unifying, Australia-wide laws. In seeking to develop the Australian nation, the ALP frequently supported government-owned enterprises, but did not call for the replacement of capitalism by socialism. Its early membership and leadership included many trade unionists, militant workers, reformers and socialists, mainly utopian socialists.

In 1921 the party adopted the “socialist objective” under the influence of the Russian socialist revolution and the world-wide revolutionary upsurge at that time. However, the party did not develop a theory or program to change the system. While the Labor Party has been responsible for many reforms, its limited objectives ensure the continuation of the capitalist system with no significant modifications to it.

The ALP receives support from sections of big business, the urban middle class, intellectuals and professional people. Nonetheless, much of its membership and voting support comes from the working class.

However, the social origin of the members and supporters of a party do not determine its character. It is the party’s ideological position which is the determining factor.

The ALP is a social democratic party and seeks to win government not with the aim of fundamentally changing society but to administer the affairs of existing capitalism. In certain circumstances, it may legislate some progressive reforms but it is also capable of dismantling such reforms to protect the interests of capital.

The Labor Party rejects the need for class struggle, for socialist revolution and the establishment of the rule of the working class. It attempts to combine private ownership and social justice, social inequality and general prosperity, democracy while leaving the capitalist state unchallenged, peace without struggle against the source of war, and so on.

Reformist ideas and policies of compromise with capitalism on the one hand, and the largely working class support for the party on the other, produce continuous right-left struggle within the party – a reflection of the struggle between capital and labour.

The reformist position of the Labor Party enables the leadership to claim to represent all the people and not solely or mainly the working class. This position also allows ALP parliamentarians, particularly when in government, to desert Labor policies and principles which members committed to the working class regard as basic. In such circumstances, Labor governments frequently implement the anti-working class policies of the anti-Labor parties. These actions lead to disillusionment and frustration among ALP members and supporters and to the subsequent electoral defeat of the party.

Many Labor Party and some trade union leaders regard the main purpose of trade unions as being to support the parliamentary party. They attempt to tie unions to supporting ALP government policies. This denies the independence of trade unions and relegates them to being a mere appendage of the parliamentary ALP.

Another trend within the ALP is reflected by those members who are committed to struggle to implement the adopted policies for reform which are in the interests of the people. They sincerely seek to serve working class interests.

Many of this trend support the idea of socialism but do not advance any strategy or campaigns to achieve it. Some are forthright in upholding Australia's national independence and sovereignty and participate in the struggle for peace.

When in government the Labor Party has implemented anti-trade union legislation, privatisation, de-regulation, and “competition policies” at the same time channeling funds to private schools and hospitals while undermining the public education and health systems, etc.

In foreign affairs, Labor governments have been subservient to United States imperialism and have obeyed US demands for its allies to “share the burden” of military spending.

Because of these features the Labor Party serves as a prop for the ruling class and its agencies and implements policies very similar to those of the anti-working class parties.

This position causes dismay and arouses disaffection among sections of the Labor Party's traditional working class supporters and results in large scale withdrawal of support by those affected and substantial dissension in the party membership. However, many have moved to the right politically and not to the left as a result of their disillusionment.

Despite these features the Labor Party will remain for some time, a main force in the political life of Australia. Its ranks include, at leadership and membership level many who express opposition to policies and practices of the party which they consider to be departures from what they hold to be Labor Party traditions and standards.

Like other governments, Labor governments are susceptible to mass pressure for economic, political and social reforms. Any concept of united action for social advance should take these possibilities into account.

The long-term support given to the Labor Party by many workers, intellectuals and others means that the participation of members of the ALP is an important factor of success in the task of building both working class unity and left/progressive unity and in bringing about progressive social change in Australia.

Trade unions

The trade unions are the main and the largest mass organisations of the workers. They are indispensable in the task of winning the many urgent demands and needs of the working people. Their leaders and members have an important part to play in building the unity of the working class.

Trade unions were first formed more than 150 years ago. They combine in their membership workers who hold a variety of political opinions and commitments. They unite workers in a particular industry or trade and have an obligation to look after their day to day interests and needs.

However, trade unions do not usually contain any far-reaching political objectives such as are contained in the programs of the left political parties. Nonetheless, they must be won to support fundamental social change in the interests of the working class.

Trade unions cannot replace the left parties when it comes to the political leadership of the class. Nor can the political parties replace the vital role played by the workers' trade unions.

Anti-union forces and right-wing trade union and labour leaders try to restrict trade union functions to economic demands, limiting their activities to getting a better deal from capitalism without in any way challenging the system, let alone attempting to change it.

The adoption of the Accord in 1983 led most trade union leaders to abandon the historic position of struggle and adopt a class collaborationist approach. The strengthening of right-wing domination in a number of trade union leaderships, the loss of membership and the decline in militancy and class consciousness pose difficult problems for class conscious union members.

There is an urgent need to reverse this process, to increase union membership, build union job organisations, and step up militancy and, above all, class consciousness.

Intellectuals and professional workers

Intellectuals and professional workers occupy many different positions in the economic life of society. Some are self-employed, many are wage and salary earners, others become part of the employing class.

As a result of the scientific and technological revolution, the number of workers in communications, the sciences, medical professions, education, engineering, cultural activities, middle management, etc has greatly increased. They contribute a great deal in the production process and provide other essential services to the community.

The growing monopolisation of the economy and other social and economic changes are forcing more and more intellectuals and technologists into the ranks of the wage and salary earners and in that respect to have a similar economic position to that of other workers. At the same time, their intellectual capacities are exploited and they are under constant economic and political pressure to serve the ruling class.

While most receive higher wages and enjoy better living standards than many industrial and white collar workers, they are also alienated in the production process. In common with other workers they suffer the intensification of exploitation, unemployment, insecurity, or an inability to find employment in accordance with their training. Their struggle around these day to day problems helps to bring them into contact with working class ideas and organisations.

Intellectuals and professional workers are an influential section in the political, ideological, cultural and productive life of society. They occupy important and influential positions in the mass struggles for peace, democratic rights, for a progressive and democratic culture, for progressive ideas in education and so on.

The ideas of people are rooted in the position they occupy in the economic system. Workers' ideas and their class consciousness arise from the collective nature of the work that most do and from their daily experience of their exploitation by capital.

However, the lack of a direct involvement in and the often isolated nature of the work of those in science and the professions influence their outlook, often towards individualism.

Working farmers

Working farmers are vital contributors to the national economy, supplying essential foodstuffs for the home market and considerable surpluses for export. The Australian economy relies heavily on agricultural commodities for its export earnings.

There is increasing monopolisation of key sectors of the rural economy and this strengthens the domination of capital over the nation as a whole.

Successive governments have closed down Farmers' Cooperatives and regulation of farm marketing systems aimed at protecting farmers' incomes and markets.

Farmers who work small and medium farms are exploited by the companies that control the supply of seeds, chemicals, machinery and other essential commodities and by the middlemen, processors and distributors when they buy agricultural products from the farmers.

The development of large scale agribusiness has intensified the competition with small and medium farms and increases their exploitation. Thousands of small farmers have been forced off their land and into the ranks of the working class.

Farm labourers and workers in the country towns, many of whom are employed in rural related industries, have an important role in linking the farmers' struggle with those of the city working class.

Small business

Small business involves a large and diverse number of people who own and operate small factories, shops and services in almost all areas of the economy. They are sub-contractors, small proprietors and entrepreneurs in transport, entertainment, manufacture etc. They are spread throughout the community in the cities and towns of the countryside.

Small business people hold an intermediary position between big capital and the working class. They play an important role in some sections of the economy, supplementing big monopoly enterprises and, in various ways, distribute the products of big capitalist enterprises to the people.

The economic security of many small businesses is vulnerable and affected directly by the decisions of foreign and local monopolies and big landlords. Some are totally dependent on monopoly for contracts and are forced to follow production requirements and prices determined by monopoly. Others are connected to and supported by government programs and are, therefore, subject to changes in governments and their policies.

While many small business people are dependent on workers as consumers and understand the needs of workers, they are held to ransom by the monopolies and are fearful of rebuffing the powerful corporations. They are constantly squeezed by monopoly. The general insecurity of small businesses is heightened during periods of economic crisis.

Great variations exist in their conditions of life, from the well to do to those who work long hours for small remuneration. Some small business men and women move into the ranks of the big capitalists while others are forced into the ranks of the working class as businesses fail and bankruptcies occur. Some small businesses are created by workers who are unable to find employment as workers and are forced to start small businesses to survive.

In the development of the democratic movement, intense ideological work is needed to overcome concepts of “free competition” and individualism inherent in the economic relationships which are characteristic of the small business strata.

The Indigenous national minorities

The Indigenous people have survived and their struggle for land and justice has never ceased.

Major political and social struggles have been developed by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people supported by many within the white community. The campaigns have raised many issues and taken many forms but the central issues are the recognition of the Indigenous people as national minorities and the restoration of communal and inalienable land rights.

As a result of their many struggles against exploitation, deprivation and the denial of land rights they have retained many aspects of their languages, culture, customs, etc. They have also developed a consciousness of themselves as national minorities.

For over 200 years the lie of *terra nullius* was the cruel and brutal cover for the mass murder, the forced removal of the children from their families, for the inhuman exploitation of the labour of the Indigenous people, the refusal to extend recognition to their existence as national minorities and for the denial of land rights.

In 1992, as a result of the struggle for land rights, the High Court of Australia recognised the concept of Native Title, stating it had existed before white settlement and had continued after colonisation. However, it said Native Title was extinguished wherever land had been sold or set aside for some other purpose.

The Indigenous people should not be forced to accept the racist legal fiction that land from which they have been forcibly prevented from maintaining a “continuous association” is therefore the property of the colonisers for all time.

In addition to Native Title for the few, there should be land rights for all Indigenous people.

Land rights mean recognition of prior ownership of all the continent of Australia. There must be legislation to return land to its traditional owners on the basis of traditional ownership, religious association, long occupancy and/or need, including full rights to minerals and other natural resources. Autonomous areas should be established on the basis of communally owned land.

The first nationally elected national organisation protecting and fighting for the political rights of the Indigenous people – ATSIC – was destroyed in 2004. The CPA supports the aspirations of the Indigenous people to re-establish such a democratic and representative body.

In addition to the struggle for land rights there have been long struggles to maintain their culture, languages and religious practices. There have been long and continuous campaigns for health, housing, education and legal services and for jobs. Much has been achieved. Much more remains to be done.

All these social groups and classes, together with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander national minorities, are involved in various struggles and activities and contribute to social change. They share many common interests and policies with the working class in opposing the economic and political domination of society by monopolies and corporations. The unification of all these forces is the responsibility of the working class and the Communist Party. Collectively they will have an immense influence on the future development of society.

Chapter 9

SOCIALISM - ITS PAST AND FUTURE

In the 20th Century revolutionary movements and struggles for socialism and national independence by many different peoples achieved victories of world-wide significance. The first victorious socialist revolution was the 1917 Russian socialist revolution which led to the establishment of the Soviet Union. The political map of the world was fundamentally changed. The world-wide transition from capitalism to socialism had begun.

The idea that a society should be developed on the basis of “everything for the good of the people” and on a co-operative basis started to become a reality.

The success of the October Socialist Revolution under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union led by Lenin served as an inspiration to people around the world to form Communist Parties to fight for the rights of all workers and to struggle for socialism in their own countries.

Following the defeat of fascism in WW2, the Soviet Union was joined by other countries in Europe, Asia and the Caribbean which showed that a new society based on the political power of the working class was possible. The

means of production were turned into public property. The exploitation of working people by capital was abolished and fundamental steps taken to end racial and sexual discrimination.

The majority of the countries which began to build socialism started from low levels of industrial and agricultural development. They faced devastation from war and cold war, were economically damaged by sanctions and blockades and forced to divert precious resources into defence. Despite these difficulties, they did develop a strong publicly owned industry and a collectively owned agriculture.

Unemployment was reduced or eliminated, illiteracy was eradicated and free education made available to all. Extensive public health and social security services were created, and national identity and culture promoted.

Socialist states gained a foremost place in space technology and in other fields of science. As their economies grew, they gained a substantial proportion of the world's production and trade.

New concepts of democracy — socialist participatory democracy — were advanced. Priority was given to the right to work and leisure, the right to an education and health care, the right of women to economic and social equality.

The socialist world advanced new forms of international economic relations based on mutual assistance, co-operation, specialisation and integration. The objective was to raise the level and rate of development of the economies of each of the participating countries to close the economic inequalities between them.

The countries of the socialist world, through mutually beneficial trade arrangements, greatly assisted the economic development of many developing countries.

For the first time in history, a number of states arose which adopted the struggle for peace as a responsibility of the state itself. The aggressive power of imperialism was contained in the post-WW2 years as the socialist states achieved military parity with imperialism. It became possible to state that a world war was not inevitable.

The foreign policies of socialist states were based on peaceful coexistence between states having different social systems. The socialist countries and particularly the Soviet Union repeatedly advanced proposals to eliminate

the danger of war, settle disputes without recourse to arms, and to scrap all weapons of mass destruction as steps towards complete disarmament.

At the same time, the socialist countries built up their capacity to defend their borders against aggression and provided an effective counter to the global war plans of imperialism. Moral, political, economic and sometimes military support was given to national liberation movements which helped protect the independence of small nations threatened by imperialism.

These and other achievements of the socialist states and their impact throughout the world are immense and cannot be erased.

The crisis of socialism in the 1990s

The undoubted achievements of socialism to some extent obscured the existence of extensive problems and deformations. The negative developments in some socialist countries were due to a complex of internal and external factors. They are not inherent in socialism and need not arise in other socialist societies which exist now or will be established or re-established in the future. The task of building a previously uncharted society could not proceed without error.

The break-up of the Soviet Union and the overthrow of socialist governments there and in the socialist countries of Eastern Europe were serious setbacks to socialism. The image of socialism was weakened in the eyes of millions of people. Capitalism and imperialism were strengthened and encouraged.

In some socialist countries, capitalism was re-established and a multiplicity of non-socialist and anti-socialist organisations emerged, replacing the Communist organisations in mass influence and in government. Some Communist parties were affected by serious divisions and went out of existence. Others were weakened.

In addition to a continuous and massive ideological, military, political and economic barrage by imperialism, serious mistakes were made in the process of building socialism. Some of the main errors can be summarised as follows:

- Although working class power was initially established, it was, over time, eroded. To a major extent, the Communist parties, as the vanguard parties, replaced the working class in the exercise of power.

- Socialist democracy remained underdeveloped and the necessary structures both within society and within the party were gradually undermined. In some socialist countries dissent was stifled and differences of opinion and approach on major issues was limited.
- The planning bodies set up to guide and develop the economy became bureaucratic and over-centralised because of the failure to work out a correct relationship between central planning and the necessary local initiative and responsibility of workers and management.
- There was insufficient attention to the specific conditions and needs of each country.
- The slow-down in the economies of many socialist countries and the unfulfilled material needs and expectations led to disillusionment with socialism. This proved fertile ground for the growth of a distorted, benign image of capitalism as a provider of plentiful consumer goods, without exploitation, unemployment, poverty, repression and insecurity.
- A damaging concept grew up that it was incorrect to have different forms of property ownership as socialist society was being built. In addition, the time that was needed to build and consolidate socialism was seriously underestimated. Egalitarian concepts took root in clear violation of the socialist principle of “From each according to their ability, to each according to the work done”.
- An underestimation developed of the dangerous nature of imperialism combined with a tendency to reject the need for and existence of ideological struggle between the two systems. The class content was removed from Lenin’s concept of peaceful co-existence with moves to give up socialist interests and class positions. Solidarity with the international working class and the movements for national independence and sovereignty was weakened. There were even trends which suggested appeasement of imperialism.
- The role of the Communist parties was also distorted. While correctly insisting on the need for Marxist-Leninist parties and on their vanguard role in society, the parties confused their political role in society with the somewhat different role of the State.

- Party committees took over economic, social and state roles which rightly belonged to planning authorities, factory managements, community organisations and instrumentalities of the state.
- Marxist theory was not correctly applied to the changes taking place in society and the world. Petty-bourgeois ideology remained widespread even in the socialist countries where Marxist education was readily available but often formal and dogmatic. Only bits and pieces of Marxism-Leninism were understood and applied.
- In practice the view was advanced that there was only one model of socialism and that was the Soviet model whereas, in fact, each country has particular characteristics and must build socialism in accordance with its historical circumstances, traditions and ways of doing things.

Nonetheless, by the 1970s, the socialist community of nations had achieved a position of rough parity with imperialism in economic, military and scientific fields and this helped to restrain imperialism's inherent aggression. But the weakening of socialism in the late 1980s changed this situation in favour of imperialism.

This in turn brought with it profound dangers to other countries. The shift in the balance of forces towards imperialism encouraged it to proclaim a "new world order" which was nothing less than the re-establishment of capitalism throughout the world using political, economic and military means to achieve this objective.

The positive trend towards detente, disarmament and international co-operation was overturned. While socialism had struggled for peaceful co-existence and disarmament, imperialism responded with a multi-faceted ideological and economic drive for a "peaceful transition" back to capitalism while arming itself to the hilt.

Imperialism took advantage of mistakes, ill-considered policies, confusion, opportunist and selfish elements, individualism and other residual expressions of capitalist thinking to achieve its aim of destabilising and destroying socialism.

The crisis in the socialist world in the late 1980s and early 90s underlines the danger of underestimating the capacity of imperialism to undermine socialism through its huge system of anti-Communist agencies and its powerful use of ideological subversion. It also underlines the role of right-

wing revisionism in opening the way for counter-revolution by whittling down and finally destroying Communist ideology and Party organisation.

The mistakes of the past and the pressures and blandishments of imperialism opened the way for widespread acceptance of a return to the capitalist system in some of the socialist countries.

The socialist societies had provided social welfare, education, health and housing, cultural facilities, women's rights, assistance for young people and generous assistance to the developing countries superior to those in most capitalist countries. The crisis in many socialist countries was not a consequence of public ownership of the economy and working class power. It was rather a result of an inadequate understanding and application of socialist principles, a failure both to see what was wrong and how to correct it. Socialism itself did not fail.

The breakup of the Soviet Union and the restoration of capitalism there and in the former socialist states of Eastern Europe opened the doors to a world-wide capitalist offensive against the working people everywhere, against the remaining socialist states and the liberation movements of the former colonies of imperialism. It is this situation which led to the invasion of Iraq and other countries and threats to many independent states. However, the struggle against imperialism is taking place on a world-wide scale which will eventually stop the march of US imperialism to world domination. The struggle for a socialist alternative is gathering strength.

Our vision of the socialist future

Socialism arises from the needs and hopes of the working people who are exploited and oppressed. It advances a profoundly humanitarian and partisan science which is a weapon in the movement to achieve a free, just, prosperous and secure society. These objectives will remain and Communist parties will continue to fight for them.

The Communist Party of Australia puts forward some ideas of how it sees a future socialist Australia.

What about democracy in a socialist Australia?

Socialism and democracy must go hand in hand. Socialist democracy means essentially the participation of people in the affairs of government

and society both by decision-making and by taking responsibility for implementation. It also means having the right to elect the government and to stand as a candidate in an election.

A socialist government would be mainly made up of working people together with scientists, technologists, intellectuals, farmers and representatives of small business. It would be a multi-party coalition with a choice of candidates in elections. Those elected would have to decide things and run the economy according to what was best for the working people. The right of recall of elected representatives would be established so that representatives who did not do their jobs well could be replaced.

Socialist democracy does not simply mean having rights, but equal rights and above all, having control over the economy. Democracy is very limited when company directors, even overseas directors, can decide to put workers out of work at any time without their having any say.

Socialist democracy would not continue the situation in which the mass media – newspaper, radio and TV – is under the control of a very small number of rich and powerful corporations. The best way to break up this monopoly is for the mass media to be owned and run by the democratic and progressive organisations such as trade unions, environmental, cultural and community organisations. Such organisations would be encouraged and assisted to run media outlets. These changes would bring about a greater degree of progressive views from the media.

Socialist participatory democracy means not only the right to elect and be elected, but also equal opportunity to have a say through the mass media and control over economic life. It also means freedom of expression and demonstration and the right of workers to strike.

These comprehensive socialist rights, however, will not be possible without getting rid of the capitalist system and the political and economic dictatorship which the big companies and the transnationals exercise in the present set up. Socialist democracy brings into existence, for the first time, government by the people, for the people and of the people.

What would socialism do about the economy?

Australia's economic life is dominated by the big banks, monopolies and the transnational corporations. Through interlocking networks of companies and company directors, real control resides in a relatively small number of

very powerful individuals, many of whom are unknown in Australian public life and who are not subject to any democratic election. Big companies not only run the economy at present but tell the governments what to do as well.

A socialist government would ensure that public enterprises became the dominant form of ownership even though some forms of private ownership would continue to exist for a long time. Public ownership is particularly important in the key areas of the economy such as natural resources, transport, steel and heavy machinery manufacturing, banking, communications, basic food supplies, etc.

The inflow and outflow of foreign capital would be controlled so that no other country could gain a dominant position in the Australian economy. This is not only a question of maintaining Australia's national independence but would ensure that the provision of jobs, control over prices, trade, the currency, patent rights, and even the existence or not of enterprises, would remain in local and mainly public hands.

At present the substantial control over our own economy by foreign companies enables them to manipulate prices or play off workers in one country against those in another when both are employed by the same transnational corporation. Another consequence of foreign ownership is the export of profits out of the country and the avoidance of taxation.

Taxation based on ability to pay

Taxation is another area in which the working people are coming off badly. The proportion of taxation being paid by working individuals and families has steadily risen while the proportion paid by companies has just as steadily gone down. Socialists say that those with high incomes and who make big unearned profits from shareholdings should pay more tax.

A socialist government would levy taxes on the profits of public and private enterprises and from personal income in accordance with the ability to pay, thus reducing taxes of all types on wage and salary earners. Taxation levels would be determined by the government's responsibilities in the areas of social services, health, education, housing, infrastructure, new enterprises, defence and other necessary purposes.

The foreign debt

The inflow of foreign capital and successive unfavourable trade balances has seen Australia's foreign debt increase substantially despite advantages in mineral resources and in agricultural production. Almost half of Australia's adverse trade balance is due to the repatriation of profits made in Australia to foreign shareholders. Much of the investment flowing into Australia has been used to buy up land and buildings or to finance the takeover of one company by another. Such manipulations, which add little or nothing to the economy, would be strictly regulated and brought under control.

Australian trade relations with other countries must be put on the basis of mutual advantage rather than being subject to the whims of the most powerful overseas corporations. Trade should be conducted with all countries willing to trade with Australia.

Technology and science

Socialism would make full use of new technology and science not as a means to increase exploitation but to reduce the working week and to eliminate arduous and dirty jobs. The benefits from increased productivity would flow to the workers in the form of increased pay and other benefits. Modern computer technology can also be used to plan industrial development taking into account the many social, economic, environmental and other factors so that it has the most all-round beneficial results.

Socialist planning

Economic planning is an important aspect of any socialist system and is necessary to prevent the inevitable booms and slumps which are a persistent feature of all capitalist economies. In the recent past Australia has witnessed the deliberate closure of large, technically advanced industrial enterprises for the sole reason that it has become more profitable to shareholders to move the enterprise "off-shore" where the wages paid are less or because a government is prepared to make tax concessions or invest government monies to benefit the private owners. To make the best use of the nation's resources, the technical skills of workers, the availability of capital, the overall needs of the people, etc macro-economic planning is a necessity.

A socialist government would establish planning authorities to map out objectives for national economic development. The detailed implementation,

once general plans have been made, would be the responsibility of local authorities, managers, technicians, engineers and workers.

Socialist peace policy

There will not be a real change in the direction of Australia's foreign policies until a government is established which actively works for peaceful relations with other countries, works to find agreed peaceful, negotiated solutions to conflicts between states, works for general international disarmament and, at all times, adopts a friendly and cooperative attitude to our neighbours.

Aggression and the policy of "pre-emptive strikes" and interference in the internal affairs of other country's must be ruled out and be replaced by a policy of friendship and respect for the social systems adopted by other countries.

A socialist government would do all that is necessary to make Australia a truly independent country free from any economic or political pressure to adopt policies against our own national interests.

The continuation of Australia's military links with the US or similar subservient links with any other country is incompatible with such a policy. The ANZUS Treaty would be terminated and the US bases on Australian territory told to go.

Industries which are at present geared to produce weapons of an aggressive, offensive type should be converted as soon as possible to production for peaceful purposes. The diversion of industries to civilian production creates more jobs not less.

If, for a time, such an attitude is not adopted by all other countries Australia would need some armaments, but they would be acquired only for the defence of our country and not to launch aggression against others.

Success in the campaign for peace and disarmament will release enormous resources for the conquest of poverty, hunger and disease and for protection of the world's ecology.

A culture of concern for the environment

The problem of environmental protection has to be dealt with by cooperation between all states, irrespective of their social system, through a new system

of international relations. It is essentially an international problem where the interdependence of all countries is most apparent. A socialist government of Australia would implement the objectives and obligations of the Kyoto protocols and other similar international treaties as they may be formulated.

A major task for a socialist government would be to educate everyone in an attitude of concern for, and a lifestyle which protects the environment. Measures to protect the environment will demand constant vigilance and public awareness together with democratic involvement and accountability.

At all times, the effects of human activity on the environment would be carefully monitored and research carried out to deal with problems as they arise in agriculture as much as in industry.

A program of research would be undertaken to ensure that present and future industries were environmentally sustainable. Every new industry would have to satisfy stringent environmental criteria.

Environmentally safe systems of energy production would have to be found since present systems are a major factor in the changes emerging in the environment which, as the greenhouse effect shows, could become catastrophic. In this respect the development of solar energy would be a priority as Australia's climate is ideal for the use of this source of energy.

Research programs to find other alternative and renewable materials and energy sources would be undertaken together with careful conservation of existing resources.

Community environmental organisations would be encouraged and supported. They have an important part to play in educating everyone in habits which protect the environment and in policing the effective protection.

Would a socialist government run everything?

No it would not, even though governments have a big role to play in any modern society. For socialism to work the working people must be intimately involved in helping to run the country and industry. Workers would help to run management and be involved in decision-making at all levels. That prevents the creation of a bureaucracy and ensures that managements have the opportunity to make the decisions and take the main responsibility for their work taking into account the overall needs of society.

What would our culture be like under socialism?

Culture plays a great role in bringing people closer together. That is why socialists and Communists have supported multiculturalism in Australia. Migrants have brought much that is progressive and of a high standard from their original homelands which should be enjoyed by everyone and become part of Australia's total cultural heritage.

The development of working class culture is an inseparable part of the construction of a socialist society, which would be impossible without a very wide spread of socialist conviction.

Using the best elements of previous culture, it will create new and inspiring images of a new society, it will strengthen the comradeship, the satisfaction of collective creative labour and working class consciousness. A basic feature will be its internationalist character.

It will reject the acceptance of exploitation, the patriarchy, the alienation, the individualism, the racism, the escapism carried over from capitalist society and its culture.

Socialism would encourage cultural life by providing a secure living for cultural workers and protecting and promoting progressive and democratic cultural achievements. A socialist government would see to it that cultural life was not swamped by the cheap and tawdry rubbish that at present floods into Australia.

What about the individual?

Everyone has his or her individual interests and outlooks on certain questions and society is enriched when the individuals who make up society are individually enriched by education, culture, good health, work, leisure activities, security and wellbeing. At the same time, no individual can exist without society which collectively provides many goods and services needed by every individual.

Workers work to produce things that are needed by others and they work collectively. When there are natural calamities like bushfires or floods, everyone gets into the job of helping out. When there is a strike, workers pull together and often make great sacrifices not only for themselves but for all. Australians have shown that they are quite capable of working together and that co-operation gets better results than just looking after oneself.

To win socialism and to build it there must be co-operation by the great majority. During the course of achieving this great task the characteristics of co-operation and care for others will become even stronger.

Hasn't socialism been a failure?

No! The socialist countries achieved many good things for the people compared with the state of affairs before socialist governments were established and, over years, built socialist societies.

Although people in some of the former socialist countries have now lost many of the benefits gained under socialism, it is certain that, in the future, the working people of these countries will resume the socialist path. Many other countries which have not yet set out on this course will start to do so. Communists and socialists believe that socialism is more than just a good idea; it works if socialist principles are properly applied and good leadership given.

The alternative is the continuation of capitalism. It always has and always will be based on the exploitation for profit of the vast majority of the people, while the real power is exercised by those who have money and see to it that the laws work for them. History is a continuous story of people rising up against those who exploit and oppress them, fighting for a better life, for freedom, security and independence. Socialism enables human society to achieve these long-held goals.

That is why the Communist Party of Australia is certain that the Australian people will also take this road, sooner or later, as the best way to solve the problems of our existing society.

The modern Australian nation has only a short history, but it is long enough to be able to say that the people have stood up for their rights, against convictism, to establish trade unions, for democratic rights, for peace and independence, against conscription and involvement in dirty wars and so on.

The above social, economic and political aims, which we are confident are shared by the overwhelming number of the working people of Australia, will not and cannot be satisfied by capitalism.

Consequently, the demand for change will inevitably arise. This is the guarantee that the future of the Australian working people remains a socialist one.

Poem

Socialism, comrade
is in the hands of men:
It is with us, it is with us –
Though it fade and fade again.
The white man shall have it
All the world around;
The black man shall have it

The yellow and the brown;
The labourer shall have it
With sweat upon his face;

The middle class shall have it –
It is for the human race;
The millionaire shall have it
Though he hates the very name
And tries to crush and strangle it –
He shall have it, just the same.

Socialism, comrade
Is like the red, red rose
Day by day it opens
And day by day it grows

Its roots are ever spreading
And its sweetness never goes,
And soon I think its petals
Will the whole wide world enclose.

Socialism by Alice Maynall (extract)

