

E. F. Hill

Looking Backward: Looking Forward

FOREWORD

This pamphlet demands a word of explanation.

It is well known that deep divisions have appeared in the world Communist movement. Marxism-Leninism is the science which guides the revolutionary Communist movement. We defend Marxism-Leninism and we defend what we regard as the originally correct Marxist-Leninist stand of the Communist Party of Australia. That stand has been betrayed by those whom we call modern revisionists. Revisionism is well known in the history of the revolutionary movement. At every critical turn it has made its appearance. It seeks to take the revolutionary soul out of Marxism-Leninism and to turn the working class into channels harmless to capitalism. It is a great weapon of the capitalist class. The purity of the revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism is always under attack. But that purity must be fought for.

This pamphlet traces some of the roots of the present revisionist politics and capitalist ideological outlook of the now revisionist “Communists” in Australia.

We belonged to the Communist Party of Australia. It is not easy to recognise what was wrong with an ideological outlook and political views and practices which we have spent part of a lifetime upholding, and upholding with the desire to serve the

revolutionary interests of the working class and exploited people of Australia.

Yet it is obvious that the present treacherous revisionist policy of the now revisionist Communist Party must have had its roots in weaknesses in its Marxist-Leninist outlook and practice; weaknesses undetected by us at the time, and accepted and practised by us for many years.

For the greater part of the lifetime of the now revisionist Communist Party, some of its work was positive. It played an extremely useful part in the development of the struggles and organisation of the Australian working class and people, but in looking back, the evidence of a limited Marxist-Leninist understanding is clear in much of its work. Its approach on some questions was completely wrong.

The denunciation of Marxism-Leninism, masked as a denunciation of Stalin at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956, was the signal for revisionists and right opportunists in Parties all over the world also to renounce Marxism-Leninism and to substitute for it, right opportunism and revisionism, which became the programme and platform for the now openly revisionist “Communist” Party in Australia.

The Communist Party of Australia turned into its opposite. Opportunism which was once the minor but persistent feature of the Communist Party became its dominant feature in 1961-62.

Those who stood out against betrayal of its former position ultimately cleansed the Communist ranks in Australia. The Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) came into being as the result of that cleansing. This was only after commencing the

most serious efforts to recognise and reject those incorrect views which we had inherited from the former Communist Party and to strengthen those correct views which we had defended from betrayal by the now revisionist Communist Party.

This pamphlet is part of that difficult process.

We are helped in this by the negative example of the revisionists and by the positive example of international events. We are assisted in particular by the example of the upholding of Marxism-Leninism by the great Communist Party of China.

But the process of awakening is not an easy one. To embark upon the critically important task of breaking with the errors of the former Party ideologically, politically and organisationally, requires protracted struggle. To break politically is not so difficult for the disasters into which modern revisionism is leading the workers are not so difficult to see. That something different is needed is fairly obvious. But the problems of fundamentally altering our ideology and building not only a new organisation but an organisation on entirely different lines are far more difficult. Such tasks demand that for ourselves we honestly examine our past practice to enable us to recognise our mistakes.

Lenin said of political parties (and it is just as true of individuals): “The attitude of a political party towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest criteria of the seriousness of a party and how it fulfils its obligations towards its class and towards the toiling masses. To admit a mistake openly, to disclose its reasons, to analyse the conditions which gave rise to it, to study attentively the means of correcting it— these are the signs of a serious party; this means the performance of its

duties, this means educating and training the class, and subsequently, the masses.” (Lenin: *Left Wing Communism*, Little Lenin Edition, p. 40).

Have we changed? It may be asserted against us that we have. No, fundamentally we have not changed. We have changed in that we now recognise as wrong some things which in the past we regarded as right. We believe as firmly as ever in the need for a revolutionary change of the social order, only our belief is in the process of becoming more soundly scientific, more reliable and useful to the working class and working people. By changing in this way, we have strengthened ourselves as Marxist-Leninists the better to carry on the splendid traditions of Communism in Australia now betrayed by the revisionists. We are the true inheritors of the pioneers of 1920 who first formed the Communist Party in Australia.

It is the former Communist Party which has changed, and changed fundamentally, from revolutionary theory and practice (however imperfect) to revisionist, reformist theory and practice.

It is these revisionist, reformist views which are attacked and criticised in this pamphlet. Because we share some responsibility for the past errors, our responsibility to correct them is all the heavier. Hence this pamphlet is part of that task. But we do not regard either the former Communist Party or the A.L.P. (which we also criticise) as a homogeneous body. We attack the theories and policies of these parties and not the members. We attack, criticise, the leaders because they crystallise and exemplify the policy, and a party must be judged by its policy and what class that policy serves.

We criticise our erstwhile colleagues for mistakes not only arising from the limited Marxist understanding they and we had, but above all we criticise them because they deserted the very cause of Communism they originally set out to serve.

It is a Marxist-Leninist duty to do just this. We make no apology for it. Historically, Marxism-Leninism developed and grew strong precisely in the struggle against rightwing ideas. Today it is again asserting itself against rightwing ideas. The champions of Marxism-Leninism have been refreshed. They are opposing and exposing the influences of the capitalist class which have accumulated to such a big degree in many of the Communist Parties.

The most important feature in our weakness was our failure sufficiently to study and apply materialist dialectics and to make materialist dialectics a mass question. It is not difficult at all to make materialist dialectics a mass question. But it is vitally important. “The law of contradiction, that is, the law of the unity of opposites, is the basic law of materialist dialectics.” (Mao Tse-tung: *On Contradiction*, p. 1). We must keep that firmly in mind in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the past, in seeing things in their movement and their development by the resolution of contradictions.

The struggle for socialism in Australia has a history in line with general principles revealed by the great thinkers of revolutionary socialism – Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Tse-tung. In that struggle the Communist Party formed in Australia in October, 1920, despite all its weaknesses, played a big part. We cannot (except incidentally) within the scope of the present booklet go into the mechanism of capitalist exploitation nor the general principles of

Marxist political economy. Rather we must proceed on the assumption that these are questions that already are understood. We set out here to examine and analyse some questions connected with the development of the working class movement in Australia and the position in that development of the trade unions, the Communist Party of Australia, now nominally headed by L. L. Sharkey (to which we will refer sometimes as the former Communist Party in contrast with the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist)) and the Australian labor party.

We therefore offer the following to assist in clarifying some of the questions that face the Australian workers now and in the future.

E. F. HILL

November, 1964

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

It has been decided to publish a second edition of “Looking Backward: Looking Forward.” Another word of explanation is called for.

Since writing this booklet I have become much more familiar with the thought of Mao Tse-tung. This thought is the highest development of Marxism-Leninism. As such it warrants our very closest attention and most careful integration with the concrete reality of Australia.

“Looking Backward: Looking Forward” deals with two particular problems characteristic of Australia. These two problems are trade union politics and parliamentary politics. They are indeed two very important problems. And their influence must be very vigorously combated.

The booklet dealt with them as part of the ideological preparation for the building of a Marxist-Leninist Party. The most brilliant and systematic exposition of the building of a Marxist-Leninist Party is to be found in the thought of Mao Tse-tung. His classics “Reform Our Study,” “Rectify the Party’s Style of Work,” “Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing,” really raise this question to the ideological plane. Their essence, their lessons are directly applicable to Australia.

Mao Tse-tung’s brilliant essays “On Practice,” “On Contradiction,” contain a remarkable exposition of the very foundation of Marxism-Leninism. They are directly applicable to Australia. Indeed one may say that every word written by Mao Tse-tung, just as every word written by Lenin, warrants careful thought and action.

In this regard the little red book, "Quotations from Chairman Mao," is of immense service to all revolutionary workers. It ought to be our constant companion.

Unfortunately the text of "Looking Backward: Looking Forward" insufficiently reflects the importance of the thought of Mao Tse-tung. Though I have made some alterations to the text, still I must use this opportunity to urge ever increasing study of the thought of Mao Tse-tung. I have added a chapter on this matter.

There is another specific error in "Looking Backward: Looking Forward" to which I must refer. This occurs in the text and in the foreword. It is correctly said, for example, in the foreword: "To embark upon the critically important task of breaking with the errors of the former Party ideologically, politically and organisationally, requires protracted struggle." Then it is said: "To break politically is not so difficult for the disasters into which modern revisionism is leading the workers are not so difficult to see." In retrospect, however, it must be said that the break politically is just as difficult and requires protracted struggle. What is really meant is that to free oneself from revisionism is a deep-going and continuous process. The acquisition of a Marxist-Leninist outlook requires protracted and continuous remoulding in the actual process of working class struggle.

E. F. HILL.
September, 1967.

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Looking Backward: Looking Forward

CHAPTER 1

Australia was settled as a penal colony by Britain in 1788. From that time Australia has gone through the development of six separate colonies – New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia. So-called self government was conferred by the British imperial parliament on the six separate colonies in the middle of last century.

This followed the development of free settlement and the beginnings of capitalism. The British imperialists had learned from their bitter experiences when they attempted to maintain the colonial bonds in North America. After the armed rebellion of Eureka in 1854, the British imperialists realised they must manoeuvre to maintain their hold on the Australian colonies. Hence they conferred “self government.” Despite self-government British imperialism continued to exploit the six separate colonies. The British imperialists invested money in them and imported (on terms favorable to themselves) the colonial raw materials, particularly wool. Trade unionism began to grow. In 1890, the great Maritime Strike took place.

It demonstrated that the working class was growing – a necessary concomitant of capitalism. Federation of the six separate colonies into the Commonwealth of Australia was enacted by an Act of the British parliament at the turn of the century.

Australia evolved as a separate “dominion” within the British empire. Thus Australia arose and continues as part of the British empire. Today British imperial hold on Australia is being challenged by the new aspirant to world domination, U.S. imperialism. With British imperialist, U.S. imperialist and Australian native capitalist investment, capitalism has taken firm root. The working class has grown. The working class is by far the most important class in Australian society. It has the historic mission of freeing Australia from British and U.S. imperialism and of establishing its own power in Australia.

From the time of the original penal colonies, the Australian workers and working people have a splendid tradition of militant struggle against oppression. Highlights in Eureka and the 1890 Maritime Strike have already been mentioned. In the years of federation, the traditions of the working class have been greatly enriched by splendid struggles.

In the last several decades this tradition has been further enriched. One very important event was the establishment of the Communist Party of Australia in October, 1920. It began the challenge to the system of politics of the Australian labor party. That party arose out of the events around the Maritime Strike. With the politics of these parties it is necessary to be very much concerned. The course the workingclass must follow to carry out its historic mission is a subject that must be closely studied. The science of Marxism-Leninism provides the key to that study.

Marxism-Leninism is a science which guides the workers and toiling people in their struggle for emancipation from capitalism. Marxism-Leninism has been obscured and pushed into the background

by some who today call themselves Communists although Marxism-Leninism is the world outlook of Communism. In the very name of Marxism-Leninism some who call themselves Communists have put forward theories and practices which have nothing in common with Marxism-Leninism.

It is, therefore, necessary to restate some of the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism and restore them to their rightful place.

Just because the trade unions occupy so important a place in the lives of Australian workers, special importance attaches to a Marxist-Leninist analysis of their position. Just because it seems to us that on this question, so important to Australian workers, those who now falsely call themselves Communists have gone wrong, it is necessary to start from the very beginning. That will require extensive quotation from the theoreticians of Marxism-Leninism, particularly from the great Russian revolutionary, Lenin. Other than that it sometimes makes a document tedious, we offer no apology, because the classics of Marxism-Leninism have been pushed on one side and their study eschewed by some so-called Marxist-Leninists. Part of the struggle to re-assert the supremacy of Marxism-Leninism lies in restoring the study of these classics to a foremost position in the Australian workingclass.

It will be necessary to refer extensively to those who falsely call themselves Communists and whom we will sometimes call revisionists. These people revise Marxism-Leninism, revise from it its revolutionary soul. To cover themselves they speak loudly about bringing Marxism up to date. They speak about creative Marxism. They speak derisively against those who, as they say, continually

quote Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. Really they condemn themselves by their own denunciations.

They do not want to be reminded of what Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin said because the very function of revisionism is to do what the capitalist class has failed to do, that is, bury the ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

We too stand for creative Marxism. Stalin, paraphrasing Engels, said that Marxism is not a dogma, it is a guide to action. That is profoundly true. But when our revisionists speak of creative Marxism, they really mean complete rejection of Marxism.

To the workingclass and toiling people, Marxism-Leninism is life itself because it provides them with the weapon to free themselves from capitalism, from exploitation. Though fulfilment of that task may seem momentarily distant in Australia, nonetheless it is imperative to prepare for the ending of capitalism in Australia and continually to struggle to that end. It is necessary to be fully armed theoretically with an understanding of society because theory has immediate practical consequences. Moreover we live in a period when capitalism has been overthrown in vast areas of the world. Today socialism is triumphant above all in China. It was victorious in Russia only to be betrayed by the revisionist Khrushchov and his successors. The actual conditions throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America are crying out for the immediate overthrow of capitalism.

Though there is not at the present time in Australia a revolutionary situation, the fact naturally is that Australian capitalism and the Australian workingclass and toiling people do not exist in a

vacuum. They exist in an actual world, a world which is in a process of acute change. The system of exploitation, of imperialism is daily being challenged. We live in the era of the transition from capitalism to socialism. No Australian is unaffected by that. Every Australian in one way or another is affected by it and must define his or her attitude to it. It affects us in taxation, in military operations in South East Asia, in wages, in houses, in education, in medical services, in legislation against democratic rights, in a thousand and one ways. It affects us in the so-called Australia-U.S. alliance because the U.S. imperialists are the main oppressors of the people. They oppress the colonial people and the people in the subordinate capitalist countries such as Australia. They are the main champions and force for maintaining capitalism.

Marxism-Leninism throws a clear light on all these problems. The capitalist class from the very beginning of Marxism in the middle of last century has tried to strangle Marxism by every means in its power, by silence, by trying to ignore it; when that failed, by hiring many “learned” people to refute it, by persecuting, killing or imprisoning its adherents. Today none of those “skills” has been lost. But one of the chief weapons of the capitalist class has always been political diversion in the very name of Marxism-Leninism. This was the role of Trotsky and those who adhered and adhere to his views. They proclaimed themselves Marxist-Leninists and in the name of Marxism-Leninism undermined Marxism-Leninism. However, Trotskyism as a political trend has received very many severe blows. It can no longer do the job of political diversion in the present period of the collapse and overthrow of imperialism.

The imperialists are absolutely frantic to save their system. They rush hither and thither with their armed

forces all over the world trying to stamp out revolts of the people. An essential complement of this is political diversion in the very name of Communism and Marxism-Lenin-ism. Lenin said: “Opportunism can be expressed in the terms of any kind of doctrine, *including that of Marxism.*” (Lenin: *On Britain*, p. 102 – emphasis his).

That is the role of the modern revisionists headed until recently on a world scale by Khrushchov and carried out in Australia by the former Communist Party of Australia which is really under the domination of the Aarons revisionist clique.

Today it is possible to see the actual collaboration of these people with the U.S. imperialists. Let us take a few examples: Khrushchov supported the attempted use of U.N. (really U.S.) “inspection” in Cuba in 1962 (a proposition vital to U.S. imperialism), Khrushchev supported the Indian ruling class backed by the U.S. imperialists in their aggression against socialist China. By his desire to disengage the Soviet Union from the Chairmanship of the Geneva Commission, Khrushchov supported U.S. military operations against Vietnam.

The Soviet revisionist successors to Khrushchov have betrayed the people of Pakistan in the Indian aggression against that country, betrayed the Arab people when they were the victims of U.S.-British-Israeli aggression, have lined up with the U.S. imperialists against all liberation struggles and against the People’s Republic of China.

Khrushchov supported the U.S. policy to destroy the socialist German Democratic Republic and strengthen the German monopoly capitalists with their plans for the restoration of German military might. In other words, the modern revisionists serve

the needs of U.S. imperialism in its plans for world domination. These plans include Australia, where U.S. investment, penetration and political domination have reached an all-time high.

Hence clarity on what is going on is critical for the Australian working people. Clarity demands that Australians be armed with Marxism-Leninism, for it alone provides the answers and indicates the way forward. Certainly we would urge the Australian workers to read Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Tse-tung and the writings of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist). These writings are not too advanced, too difficult, as the revisionists say. The workers are not too backward, too ignorant. They do not have the contempt for theory of which the revisionists are so fond of speaking. On the contrary, it is the revisionists who fear to urge the study of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Tse-tung, just because such a study is imperative in the struggle to end capitalism. The revisionists do not themselves want to struggle to end capitalism. They want to prevent everyone else from struggling to end capitalism. They have a contempt for the workers, for the people.

Particularly do we urge the study of the thought of Mao Tse-tung. Precisely because it analyses all experience from the time of the death of Lenin and creatively develops Marxism-Leninism it is of supreme importance in the world of today. It is the highest development of Marxism-Leninism.

In speaking of the fact that socialist ideas came from outside the workingclass, Lenin said: "Since there can be no talk of an independent ideology formulated by the working masses themselves in the process of their movement, the only choice is – either bourgeois or socialist ideology" and he added

a footnote: “This does not mean, of course, that the workers have no part in creating such an ideology. They take part, however, not as workers, but as socialist theoreticians ... in other words, they take part only when they are able, and to the extent that they are able, more or less, to acquire the knowledge of their age and develop that knowledge. But in order that workingmen may succeed in this more often, every effort must be made to raise the level of the consciousness of the workers in general; it is necessary that the workers do not confine themselves to the artificially restricted limits of ‘literature for workers’ but that they learn to an increasing degree to master general literature. It would be even truer to say ‘are not confined,’ instead of ‘do not confine themselves’ because the workers themselves wish to read and do read all that is written for the intelligentsia, and only a few (bad) intellectuals believe that it is enough ‘for workers’ to be told a few things about factory conditions and have repeated to them over and over again what has long been known.” (Lenin: *What is to be Done, Selected Works*, 3 Volume Edition, 1960, Vol. 1, pp. 156-7).

The modern revisionists in Australia today systematically attempt to confine the workers to being told a few things that they already know and never seek to raise the level of the consciousness of the workers.

If you read their publications (which you should), *Tribune* (now described not as a newspaper of Marxism-Leninism nor even as a newspaper of the working class but as “Australia’s national progressive weekly”) and *Australian Left Review* (the name *Communist Review* has been dropped), and particularly the writings of L. Aarons, you will see this demonstrated. These publications

reveal very clearly that the revisionists have taken up the role of abject servants of capitalism.

How then do the trade unions fit into all this? Opposition to capitalism first took the form of machine breaking, because the machine was seen as the thing which brought ruin to the craftsmen. Machine breaking was blind revolt. The adherents of machine breaking failed to see that machines had come to stay and that a new form of society, capitalism, was destined to occupy a whole historical stage. When machines had established themselves, when capitalism was entrenched, gradually the workers learned that they had a common interest against the employer. Their consciousness developed to organising strikes against the appalling conditions imposed upon them. But their strikes were strikes within the confines of capitalism. They never challenged the capitalist system itself. They raised as demands only the things which immediately affected them – wages, hours, conditions.

Lenin said: “There could not have been Social Democratic (read Communist) consciousness among the workers.

It would have to be brought to them from without.

The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e. that conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers, and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labour legislation, etc. The theory of socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the propertied class, by intellectuals. By their social status, the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia.” (*What is to be Done*,

The crux of this thought is of critical importance to Australian workers today. What is the way forward: is the way forward to confine the workers to trade unionism, to trade union struggles, or is it to work to lift the consciousness of the workers to the level of Communist (scientific socialist) consciousness, and build a revolutionary scientific socialist party of the working class capable of leading the whole struggle against capitalism? To do the former is to perpetuate capitalism: to do the latter is to prepare for the overthrow of capitalism. It is our contention that the modern revisionists in Australia seek to confine the workers to trade unionism, to trade union politics, and thus to do something which does not really challenge capitalism as a social system.

Australian trade unions date back to the first half of last century. In the early stages, they reflected the weakness of the development of Australian capitalism, i.e. without capitalism there are no workers. As we have said, Australia commenced as a penal colony, which provided no basis for trade unions. But particularly after the gold rushes had subsided and capital accumulated and an embryonic working class was available to be exploited, capitalism developed in Australia. The British capitalists exported capital to their colony Australia. Employers exploited workers. Trade unions got greater stability. Strikes occurred. In 1890, the Maritime Strike took place. It was the biggest strike in the history of Australia up to that time. It was defeated. We shall in a moment turn back to some of its consequences.

The history of the development of trade unions in Australia was a history of resistance by the capitalist class (just as it had been in Britain) to the very formation of trade unions. All sorts of obstacles, including repressive legislation, were placed in their way. The capitalists demanded the right to exploit the individual worker to the full. They worked hard to prevent the workers from combining because the capitalists understood that the organisation of the workers gave the workers far greater strength. Hence many bitter struggles had to be waged before the capitalists recognised at all the right of the workers to organise. The workers only held that right by virtue of their strength. It was a question of class against class. When the capitalist class finally acknowledged the fact of workers' organisation, it sought at all times to make that fact depend upon its own conditions and terms and to turn it to its own advantage. It has been pointed out that in England at a certain stage of the development of capitalism, it paid the capitalists to have trade union organisation in a given industry because thereby the capitalists were saved from competition amongst themselves in the hiring of labour power, i.e. it was an advantage to capitalist A to know that he was paying the same wages as capitalist B and not being undercut in this respect by capitalist B.

In Australia in the 1870's and 1880's, there was an expansion of trade unionism. Naturally enough it was influenced by the course of development that had been followed by the English trade unions. The workers, for the most part, were emigrants from England. But certainly no conception arose from the trade unions to attack the social system itself. The workers had forced on them only the understanding that in a given factory or given trade they were the victims of low wages, long hours, bad conditions at

the hands of the employers and that by combining they had more chance of alleviating their lot than by acting individually. Occasionally they directly or indirectly supported a member of parliament to pursue in parliament the workers' demands.

Because of their conditions of life – lack of education, long and arduous work, etc. – the workers could not of themselves subject all history and all society to searching analysis. This was left, as Lenin said, to the educated representatives of the propertied classes, Marx and Engels, who had the education and the time to survey the whole of history and society and to reveal that its development had taken place according to definite social laws which operated all the time. These laws showed that society must develop into socialism and Communism and that the workingclass was precisely the class which had the historical mission to achieve socialism and thereby free all toiling people.

Accordingly, left to themselves the workers could never escape from capitalism. Alone, the ideas they generated must necessarily have been confined to trade union demands, i.e. better terms from the capitalist within the bounds of capitalism. Thus the ideology, the politics of the workers, strange though it may seem, were bourgeois, capitalist, ideology and politics, i.e. they were based on an acceptance of capitalism. They could not get beyond capitalism. Their struggle was a desperate struggle for existence, to hold a job, and in that job to get the best conditions. Trade unions, therefore, of themselves never did generate socialist politics, and today that holds good. A study of Australian trade union and workingclass history shows it to be true.

The struggle to improve wages, to improve conditions, to resist victimisation, though vitally

important, does not of itself challenge capitalism and does not of itself in any way strengthen the socialist consciousness of the working class. On the contrary, unless it is handled in a particular way, it can strengthen trade union politics, i.e. the acceptance of capitalism by the workingclass. Though it always fights to resist workingclass demands, the capitalist class is never really threatened by trade union politics because they never challenge the capitalist system itself. By trade union politics we mean the preoccupation imposed by the conditions of capitalism on the trade unions to confine themselves to trade union demands. Insofar as the trade union politics spontaneously generated by the workingclass have been systematised as bourgeois politics (reformism), this has been done by the educated representatives of the propertied classes.

One result of the Maritime Strike of 1890 was to give currency to the idea that only by securing widespread representation in parliament could the workers achieve their trade union demands. It was said the forces of the State had been used to defeat the strikers and success could not be achieved unless the workers secured their own representatives in parliament.

By 1890, there had been brought to the workingclass of the world, social ideas and theories of various kinds. Social theoreticians had arisen from the capitalist class. Marx and Engels advanced the ideas of scientific socialism; Utopian (unscientific, dreamlike) socialist ideas had emerged earlier from such people as Robert Owen and the Frenchmen St. Simon and Fourier; the Englishman William Morris put forward socialist ideas; the German Duhring; Henry George and Edward Bellamy exercised considerable influence, and many others. Those ideas, and mixtures of them attracted

and influenced the advanced workers. But the development of capitalism in Australia by 1890 did not provide the objective basis upon which Marx and Engels' ideas of scientific socialism could flourish.

The far more limited idea of workingclass representation in parliament did have soil upon which to flourish. As we have said, Australian workingclass representation in parliament was to be to achieve trade union demands, i.e., it was strictly within the confines of capitalism itself. To labour the point a little more: the aim of securing working class representation in parliament accepted the existence and permanence of capitalism. It was again bourgeois, capitalist ideology and politics. Moreover, parliament itself was and is an institution of capitalism. It was and is the possession of the capitalist class. One of the very points of seeking representation in parliament was because it was said, and correctly, that parliament was full of representatives of the capitalist class and what hope did the workers have when the laws were made by legislators who were capitalists.

Thus the workers in the years immediately following 1890 sought representation in a bourgeois institution, i.e., parliament. They wanted to use the bourgeois parliament to enact measures that would satisfy the workers' demands to improve their own lot. To put it plainly, the workers sought to achieve demands which never challenged capitalism and sought to do so through a capitalist institution, namely parliament.

Thus they accepted capitalism in two ways, (1) their demands accepted the social system of capitalism, (2) their method of achieving them accepted the social institution of capitalism – parliament. This is not a reproach of the

workingclass at all. It is explained by its then immaturity and demonstrates that of itself the workingclass cannot generate a scientific socialist consciousness. It shows further that at that stage of Australian capitalist development scientific socialist ideas were largely unknown. All this has influenced the subsequent history of the Australian working-class.

It was against this background that the Australian labor party, which has always been very closely linked with the trade unions, arose. The idea was that one of the big functions of the labor party in the parliament would be to enact legislation to give effect to trade union demands. It was a political party therefore which historically accepted demands which did not in any way challenge capitalism and which accepted the capitalist parliamentary institution as the institution through which to gain the demands. Nevertheless it was a considerable historical step forward, for it marked the beginning of the struggle for the political independence of the workingclass.

Australian capitalism developed throughout the latter half of the 19th century. The number of workers correspondingly increased. Australian Federation in 1901 was the product of the development of capitalism. The six separate colonies had by the end of the 19th century outlived their usefulness and were constituting a barrier on the further development of capitalism in Australia. Hence Federation.

Because Australia was a British colony, federation could only be granted by legislation by the British parliament. But it was a hesitant federation with a constitution full of contradictions. These reflected the conflicting interests of the various groups of

British (and the few Australian) capitalists – those whose interest lay in the development and exploitation of Australia as a whole and those whose vested interests lay in separate states. Between them there were many other sectional interests. The worker; were divided, influenced by sectional considerations. Many Australian trade unions today reflect this in the weakness of their federal structures.

In the first 20 years of federation, the High Court, an interpreter of the constitution, was careful to safeguard the separate interests vested in the separate states (the original six colonies) and careful to put a restraining hand on the development of centralism. It enunciated legal doctrines that were in conformity with these economic and social considerations.

CHAPTER 2

The development of capitalism, and with it the working-class, was inexorable. World War I saw an enormous development of industry (e.g. the establishment in 1915 of an iron and steel industry) and a concentration and centralisation of capital in Australia. Likewise it saw a great development of trade unionism.

The High Court accorded with the new position of the Commonwealth as a central governmental authority which was much more powerful after World War I by reason of the changes just mentioned. High Court decisions of 1920 expressed a new legal doctrine which reflected the new power of the Commonwealth Government.

Now what of the politics and demands of the trade unions? After 1890, the demands of the trade unions continued to be demands within the framework of capitalism made on the employer and the capitalist states. The trade unions' parliamentary activity was largely lobbying with members of the parliamentary parties. The movement towards parliamentary representation through what became the Australian labor party was greatly intensified.

At no stage did the demands go beyond reforms to be achieved within capitalism. Of course, the capitalists fought bitterly to make the minimum concessions. They vigorously resisted strikes and poured forth abuse and warnings of disaster if this or that gain were made by the workers. Thus one may say that until the end of World War I very little had been done in Australia, except in very primitive ways, to change the situation created by what is a

law of capitalism: namely, that the workers by themselves can never generate anything more than trade union consciousness (based upon an acceptance of capitalism). However, the idea had been implanted in the workingclass, and developed, of seeking parliamentary representation.

This itself was an important development for it reflected, even though in a primitive and confused form, a recognition of the class oppression of the capitalist state machine. Essentially however it never went beyond the confines of capitalism. It was a certain historical step forward but contained within itself its own dangers. If the workers devoted their attention exclusively to demands that accepted capitalism as permanent, and accepted capitalist institutions as the means to realise those demands, then there were the means for their continual enslavement. They could never get beyond capitalism.

To carry the argument further, if they were to accept parliament as the institution to carry through the reforms, then they were perpetuating the illusion that parliament is a democratic institution to carry out the will of the people rather than what it really is. Parliament is an instrument for the deception of the people and provides them with what Marx said was the opportunity to choose once every few years “which member of the ruling class will misrepresent the people in parliament.” The more far-sighted capitalists and their theoreticians, though they may have resisted this or that demand, could see advantages in this very development. From their standpoint, what had happened? The workingclass had developed trade unions: this had proved impossible to prevent; hence what to do – make the best of it – resist what you can – concede what you are compelled to concede and as to parliament, well

after all, so long as we own the parliament, as we do, it does no harm to allow the workingclass at least to appear to be represented: it can even be a great advantage because it spreads illusions that parliament is not really our institution but is really a people's institution. The educated representatives of the propertied classes who emerged to perpetuate capitalism, to advance ideas in defence of capitalism, were not slow to see this and not slow to develop "labour" theoreticians to expound appropriate ideas amongst the workingclass.

Therefore, like all other workingclasses, the Australian workingclass by its own efforts developed only trade union consciousness. Moreover, it was a workingclass largely immigrant in origin, composed of English migrants. As late as 1913, Lenin said:

Australia is a young British colony. Capitalism in Australia is still quite young. The country is only just beginning to take shape as an independent state. The workers, for the most part, are emigrants from England. They left England at the time when liberal labour politics held almost unchallenged sway there and when the masses of the English workers were liberals. Even up till now the majority of the skilled factory workers in England are liberals and semi-liberals. This is the result of the exceptionally favourable monopolist position England occupied in the second half of the last century." (Lenin: "In Australia.")

With the assistance of ideas from the outside (that is, from the ruling class), the Australian workingclass developed a parliamentary party to give expression to trade union politics. Therefore the labor party was born as a capitalist party and it served capitalist interests extending beyond the mere trade union demands of many of its founders. The workingclass by its own consciousness could not and did not demand a political party which went

beyond expressing trade union demands. Thus in Australia in the birth of the trade unions and the birth of the A.L.P., there was always an acceptance of bourgeois ideology, bourgeois politics. Historically it could not be otherwise. To repeat, the A.L.P. was born as a party of capitalism accepting all aspects of capitalism but demanding reforms within capitalism and using capitalist institutions to achieve those very reforms. The question simply never arose of ending capitalism. If there was an acceptance of this position, i.e. trade union demands, then that position was necessarily self-perpetuating. Practically no effort was made to attain scientific socialist consciousness and necessarily the politics which emerged must have been bourgeois politics.

Let us quote again from Lenin: "Since there can be no talk of an independent ideology formulated by the workingclasses themselves in the process of their movement the only choice is – either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course (for mankind has not created a 'third' ideology, and, moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms there can never be a non-class or an above class ideology). Hence to belittle the socialist ideology in any way, to turn aside from it in the slightest degree means to strengthen bourgeois ideology. There is much talk of spontaneity. But the spontaneous development of the workingclass movement leads to its subordination to bourgeois ideology ... for the spontaneous workingclass movement is trade unionism . . . and trade unionism means the ideological enslavement of the workers by the bourgeoisie. Hence, our task, the task of Social Democracy (read Communism or Marxism-Leninism) is to combat spontaneity, to divert the workingclass movement from this spontaneous, trade unionist striving to come under the wing of the

bourgeoisie and to bring it under the wing of revolutionary Social Democracy” (read Communism or Marxism-Leninism) (Lenin: *What is to be Done*).

Thus the development of the Australian workers has resulted in a position where they had enslaved themselves to the bourgeoisie and this had become very strongly entrenched.

In 1917, the ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin of revolutionary scientific socialism received a tremendous world impetus from the victory of the revolutionary Russian workers in establishing their own state power.

Throughout the imperialist war of 1914-18, the workers in the capitalist countries including Australia had become increasingly dissatisfied and increasingly restive. In 1917, a general strike, for example, occurred in N.S.W., sparked off by a system of speed-up in the N.S.W. railways. Such was the unrest amongst the workers that before long thousands were involved. Again all the limitations of trade union politics operated: no challenge to capitalism: simply rectify our grievances and we will return to our wage slavery. Naturally the mere act of striking constituted a certain challenge to capitalism. However, now there were beginnings of scientific ideas being introduced because the imperialist war had caused a world-wide resurgence of revolutionary socialist ideas, particularly after the old socialists of the 2nd International had betrayed socialism by their very support of the imperialist war.

Whereas the European social democrats had at the Basle conference in 1912 declared their unequivocal opposition to imperialist war and their determination

to call on the workers to overthrow capitalism in the event of imperialist war, such sentiments had not affected the Australian labor party leaders nor secured any hold on the Australian workingclass. At the outbreak of the war in 1914, the European social democrats betrayed their own resolution, but no Australian labor party leader could be said in the same way to have betrayed that resolution or any similar resolution because at that time the politics of the workers were almost wholly bourgeois politics.

The logic of them was expressed by Andrew Fisher, Australian labor party leader, when he pledged Australia to the last man and the last shilling in support of the war.

The Russian Revolution in 1917 profoundly influenced the whole of socialist thinking and profoundly influenced the whole of the workingclass of the world. Though Australia was far away, it profoundly influenced the Australian workers and the theoreticians of the Australian workers. The ideas that gave rise to the Russian Revolution had not been trade union politics, had not been politics generated by the workingclass by its own efforts. They were ideas developed by Marx, Engels and Lenin himself, all educated representatives of the propertied classes, taken to the workingclass. Once these ideas had been made the property of the advanced section of the workers, the workers were party to their development and extension.

Marxism-Leninism in the hands of the workingclass is an all-powerful weapon. The laws of society, the world outlook of Marxism-Leninism, discovered and expounded by the founders of Marxism-Leninism and grasped by the workingclass, are the greatest possessions of the working-class. The workingclass in possession of

that weapon develops and extends it; integrates it with the concrete conditions of the given country, preserves it from all alien trends. Marx said: "Theory becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses." (*Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law.*)

The process of theory becoming a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses is spectacularly demonstrated by the great proletarian cultural revolution in China. The thought of Mao Tse-tung, the highest development of Marxism-Leninism, has gripped millions of Chinese people. Armed with it they are consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat and uprooting the remnant capitalist influences. These influences persist within the top leadership of the Communist Party. China's Khrushchov indicates this. But with Mao Tse-tung's thought the people and the dictatorship of the proletariat and its chief arm, the People's Liberation Army, are all-powerful.

But it is a continuous struggle in the workingclass as to which will win: Marxism-Leninism or reformist, bourgeois politics. Hence the workers must study Marxism-Leninism, must struggle for it, must struggle to make it grip the masses. Once the theories of Marxism-Leninism had been discovered and expounded by the educated representatives of the propertied classes, it by no means followed that educated representatives of the propertied classes were the sole repositories of Marxism-Leninism. On the contrary, Marxism-Leninism is the property of the workingclass and educated representatives of the propertied class participate in the struggle to develop and defend Marxism-Leninism only in so far as they identify their position with that of the workingclass. Hence there is no question of a handful of so-called intellectuals being the custodians or developers of

Marxism-Leninism. The custodians and developers of Marxism-Leninism are the workers and those who have identified their position with that of the workers.

The ideas of Marxism-Leninism had been victorious in the Russian workingclass. They succeeded in a stern battle against trade union politics with their acceptance of capitalism. They succeeded against the theoreticians who arose to exploit and give system to those other politics, theoreticians also largely educated representatives of the propertied classes, but who had given themselves to the bourgeoisie to help perpetuate capitalism (e.g. Bernstein, Kautsky). In this country, “educated” people came to the fore in the labor party to develop and exploit these bourgeois ideas.

The Russian Revolution demonstrated that the ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin were correct. Throughout the world, including Australia, these ideas profoundly influenced the workers and the social theoreticians who sought to serve the workingclass. The struggle began for them to grip the workingclass. In Australia, the battle was really joined between revolutionary scientific socialist ideas – Communism – Marxism-Leninism on the one hand and trade union politics, social democracy, reformism, on the other hand. In saying that, we do not mean to say that fully developed Marxist-Leninist ideas entered the fray. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that from that time, the struggle to bring Marxist-Leninist revolutionary scientific socialist ideas to the Australian workingclass commenced. The ideas competing against Marxism-Leninism for the minds of the workers were those of trade union politics and the political party to which they had given birth, namely, the Australian labor

party. They were necessarily from the very beginning bourgeois ideas.

Left to themselves the workers organised in the trade unions could not generate anything but ideas limited by capitalism. When the capitalist class evolved theoreticians to take advantage of that, to provide a “theoretical” basis for the stirrings of the trade unionists, there was the systematic exploitation of trade union politics by the bourgeoisie for the express purpose of perpetuating the adaptation of the workingclass to capitalism. At a given stage, the capitalist class thus provides theoreticians for the workingclass and even from the workingclass to enslave the workers to capitalism. There are thus several aspects to this problem: the spontaneous natural growth of trade union organisation and consciousness, never of itself going beyond the limits of capitalism, but on the contrary, developing capitalist politics which constitute the soil for the bourgeoisie to provide theoreticians to take advantage of this and to rivet the shackles of bourgeois ideology on the workingclass.

What is the basis for the maintenance of trade union, reformist ideology? The capitalists look to the higher paid workers as the reservoir from which to recruit those who will serve them in the name of labour in the trade unions. Deliberately the capitalists pay more wages to certain sections of the workers. Deliberately they flatter, cultivate and foster certain trade union leaders and certain workers. In England, they even knight them, make them lords or earls, bestow honours on them. Occasionally they resort to crude bribery.

In Australia, they do not knight them or make them earls or lords, but they use a similar technique. Again they recruit “theoreticians” from the

bourgeois intellectuals. They draw on the international “theoreticians” of social democracy: Kautsky, Bernstein, Ramsay MacDonald, and so on. Their “theoreticians” raise the cry of no politics in the trade unions or only A.L.R politics in the trade unions. What is the effect of this? If there are no politics in the trade unions, then it means that there are only bourgeois politics in the trade unions.

As we have already pointed out, the spontaneous natural development of the workingclass by itself reaches only trade union organisation and consciousness, and the very existence (a very important existence, of course!) of trade unions under capitalism is based upon the defence of the workers against the capitalists, i.e. the very acceptance of the idea of the permanence of the capitalists and the permanence of the workingclass. Lenin said: “But why, the reader will ask, does the spontaneous movement, the movement along the line of least resistance, lead to the domination of bourgeois ideology? For the simple reason that bourgeois ideology is far older in origin than socialist ideology, that it is more fully developed, and that it has at its disposal immeasurably more means of dissemination. And the younger the socialist movement in any given country, the more vigorously it must struggle against all attempts to entrench non-socialist ideology, and the more resolutely the workers must be warned against the bad counsellors who shout against ‘over-rating the conscious element’ etc.” (Lenin: *What is to be Done*. 3 Vol. edition, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 158).

Hence the task before the young socialist movement in Australia in the period after World War I was to struggle vigorously against all attempts to entrench non-socialist ideology in the workingclass,

to fight with all its strength against the line of least resistance.

In 1920, the Communist Party of Australia was formed from various groups which had been reaching after Marxism-Leninism. It had the purpose of struggling for Marxism-Leninism and to bring Marxism-Leninism to the Australian workers. It was a Marxist-Leninist party, even though it had many shortcomings.

But what were the circumstances of that struggle? Australian capitalism was still developing. True it suffered the economic ups and downs of capitalism, but historically it was developing and developing Australia as a nation. The trade unions were increasing in membership and moving towards creating a central leadership. In 1927, the Australian Council of Trade Unions was set up as a single trade union centre for the whole of Australia. Today this Australian Council of Trade Unions embraces all the important Australian trade unions with the exception of some important white collar organisations.

As the trade unions developed and strengthened, so too did the tendencies to trade union politics develop, i.e. the natural spontaneous development was towards trade union politics for the reasons we have already advanced. Affiliated to the Australian labor party as the main unions were, there arose the concept of an industrial wing and a political wing, i.e. the industrial wing constituted by the trade unions and confining itself specifically to the economic demands of the workers through trade union activity, and on the other hand the political wing constituted by the Australian labor party with the avowed job of looking after in parliament the interests of the workers. This concept itself was an expression of trade union politics which accepted the

permanence of capitalism. Its very life and existence lay in the permanence of capitalism. Each “wing” supported the other and operated in self-perpetuation of trade union politics. It had the blessing and co-operation of the capitalist class, because that class could see that the whole situation was entirely to its advantage. By fostering trade union politics, bourgeois politics, reformist politics, and a political party to perpetuate them, it was fostering a political party to serve itself. The last thing the capitalists wanted was a revolutionary party, revolutionary politics. If they could have a party which spoke in the name of the workers yet was a party of capitalism, they could ask no more. After all, the lessons of the Russian Revolution of 1917 were far from lost on the capitalist class.

The capitalist class summed up the experiences of the Russian Revolution, the Australian capitalist class no less than others. Nor were the lessons lost on the leaders of the A.L.P., who served the ruling class. They were quick to realise the tremendous influence and appeal socialism now had on the workingclass. So they inserted into the labor party programme the socialist objective for the very first time. The fact that the A.L.P. had never previously had such an objective is powerful evidence substantiating our reasoning that it never was a party even with nominal workingclass objectives. In other words, it did not even claim to be a party against capitalism. Really it gave conscious political expression to the spontaneous generation of trade union politics from the Australian workers, that is, no challenge to capitalism, permanence of capitalism and development of capitalism.

When in 1921 the Australian labor party adopted the socialist objective (vaguely worded at that) it did so as an act of deception of the workers. Many

workers genuinely wanted socialism; they instinctively responded to its appeal. Capitalism on a world scale was increasingly challenged by socialism not only in Russia. In Germany, Hungary, France, England, etc., the ideas of socialism exercised a powerful influence under the example of the Russian Revolution. The capitalist class was bound to take this into account and it did so in various ways. Examples are (1) it sought to crush the Russian workers, (2) it sought to appease the workers by concessions, (3) it sought to achieve its ends by political diversion and by deception. It used all means and used them simultaneously. Part of this in Australia was the insertion into the A.L.P. programme of the socialist objective. In view of the misuse by modern day “Communist” revisionists of this socialist objective of the A.L.P. (by asserting the essential unity of the programmes of the Communists and the A.L.P. – see L. Aarons “Labor Movement at the Crossroads”), it is vitally important to remember the setting in which it was introduced into the A.L.P. programme.

We must repeat that the A.L.P. was the product of trade union politics, which involved acceptance of capitalism. Without any question at all it was a party of capitalism and did not pretend to be anything else. It accepted itself as a party of capitalism and it carried out policies of capitalism as, e.g. during World War I it played a full part in support of the imperialist war. It played a big part in creating a unified Australia. It was on to that party with that background that the socialist objective was grafted. It would have been strange indeed if that mere act had transformed a well-entrenched capitalist party into a socialist workers’ party, strange indeed! It would have had no precedent in history. Subsequent events have made abundantly clear that it did not

convert the A.L.P. into a workers' socialist party at all. Investigation proves that conclusively. Both as a matter of logical theoretical reasoning and as a matter of cold hard fact, it left it as a party of capitalism. What clearer proof could there be than that the A.L.P. leaders have constituted the government in the Commonwealth and in every single State, yet capitalism under their rule has remained intact and developed. In any conditions of crisis the A.L.P. has dramatically and openly demonstrated itself as an anti-socialist and anti-workingclass force.

But alongside this development went on the struggle of the Communist Party of Australia to bring Marxism-Leninism to the Australian workers. It genuinely strove to bring Marxism-Leninism to the Australian workers. Despite its own imperfect ideas of Marxism-Leninism, there can be no doubt that its founders were genuine seekers after Marxism-Leninism and genuinely strove to extend it. They initiated and participated in important mass struggles. By 1926, their position and the international success of Communism so alarmed the ruling class that it inserted into the Commonwealth Crimes Act political provisions specifically aimed at the Communist Party – testimony to the fact that the Communist Party of Australia alarmed the ruling class with its ideas of revolutionary scientific socialism.

Hence there were two main trends in the Australian workingclass – the development of trade union politics and as a product, the A.L.P., and on the other hand, the development of the revolutionary movement under the leadership of the Communist Party of Australia.

Let us digress a little. The strengthening of the trade unions was a very important factor in the life of the Australian workingclass and of the Australian people. Without the trade unions, without their struggle, as Marx put it, the workers would be reduced to broken wretches.

In *Value, Price and Profit*, Marx said:

These few hints will suffice to show that the very development of modern industry must progressively turn the scale in favour of the capitalist against the working man, and that consequently the general tendency of capitalistic production is not to raise, but to sink the average standard of wages, or to push the value of labour more or less to its minimum limit. Such being the tendency of things in this system, is this saying that the workingclass ought to renounce their resistance against the encroachments of capital, and abandon their attempts at making the best of the occasional chances for their temporary improvement? If they did, they would be degraded to one level mass of broken wretches, past salvation. I think I have shown that their struggles for the standard of wages are incidents inseparable from the whole wages system, that in 99 cases out of 100 their efforts at raising wages are only efforts at maintaining the given value of labour and that the necessity of debating their price with the capitalist is inherent to their condition of having to sell themselves as commodities. By cowardly giving way in their everyday conflict with capital, they would certainly disqualify themselves for the initiating of any larger movement.

At the same time, and quite apart from the general servitude involved in the wages system, the workingclass ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these everyday struggles. They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of those effects; that they are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction; that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady.

They ought, therefore, not to be exclusively absorbed in these unavoidable guerrilla fights incessantly springing up from the never-ceasing encroachments of capital or changes of the market. They ought to understand that, with all the miseries it imposes upon them, the present system simultaneously engenders the material conditions and the social forms necessary for an economic reconstruction of society. Instead of the conservative motto: 'A fair day's wage for a fair day's work' they ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword: 'Abolition of the wages system'!"

Organisation of the workers in itself is important.
In Left Wing Communism, Lenin said:

Trade unions represented enormous progress for the workingclass at the beginning of the development of capitalism as the transition from the disunity and helplessness of the workers to the rudiments of class organisation. When the highest form of proletarian class organisation began to arise, viz, the revolutionary party of the proletariat (which does not deserve the name until it learns to bind the leaders with the class and with the masses into one single indissoluble whole), the trade unions inevitably began to reveal certain reactionary traits, a certain craft narrowness, a certain tendency toward becoming non-political, a certain inertness, etc. But the development of the proletariat did not, and could not, anywhere in the world, proceed otherwise than through the trade unions, through their interaction with the party of the proletariat . . . (Lenin, *Selected Works*, 12 Volume Edition, Vol. 10, pp. 90-91.)

It is impossible to minimise the importance of the great growth and great strength of the Australian trade unions.

Every Communist, every Marxist-Leninist, is proud of the Australian trade union movement and is proud that the Communists paid and pay close attention to it. Every Communist will continue to have that pride and give to the trade unions their

rightful place. To give the trade union movement its rightful place, it is necessary to restate the principles of Marxism-Leninism. Practice of those principles alone can put an end to capitalism. It is essential to win the victory of Marxist-Leninist revolutionary politics over trade union politics.

The point however is to analyse the political trends that developed and to understand that unless a correct Marxist-Leninist understanding of and stand in relation to the trade unions is achieved, then the workingclass must inevitably remain shackled to capitalism, shackled to bourgeois politics, to reformist politics. The conflict is not at all between the trade unions and Communism. It is between the system of political ideas known as trade unionism or trade union politics and Communism. The system of political ideas known as trade unionism must be defeated, because trade union politics are bourgeois politics. If the Marxist-Leninists allow the field to be dominated by the bourgeoisie, whether in an open or concealed form, then they are not carrying out the behests of Lenin. They are leaving the field to the capitalist class, they are taking the line of least resistance.

CHAPTER 3

As capitalism in Australia has developed, the Australian trade unions have continued to develop in membership and strength right up to the present time.

The Australian trade union movement reflects the development of capitalism in Australia. The decisive position of the Australian Workers' Union, largely an agricultural workers' union, some sixty-odd years ago was a reflection of the primarily agrarian character of Australia's economy up till World War I. By 1927, the trade unions covering the industrial workers had constituted the Australian Council of Trade Unions, to which the A.W.U. was not affiliated until 1967. Each maintained a separate existence. The 1967 A.C.T.U.-A.W.U. marriage is a reflection of Australia's economic development and the crisis of reformist trade union politics. The leaders of these two bodies need each other's support to hold back workingclass struggle.

In the period after World War II, further changes in the nature of the economy are reflected in the emergence of the Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Associations and the High Council of Public Servants, organising the skilled technicians and white collar workers. These latter bodies have been called into being by the increasing mechanisation and automation of industry and the growth in the public service. All of this requires analysis and a proper working out of correct Marxist-Leninist policy. The central fact is that the great majority of Australian workers are organised in trade unions.

And what does that mean? It means that the field of competition for the minds of the workers is eternally expanding. With the expansion of the trade unions, so the tendencies to spontaneous generation of trade union politics are strengthened. On the other hand, the fact of organisation and the very degree of consciousness that leads to organisation, together with Marxism-Leninism increasing its hold on the workers, expands the field for the Marxist-Leninists. Left to themselves the trade unions will generate only trade union consciousness which involves acceptance of the existing social order.

Bourgeois politics, reformist politics will flow into the workingclass from the trade unions. Given a correct approach the workingclass provides an inexhaustible reservoir for revolutionary Marxism-Leninism. Without a revolutionary party extending leadership to all spheres and strata of the community, including the trade unions, the trade unions provide a veritable sea of bourgeois ideas, all the time being generated, all the time exercising an influence against revolutionary ideas, exercising a conservative influence, an influence for the acceptance of capitalism. All this is exploited by the bourgeoisie. On the other hand, with correct Marxism-Leninism and given a Marxist-Leninist political party exercising its leadership correctly the bounds of trade union politics can be overcome. The workingclass in those circumstances is not then confined to mere questions of trade unions and trade union interests. From its very position as the most revolutionary class the workingclass must take up all the questions of society (not only the immediate economic interests of the workers). It must become imbued with revolutionary consciousness. Marx and Engels said:

Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product. The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat; they thus defend not their present, but their future interests; they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat (*Communist Manifesto*, 1848).

Hence the tendencies go both ways but, as Lenin said, it requires determination, resolute struggle, to ensure the victory of breaking away from the limitations of trade union politics, i.e. “the common striving of all workers to secure from the government measures for alleviating the distress to which their condition gives rise, but which do not abolish that condition – which do not remove the subjection of labour to capital” (Lenin, op. cit. 159.)

We must pause here to quote Lenin a little more. He said: “Workingclass consciousness cannot be genuine political consciousness unless the workers are trained to respond to all cases of tyranny, oppression, violence, and abuse, no matter what class is affected – unless they are trained, moreover, to respond from a Social Democratic (read Communist) point of view and no other. The consciousness of the workingclass cannot be genuine class-consciousness, unless the workers learn from concrete, and above all from topical, political facts and events to observe every other social class in all the manifestations of its

intellectual, ethical and political life; unless they learn to apply in practice the materialist analysis and the materialist estimate of all aspects of the life and activity of all classes, strata and groups of the population. Those who concentrate the attention, observation and consciousness of the workingclass exclusively, or even mainly, upon itself alone are not Social Democrats (read Communists), for the self knowledge of the workingclass is indissolubly bound up, not solely with a fully clear theoretical understanding – or rather not so much with the theoretical, as with the practical understanding – of the relationships between all the various classes of modern society, acquired through the experience of political life. *For this reason the conception of the economic struggle as the most widely applicable means of drawing the masses into the political movement, which our Economists preach, is so extremely harmful and reactionary in its practical significance. In order to become a Social Democrat (read Communist) the worker must have a clear picture in his mind of the economic nature and the social and political features of the landlord and the priest, the high state official and the peasant, the student and the vagabond; he must know their strong and weak points; he must grasp the meaning of all the catchwords and sophisms by which each class and each stratum camouflages its selfish strivings and its real 'inner workings'; he must understand what interests are reflected by certain institutions and certain laws and how they are reflected. But this 'clear picture' cannot be obtained from any book. It can be obtained only from living examples and from exposures that follow close upon what is going on about us at a given moment; upon what is being discussed, in whispers perhaps, by each one in his own way; upon what finds expression in such and such events, in such and such statistics, in such and*

such court sentences, etc., etc. These comprehensive political exposures are an essential and *fundamental* condition for training the masses in revolutionary activity.” (Lenin: *What is to be Done*, 3 Volume Edition, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 181-2, emphasis partly mine.—E.F.H.)

Enough experience has accumulated in the Australian trade union movement to enable us to examine some aspects of its politics from the time of the 1917 Russian Revolution.

We choose that time because it was then that the struggle for the ideas of revolutionary socialism was really joined in Australia. We propose to examine the work of raising the consciousness of the workers to Marxist-Leninist socialist consciousness and to test it by the classical tests set out by Lenin.

In our country, good trade union leaders, leaders who are prepared to fight, justifiably command the respect of the workers. A trade union leader who leads his members in strike and other struggles and wins gains for his members, earns their respect and support and quite correctly so. The job of a trade union leader is to devote himself selflessly to the interests of his members. In Australian conditions he must be a good mass leader, he must be familiar with the laws and awards that govern the industry, he must be a good advocate. But none of that makes him a revolutionary socialist. By doing his trade union duties he is giving expression to trade union politics and demonstrating once again that by its own efforts alone the workingclass can generate only trade union consciousness. A trade union leader emerges from amongst the workers in the factories.

Usually he has demonstrated his capacity for leadership in many struggles on the job. He carries

with him all the influences of trade union consciousness arising from the factory conditions in which the essence of the struggle spontaneously developing all the time is to get a better deal from the employer. The political affiliations of such a person may be Australian labor party, Communist or he may belong to no party. Whatever party he belongs to he will most likely bring with him the heavy imprint of trade union politics precisely because of his immediate environment in the factory and because of the very strength of the organisation of trade unions in Australia. But the criterion of a good revolutionary socialist, Marxist-Leninist, Communist, goes far beyond the mere capacity (praiseworthy and necessary that that is) to be a good trade union leader. A militant trade union leader is not, merely by virtue of his militancy, a revolutionary. Nonetheless a trade union leader may also be a good Marxist-Leninist, just as anyone else may be. In Australia there are trade union leaders who are revolutionaries.

Sometimes it is answered that the trade union leaders not uncommonly are good politicians, that they give the economic struggle a political character. That is a common assertion of the modern day Australian revisionists. This was well answered by Lenin over 60 years ago. He said: "The economic struggle is the collective struggle of the workers against their employers for better terms in the sale of their labour power, for better living and working conditions. This struggle is necessarily a trade union struggle, because working conditions differ greatly in different trades, and, consequently, the struggle to improve them can only be conducted on the basis of trade organisations (in the western countries, through trade unions) . . . Lending 'the economic struggle itself a political character' means, therefore,

striving to secure satisfaction of these trade demands, the improvement of working conditions in each separate trade by means of 'legislative and administrative measures'.

This is precisely what all workers' trade unions do and always have done. Read the words of the soundly scientific (and 'soundly' opportunist) Mr. and Mrs. Webb and you will see that the British trade unions long ago recognised, and have long been carrying out, the task of 'lending the economic struggle itself a political character'; they have long been fighting for the right to strike, for the removal of all legal hindrances to the co-operative and trade union movements, for laws to protect women and children, for the improvement of labour conditions by means of health and factory legislation, etc.

Thus, the pompous phrase about lending the economic struggle itself a political character, which sounds so 'terrifically' profound and revolutionary, serves as a screen to conceal what is in fact the traditional striving to degrade Social Democratic (read Communist) politics to the level of trade union politics.

We may, and the workers may, respect, and rightly so, a trade union leader for his capacity to perform his job as a trade union leader, but that must not blind us to the fact that that capacity, that ability to carry out the tasks of the trade unions does not make that person a workingclass leader who seeks the end of capitalism. On the contrary, such a person can well (maybe unconsciously) serve the capitalist class by operating always on the basis of the maintenance of capitalism.

Something much more must be expected and demanded by the workers. Of course, the workers will fight to defend and strengthen their trade unions and demand of their trade union leaders selfless attention to their trade union duties. But as we have

said, for the emancipation of the working-class, something much more is required.

“Revolutionary Social Democracy (read Communism) has always included the struggle for reforms as part of its activities.” (Lenin: *What is to be Done*, 3 Vol. Edition, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 175.) Communists must always play a full part in the struggle for reforms. “But,” said Lenin, “it (Communism) utilises ‘economic’ agitation for the purpose of presenting to the government, not only demands for all sorts of measures, but also (and primarily) the demand that it cease to be an autocratic government.” (He was speaking of Russian Czarism.) “Moreover it considers it its duty to present this demand to the government on the basis, not of the economic struggle alone but of all manifestations in general of public and political life. In a word, it subordinates the struggle for reforms, as the part to the whole, to the revolutionary struggle for socialism.”

And later Lenin said: “‘Economic’ concessions (or pseudo-concessions) are, of course, the cheapest and most advantageous from the government’s point of view, because by these means it hopes to win the confidence of the working masses. For this very reason, we Social Democrats (read Communists) must not under any circumstances or in any way whatever create grounds for the belief (or the misunderstanding) that we attach greater value to economic reforms, or that we regard them as being particularly important.”

Hence we return – to whom should the workers look as leaders? Because of the trade union traditions in Australia, because of the strength of the trade unions in Australia the trade union secretary is frequently the ideal to whom the workers respond.

As we have said, as the quotations from Lenin indicate, that is not nearly enough. Speaking of the revolutionary circles in Russia (and we maintain it applies in Australia with equal force), Lenin said:

In fact, the ideal leader, as the majority of the members of such circles picture him, is something far more in the nature of a trade union secretary than a socialist political leader. For the secretary of any, say English, trade union always helps the workers to carry on the economic struggle, he helps them to expose factory abuses, explains the injustice of the law and measures that hamper the freedom to strike and to picket (i.e. to warn all and sundry that a strike is proceeding at a certain factory), explains the partiality of arbitration court judges who belong to the bourgeois classes, etc., etc. In a word, every trade union secretary conducts and helps to conduct 'the economic struggle against the employers and the government.' It cannot be too strongly maintained that this is still not Social Democracy (read Communism), that the Social Democrats' ideal should not be the trade union secretary but the tribune of the people, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalise all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth before all his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for all and everyone the world historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat.

The leadership of the revolutionary movement belongs not to the trade unions or trade union leaders however militant they may be, but to the Marxist-Leninist Party. The Marxist-Leninist Party is organised on a scientific basis, with a guiding political science to give leadership to every sphere and stratum of society, to win the workers to a revolutionary position.

Thus those who seek emancipation, those who are Marxist-Leninists, those who accept Marxism-Leninism, must not see the purely trade union leader (i.e. the trade union leader who performs only trade union tasks) as the ideal. A given trade union leader may be, to use Lenin's term, "a tribune of the people," a Marxist-Leninist, but he is not that by virtue of his trade union position. If he is a good Marxist-Leninist his trade union position will give him greater influence as a tribune of the people, but continually there will act upon him trade union influences that drag him away from being a tribune of the people. If he is a sound Marxist-Leninist, he will resist those. If he is not but belongs to a Marxist-Leninist organisation, he will take his trade union politics into that organisation, and if that organisation is not vigilant, those ideas will exercise very great influence and help to turn the organisation away from Marxism-Leninism.

Thus we have set out some general considerations, and now let us look at what has happened in Australia.

CHAPTER 4

In the great economic crisis of the 1930's labor governments in Australia revealed themselves clearly as anti-workingclass. At the dictation, even public dictation, of the capitalist class, labor governments reduced wages and attacked the workingclass in all ways, including with police violence. In the trade unions many officials who were members of the A.L.P. supported the labor governments. Some showed their corruption and lack of ability. Amongst the workers there was widespread disillusionment with the A.L.P. and with the orthodox trade union leaders. Looking for a lead on economic questions and for emancipation from unemployment, evictions, wage reductions, speed up, the workers failed to get it from the A.L.P. or from the orthodox trade union leaders.

On the other hand, the Communist Party of Australia correctly analysed that what was happening was that the capitalist class was using the economic crisis to intensify exploitation and that the workers must struggle against it. It was a focus for socialist ideas. It popularised the achievements of socialism in the U.S.S.R. However, even though it was a Communist Party its emphasis was on the economic demands of the workers as ends in themselves. It emphasised their trade union demands, the demands of the unemployed for work, for an adequate dole and so on without finding the way to link the whole struggle, the whole experience of the workers, to the revolutionary struggle for socialism and just as importantly without organising the Communists effectively amongst the workers. It saw its task in terms far too much of having

Communists elected to leading trade union positions and leaving it at that.

The predominant insistence upon the idea of electing Communists into the leadership of the trade unions and leaving it at that, contributed to the isolation of the Communists because the hard day to day contact with the vast middle and backward sections of the workers was not carried out. Again such an idea was based upon the wrong assumption that the trade unions themselves are vehicles of the revolution and trade union leaders, its leaders. The correct view that the revolutionary party, namely the Communist Party, is the leader of the workingclass and that the workingclass must take up all the problems of the oppressed was blurred.

It did not sufficiently attend to the problems of all other strata of the population – the farmers, the ruined small capitalists, the public servants, nor react sufficiently to all the evil manifestations of capitalism. But certainly and correctly it paid great attention to the economic demands. Its weakness lay in failing to give them their correct overall place in the whole struggle against capitalism and to use the situation to extend Marxism-Leninism ideologically, politically and organisationally. Its weakness lay in its lack of revolutionary ideology. Its striving and desire were towards revolution, but it was held back by its environment.

With the economic crisis there occurred the rise of Hitler and the armed aggression of Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo. Abyssinia was attacked in 1935, the Spanish Civil War with Nazi and Italian Fascist intervention occurred in 1936-1939, and there was a succession of internal attacks upon the German, Italian and Japanese people, coupled with extended external aggression by the imperialists of those

countries. Monopoly capitalism in those countries had thrown off the cloak of democracy and resorted to open terrorist dictatorship. In that situation, again the A.L.P. leaders and their counterparts in the trade unions gave no leadership to the workers. On the other hand, the Communists in Australia raised the slogan "Against War and Fascism," were energetic in support of the Spanish people, against the aggression of Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo, against the Munich Treaty of 1938 and so on.

In these conditions, the workingclass in Australia did make a big turn to the Communists. With the failure of the A.L.P. and the A.L.P. trade union leaders, Communists began to be elected to the leadership of the trade unions. The workers saw in the Communists people who were not corrupt, who were courageous, determined and bold enough to lead the struggle of the workers. In the period of the economic crisis and throughout the 'thirties, Communists in the workshops and amongst the unemployed had demonstrated their capacity for leadership in the workers' struggles. Moreover, they were by comparison with the A.L.P. well organised, and commonly organised on the basis of opposition to the corrupt trade union leadership in their industry. Largely the then factory organisation of the Communists was directed at removing corrupt and inefficient trade union leaderships and replacing them with incorrupt and efficient leaderships. That task was crowned with great success. When in the years of World War II the victories of the Soviet Army again turned Australian workers towards the Communists, the whole process was accelerated. Thus by the end of World War II in 1945, many members of the Communist Party occupied important leading trade union positions throughout Australia. In fact, too, the workingclass and working

people had developed through their participation in the anti-fascist struggle and through the leadership of the Communist Party a great consciousness of the struggle against capitalism.

Now the question is – how did the Communist Party discharge its revolutionary job of lifting the trade union consciousness of the workers into revolutionary consciousness? What influence did it have on the trade unions and what influence did the trade unions have on it?

We start off from the proposition we have already made that a trade union leader, however efficient, is not, merely because he is an efficient trade union leader and even though he is called a Communist, a revolutionary leader, a Marxist-Leninist, a Communist. Indeed the environment in which he lives and works is all against his being a revolutionary leader. And that is through no fault of his own. Day in and day out, probably seven days a week, he is preoccupied with trade union problems – wages, hours, conditions, victimisation, workers' compensation, etc. Just as the worker works and travels to and from work long hours and so gets little time to devote to pursuits, including political pursuits, outside his work, and has little energy to think out the whole range of social problems, so the trade union leader works in an atmosphere that exudes trade union politics.

He works metaphorically in a veritable sea of trade union politics. Only the strongest of Marxist-Leninists can be expected to resist this. Inevitably numbers of Communists who become trade union officials become also trade union politicians. Instead of seeing all aspects of the struggle, all strata of the population, all cases of oppression, victimisation, etc., they see only the particular economic demands

of their particular workers or of the workers as a whole, i.e. their outlook is limited by the economic struggle, dominated by the economic struggle. That means bourgeois politics, politics based upon an acceptance of capitalism. In its turn, it opens the way for direct unity with the capitalist class itself, for corruption.

In the first place some of those, even many of those, who became Communist trade union officials were not Communists and were not even striving to become Communists at all. They knew little or nothing of Communism, Marxism-Leninism. Some joined the Communist Party precisely because they could see that the Communists were coming into the leadership of the trade unions and thus good jobs could be obtained by being a Communist. Others were honestly seeking to master Communism, Marxism-Leninism. Some were good Communists or striving to become so, and continued in that position.

But it is our contention that the trade union leaders who belonged to the former Communist Party have largely become adapted to capitalism. They have been one of the factors in the degeneration of the old Communist Party of Australia into a purely reformist, revisionist organisation and its desertion of even striving for revolutionary principles. Many Communists in the trade unions, however well intentioned they were and are, have succumbed to trade union politics and have abandoned revolutionary socialist politics. Nor in most cases did they do that by wicked design. They did so because of shortcomings in understanding Marxism-Leninism, and included in that, a failure to understand the problem of the trade unions itself.

Worship of the trade union struggle, worship of the trade union leaders are a feature of the history of the former Communist Party of Australia. That, as Lenin has said, is quite wrong, because logically, theoretically and borne out by practice, it does not further the struggle to overthrow capitalism. On the contrary, it can strengthen capitalism.

So these Communists who were trade unionists almost necessarily bore with them the mark and influence of trade unionism which they carried into the former Communist Party. The leaders of the former Communist Party did not work to lift the consciousness of these workers beyond trade union consciousness. In the very strong trade union environment in Australia, very strong Marxist-Leninists are required to handle the trade union politics that are continually, spontaneously being generated. If that work is neglected or not understood, inevitably trade union politics become supreme.

It has been commonly said of the former Communist Party of Australia that one of its great strengths has been its close connections with the trade unions. Yes, that is a source of strength, but it is also a source of weakness. It is a question of struggle. Which will prevail: revolutionary socialism, Marxism-Leninism on the one hand, or trade union politics, economism, reformism, revisionism on the other. They are both eternally present. The A.L.P. reflects, represents, extends and systematises trade union politics. Marxism-Leninism reflects, represents, revolutionary socialism. Within the A.L.P. some workers become revolutionary, i.e. they abandon the ideology and politics of the A.L.P., but because it is a bourgeois party supported by the bourgeoisie, it cannot be changed into a workingclass party.

Within all Communist Parties there is an eternal struggle between revolutionary politics and bourgeois politics. This is the contradiction within the essence of the Communist Party. In the conditions of the strength of trade unionism in Australia, the spontaneous generation of trade union politics was a big factor in influencing the course of the internal struggle in the former Communist Party of Australia. Unless counteracted, unless taken full account of, unless a proper assessment was continually made of the great importance of the trade unions and the correct Marxist-Leninist approach to them, the spontaneous trade union politics sooner or later must have been victorious.

In practical terms, the Communists in the trade unions without any doubt played a positive role in strengthening the organisation of the trade unions and against the corruption of those whom they replaced. There are many specific instances of this. Their leadership shone in bright contrast to that of some of their predecessors. They led many very good struggles of the workingclass and struggles that extended in some cases beyond the mere economic interests of the workers, as e.g. the stand by Australian unions in support of Indonesian independence.

Up until 1949, there had been many great struggles of Australian trade unionists led by Communists. It is necessary only to refer to the struggles of the coalminers going back into the 'thirties, and after the war, the steel workers, meat workers in Queensland, transport and metal workers in Victoria. All this represented the high point of Communist-led struggles. It is to be noted that the predominant concentration was on economic issues as such, i.e. trade union politics. But the question from a Marxist-Leninist standpoint is – did these

struggles, the basis for which arose spontaneously in the unrest of the workers, result in Communist, Marxist-Leninist, revolutionary consciousness, ideology, politics and organisation being raised? Did they take full account of what Lenin said: “The spontaneous workingclass movement is by itself able to create (and inevitably does create) only trade unionism, and workingclass trade unionist politics is precisely workingclass bourgeois politics. The fact that the workingclass participates in the political struggle, and even in the political revolution, does not in itself make its politics Social Democratic (read Communist – Marxist-Leninist) politics.” (Lenin: *What is to be Done*, 3 Volume Edition, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 203).

Did they take full account of what Lenin said: “Trade union organisations, not only can be of tremendous value in developing and consolidating the economic struggle, but can also be a very important auxiliary to political agitation and revolutionary organisation.” (Lenin: p. 220). Or did they see, as Lenin enjoined us to see, that the economic struggle was part of but subordinate to the general revolutionary struggle. Of course, Lenin said: “The workers’ organisations for the economic struggle should be trade union organisations. Every Social Democratic (Communist) worker should as far as possible assist and actively work in these organisations.” But the question still remains: Did the former Communist Party, as a political party independent of the trade unions and the individual Communist trade union leaders, see these struggles not as ends in themselves, important though those ends may be, but as an essential part of the task of raising the whole consciousness of the workers and all working people towards revolutionary consciousness, ideology, politics and organisation?

Or did they, in their giving leadership and effective leadership to many of these struggles, in fact strengthen capitalism because the struggles were seen as an end in themselves and side by side with them all the issues that affected all other strata of the population adversely were not taken up?

Now let us look at two examples. The Victorian transport strike of 1946 resulted in quite substantial wage increases for certain Victorian transport workers. It was a very good, solid struggle and it was well led from a trade union point of view. But it was seen by the former Communist Party as the most important aspect of political struggle, as the main thing. It was a trade union struggle and Communists in the trade unions and in the leadership of the trade unions were duty bound to exercise all their influence and activity in supporting that struggle. That was very good. But there is another side to it. The Communists were also bound to work during the struggle (as at all times) to lift the consciousness of the workers towards a revolutionary socialist understanding, to strengthen the Communist Party itself ideologically, politically, organisationally. The Communist Party as such had the job of not seeing or presenting this struggle as the be-all and end-all of the revolutionary struggle. Neither from the former Communist Party as such nor from the Communists in the struggle was the question of social revolution or the nature of capitalism really raised at all in persistent, appropriate, patient mass work. These matters were only raised as a passing agitational point because the Communist Party was heavily influenced by trade union politics.

As the result of the strike struggle, wage increases were granted by the Arbitration Court. That was good, but it also had its negative side because, as Lenin said, economic concessions (or pseudo-

concessions) can be in fact a weapon of the ruling class. If the struggle goes no further than to raise and even realise an economic demand, it even strengthens capitalism and the capitalist institutions such as the arbitration machinery.

The second example is that of the metal strike in 1947 which centred about wage increases for metal trades workers. Again it was a very successful struggle which Communists did support and were bound to support. It resulted also through the arbitration machinery in quite important wage increases. Those wage increases were presented by the former Communist Party as the be-all and end-all of the struggle. The victory over the employers was very good: the workers counterbalanced the constant pressure of the employers to force the price of labour power below its value.

But it too had the aspect of strengthening capitalism because the former Communist Party and the Communist trade union officials failed to work assiduously to explain the shortcomings of trade union politics and failed to enhance the revolutionary consciousness and organisation of the masses. Above all the Communists should have been with the masses of the workers. In this regard the position of avowed Communist trade union officials is of secondary importance.

At all times the most important question is the integration of the Communists with the masses. The masses must be to the Communist what the water is to the fish. That is an arduous and difficult job and it does not mean neglecting economic and trade union struggles. On the contrary, it means enhancing them by understanding clearly that just to succumb to the politics that emanate from the trade unions, from the workers even in struggle, is to succumb to politics

bounded by capitalism – to take the line of least resistance.

We return to make a passing comment on whether or not the workers in those struggles would respond to education, would respond to Marxism-Leninism, would grapple with the wide social problems of socialist revolution, would strengthen their revolutionary party. This must be answered unhesitatingly, yes, they would. All experience proves this to be true. The response to direct socialist agitation and propaganda during a strike struggle is always enthusiastic. In itself that can be very fleeting. But what the former Communists failed to do was to present the correct perspective, to develop revolutionary consciousness and organisation and to work hard, patiently – persistently amongst the masses – not merely or even mainly the trade union officials working among the masses. And working among every section, stratum of the masses, not merely the workers. On the contrary, they passively let it run as a purely trade union struggle, the product of which left to itself is trade union, bourgeois politics. They failed to act as revolutionaries at all and this arose out of the environment of the Australian trade union movement which daily, hourly, gives rise spontaneously to trade union, bourgeois politics.

The former Communist Party bowed to that spontaneity despite all that Lenin wrote on it. Bowing to that spontaneity is rendered all the more easy – the line of least resistance, Lenin called it – by the fact that the ideologists of the labor party give conscious impetus to the bourgeois politics that flow from the spontaneous movement. In the competition between the ideology of revolutionary socialism and reformism, the least slackening of vigilance by the revolutionaries means that the eternally besieging

bourgeois ideology penetrates the fortress. Furthermore, the predominant emphasis upon the trade union leaders who were Communists strengthened the wrong idea that the Communists see the trade unions as vehicles of the revolution.

The lessons of these struggles were summed up in the former Communist Party, but in retrospect it is easy to see that the conclusions drawn were largely wrong because they were summed up from the standpoint of trade union politics and not from a revolutionary standpoint at all. The real assessment should be for all Communists, not only the trade union leaders nor the Communist trade unionists involved, how did the given struggle assist or hinder the workers in breaking from the bourgeoisie politically, ideologically and organisationally and in building the revolutionary party? How did it assist all the toiling people to do that? How did it fit into the struggles of all other strata of the population?

How did it itself raise the problems of the other strata of the population? How did it extend revolutionary organisation?

In retrospect it was perfectly correct for the workers to struggle and for the Communists to give leadership in the struggle. But the struggle, for various reasons, the main one of which was that it proceeded from the standpoint of trade union politics, actually strengthened bourgeois influence in the working class.

Absurd, you may say, but reflection will show that it is not absurd. It strengthened illusions about the Arbitration Court even though it was correctly pointed out that the Arbitration Court simply registered gains that had already been won. That is one example.

It strengthened illusions about the capitalist class, that it will be reasonable under enough pressure. It strengthened illusions about the labour governments of the day because they were the governments which made concessions. Whereas if the struggle had been presented and the presentation fought and organised for as but part, and even only a small part, of the preparation for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, as taking place along with many other struggles and injustices of other sections of the people in which the workers must intervene, then the spontaneous forces could have been counteracted and the energy, enthusiasm and determination of the workers directed into correct channels. Moreover, such a presentation takes full account of the possibility of defeat of the workers on their economic demands, an ever-present danger, and one of which full account must be taken. It is then seen as part of the necessary experience of the workingclass in the struggle for state power.

Long, sustained and hard work is necessary to explain all this, all the time to the workers, and genuine organisation of the revolutionaries linked by a million ties to the workers is required – working day in and day out protected by correct organisational methods from the scrutiny of the employer and the secret police. The Communists must explain to the workers all these issues, get them to read Lenin's "What is to be Done," be persistent, resolute; win the advanced workers to do the same work, taking full account of the level of each worker, but having confidence that given the correct approach he can be won.

It is the height of absurdity to expect that a Communist Party can do all this by making a few passing references to socialism and Communism. It can publicly advocate the ideas of Communism, but

many, many workers are going to be careful about having anything to do with it because “contamination” with it means victimisation or possible victimisation, or that is how it is seen. To fail to take account of this is the most arrant sectarianism and is to skip over necessary stages in the development of the workingclass and to isolate the Communists. In his very great book, *Left Wing Communism*, Lenin paid detailed attention to this very matter.

In addition to the direct public Communist agitation and propaganda which present legal conditions make possible, even more important is painstaking, patient work among the masses – and not the crude methods of endangering the livelihood of the workers. Revolution, Marxism-Leninism, is a science and it requires a scientific approach, proceeding from the actual level of the workers, which varies from advanced to backward. All too much damage has been done by the modern day revisionist Communist sectarians who in many cases because they wear the name Communist but are not Communists at all, are no more than decoys by which the employers and secret police can compile lists of the good honest militant workers. The revolutions in Russia and China were won by the application of scientific methods and not by such sectarian methods as persisted in by the modern Communist revisionists.

The former Communist Party committed the very errors which Lenin criticised in *Left Wing Communism*. Lenin attacked the Communists of the 'twenties who wanted to create separate “pure” Communist organisations in the trade union movement and elsewhere. It is true that the former Communist Party did not create separate organisations. In practice it did something

essentially similar. It created in the trade unions an exclusive left bloc. The existence of the left bloc cut the Communists off from great masses of workers. After all, the advanced workers are always a minority. You cannot possibly successfully appeal to the vast mass of backward and middle workers from an exclusive left Communist bloc. That was the very principle that Lenin dealt with. In order to maintain contact with all the workers the Communists must have their members at every level of the workers and amongst all the workers. If a person is identified as a member of the exclusive left Communist bloc his effectiveness is immediately reduced. If, on the other hand, he works patiently and persistently and builds up his friends, contacts, winning them carefully to Communism, enlisting some who in turn will do the same, then he is doing effective Communist work. Though he may achieve none of the publicity accorded Communist trade union leaders, his work is more important.

The capitalist class and its servants, the A.L.P. leaders and trade union leaders, resort to every foul means to keep the Communists from the masses. The exclusive left Communist bloc assists the capitalist class. But the Communists must at all costs be with the masses. They must defeat the capitalists despite all difficulties. Nor must they succumb to legalism and thereby create the exclusive left bloc which isolates them. Though the trade unions in Australia by and large permit Communist membership, nonetheless (and because of this) the former Communist Party isolated itself and its members from vast sections of the workers. Lenin's principles are fully applicable. In *Left Wing Communism*, he urged the Communists to be with the masses, there to work for Communism, to go to any length to do so. Every word of *Left Wing Communism* is fully

applicable to Australia. In Chapter VI, Lenin dealt particularly with mass work in the trade unions. He said: "Under tsarism, until 1905, we had no 'legal possibilities'; but when Zubatov, the secret service agent, organised Black Hundred workers' assemblies and workingmen's societies for the purpose of trapping revolutionaries and combating them, we sent members of our Party to these assemblies and into their societies. (I personally remember one such comrade, Babushkin, a prominent St. Petersburg working man, who was shot by the tsar's generals in 1906.) They established contacts with the masses, managed to carry on their agitation and succeeded in wresting the workers from the influence of Zubatov's agents." (To this Lenin added this footnote: "The Gomperses, Hendersons, Jouhaux and Legiens [reformist leaders akin to our A.L.P. and reformist trade union leaders. –E.F.H.] are nothing but Zubatovs, differing from our Zubatov only in their European dress, in their outer polish, in their civilised, refined, democratically sleek manner of conducting their despicable policy.") Then Lenin goes on in the body of the text:

Of course, in Western Europe, which is particularly saturated with inveterate legalist, constitutionalist, bourgeois-democratic prejudices, it is more difficult to carry on such work. But it can and must be carried on systematically. (Lenin: *Selected Works*, 12 Volume edition, Vol. 10, pp. 95-96.)

Another feature of the problem of organisation is that, as we pointed out earlier, the Communists came to the leadership of the trade unions backed by Communist organisation, the main aim of which was to win the leadership of the given union. It was based in the workshops but having achieved the objective of winning the given union leadership, it largely

collapsed as an effective organisation. That organisation collapsed because it was an organisation not with a revolutionary objective but dominated by trade union politics, and when the aim of electing the leadership in the union was achieved, it had served its purpose. Moreover, the persons elected to the leading positions were never too keen about maintaining and strengthening the organisation because even though those elected may have been unconscious of it, organisation in the workshops always has revolutionary potentialities and it can easily disturb the peaceful and privileged position of a trade union official who has succumbed to bourgeois politics.

Again, the given official was and is always studied by the employers and by the secret police – his strengths, his weaknesses, whether or not he drank, gambled, his personal behaviour, whether or not he was open to flattery and so on and so forth. The ruling class is quite scientific about this. They make a very careful study. They go to work as soon as the given Communist attains any prominence. Their aim is to adapt the Communists to the ruling class. It must be said immediately that in this narrower sense, in addition to their having succumbed to trade union politics, several of Australia's trade union officials from the former Communist Party are in one way or another adapted to the ruling class. There are those who gamble excessively; those who drink excessively; those whose behaviour leaves them open to blackmail and divulging confidences, but their basic weakness is purely and simply that they do no more than reflect trade union politics.

The trade union leaders who have embraced modern revisionism are the quintessence of time servers. Everywhere they are most respectable and willing servants of the capitalist class. In no way are

they distinguishable from the old line reformists and opportunists. If there is any distinction it is in favour of the latter who do not add to their treachery the word "Communist."

CHAPTER 5

Let us then look again at what has happened. In the years that followed World War II, there was a powerful upsurge of the workingclass upon which we have already commented. It expressed itself in this country in a series of big struggles. In the early struggles, the capitalists made concessions fairly rapidly. The capitalists feared that struggle would develop into a challenge to capitalism itself. The concessions made by the capitalists were an insurance for them. Because the former Communist Party failed in its job of working politically, ideologically and organisationally in a scientific way, and particularly of developing correct work among the masses, the Australian workers and working people did not reap the necessary political advantages. The capitalists sought to hem in the struggle, to confine it and worked hard to adapt the working-class more strongly to capitalism. They feared the advance of socialism which had come to power in Eastern Europe and was winning in China.

In 1946, Churchill made a speech in Fulton, Missouri, U.S.A. Churchill was the most experienced representative of the most experienced ruling class in the world. His Fulton speech was in effect addressed to the capitalists of the world. Churchill advised them that it was time to call a halt to the advance of the workingclass, the advance of socialism. It was a most significant speech made at a critical time. Gradually that advice was put into effect. Whereas in Australia up to 1949, the capitalist class fairly readily made concessions to the workers to take the sting out of them, as it were, in 1949 it began to fight back and to resist workingclass demands even though those demands were purely of

a trade union character. The lesson for the capitalist class was that in a world where the ideas of socialism had gained greater currency and been put into effect successfully all workingclass struggle had to be watched with even greater vigilance than hitherto.

In 1949 in Australia, there occurred a general strike in the coal mines. The Chifley labor government was in office. On behalf of the ruling class, it set out deliberately to smash the coal miners' strike even though this strike raised only trade union demands for better wages and conditions. There was nothing revolutionary in the demands nor in the methods used to achieve the demands. There were Communist trade union officials in the leadership of the union but, though in fact they were men with strictly trade union politics, nonetheless they bore the name "Communist," with possibly dangerous implications as the capitalists saw it. The Chifley Government used men and equipment of the armed forces to work the mines. It passed emergency legislation to freeze the funds of the unions, the very doubtful constitutionality of which was upheld in an emergency sitting of the High Court. It gaoled the union leaders and conducted an unprecedented campaign of vilification of the workers. Those are facts and nothing can alter them, and they should never be forgotten nor allowed to be forgotten. The miners' strike was smashed. One of the then Communist leaders, J. D. Blake, wrote a pamphlet which made an estimate of the strike. Subsequently this pamphlet was condemned as left sectarian but, despite some exaggeration, this pamphlet did draw the lessons that the A.L.P. had used the State machine to smash a workers' struggle. That was indeed the most important lesson of the miners' strike, a lesson that the modern-day Australian revisionists who call themselves Communists would

desperately try and push into the background. It is not without significance that this correct characterisation was subsequently condemned as left and sectarian by the leaders of the former Communist Party. Their condemnation is expressive of non-revolutionary politics when yet the former Communist Party was still striving after Marxism-Leninism.

Why did the A.L.P. use the State machinery to smash this strike when after all only economic demands were raised? We have already referred to Churchill's Fulton speech and its call to the capitalist class of the world to stand firm against the threatened advance of the workingclass. The A.L.P. demonstrated clearly enough, if demonstration were still needed, that it was a capitalist party administering the capitalist state. It had never sought to rise above trade union politics. On the contrary, it was the product of trade union politics which it extended and developed into a whole system of adapting the workingclass to capitalism. Even the trade union demands were put on one side by the Chifley government so that it could obey the most reactionary behests of the capitalist class. It could not do otherwise, for having emerged as a party of capitalism it must inevitably (confirmed a thousand times by practice) do what the capitalist class dictated. The natural end of trade union politics, left to their own spontaneous development, is a bourgeois political party administering the capitalist state in the name of labour and the trade unions, against the workers and trade unionists themselves.

The only answer is to develop a strong Marxist-Leninist Party with infinite mass connections, and through it Marxist-Leninist scientific consciousness amongst the workers, seeing their trade union activity and membership as one, but only one,

important aspect. Once again in the miners' strike, the Communists failed to work among the masses politically, ideologically and organisationally around this extremely important lesson that the Australian workers had. All the former Communist leaders could see was disaster, an experience that must be avoided again at all costs. They could not see the magnificence of the great stand by the miners, nor the richness of the lessons. That arose from a wrong approach in the first place, an approach dictated by trade union politics, and a failure to develop and present the struggle as but one of many in the overall revolutionary struggle. Then it was followed by a failure to draw the extremely rich lessons from the workers' experience. These lessons were smothered. Our modern-day revisionists who call themselves Communists even raise the slogan "Elect" or "Support a labor government," knowing full well what a labor government will do. That is treachery to the workingclass. Later on we shall consider these slogans.

Because its history throws much light on the question of trade union politics and the question of the struggle for supremacy in the workingclass of bourgeois ideas or workingclass, Marxist-Leninist, ideas and the role of the former Communist Party in Australia, it is necessary to deal a little bit more fully with the role of the Chifley government.

This government actually commenced the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (the secret police), the main direction of which is against the workingclass and particularly against the revolutionary workers. There is no doubt of that: it is a well-documented fact. The leaders of the A.L.P. justify this to the workers by saying, "Oh, we appointed a judge to head this organisation, and you

know that a judge would do no wrong. It is Menzies and the reaction who have appointed a military man to head the secret police.”

This very defence is its own exposure, for the effect of this argument is to trade upon the illusions of so-called impartiality of the judiciary, something which taken from a social standpoint is simply non-existent. The very fact that it is a judge about whom people have illusions makes it all the more dangerous because it is relatively easier to expose an organisation of this character when it is headed by a military man such as Brigadier Spry. The Chifley government then created this organisation which (like all similar organisations of capitalist countries of the “free” world) uses deceit, bribery, blackmail, forgery, frame-ups, in its campaign against the workers. Have no illusions about it at all. That’s what it does and it was created by the Chifley government. Instead of our modern-day revisionists who call themselves Communists making that fact known and well known, they conceal it and shout “Elect a Labor Government” in the sense of supporting (uniting with) its policies.

What else did the Chifley government do? It introduced machinery which enabled the ruling class directly to interfere in the trade unions. It is vitally important to remember that the very first legislation to impose government ballots on the trade unions was introduced by the Chifley government. For long, the capitalist class had sought to make the trade unions appendages of the state. Many years ago, Mr. Justice Isaacs in the High Court put this idea almost in so many words and it has been repeated since. He said: “. . . an ‘organisation’ ... is the creation of the Act (i.e. Arbitration Act) and simply as incidental to its great purposes. It is permitted to come into existence for the very purpose, not of making the

policy of the statute under the Constitution more difficult of attainment, but of assisting to carry that policy into effect. Its primary function is to help in the effort to maintain industrial peace as a convenient instrument to secure, for those whose interests it represents, industrial justice where necessary, but to secure that justice according to law. Those who become members of such an organisation, and particularly those who undertake the duty of managing its affairs, whether in supreme or in subordinate authority, take a part more or less responsible in an association which is not merely a convenient method of obtaining their just rights, but is also a public instrument for effectively administering an important statute of public policy for the general welfare. Such an organisation secures rights and privileges, but it has also duties.” (Australian Commonwealth Shipping Board v. Federated Seamen’s Union of Australasia, 35 *Commonwealth Law Reports* 462 at 475-6.)

In line with this conception the Chifley government took the far-reaching step of introducing these ballots. That is a fact too that should never be forgotten. In spite of that fact our modern-day revisionists who call themselves Communists say, “Elect a Labor Government.” In fact, the labor government paved the way to the greater attack on the trade unions and workers’ struggle by the Menzies government. Without this preliminary work by the A.L.P. leaders, the Menzies government could not have done it.

Using the very foundation of trade union politics, bourgeois politics, the Chifley government administered the State just as ruthlessly, even more than, the open parties of the reaction. That is the logic of history.

The only counter force, the former Communist Party of Australia, despite its seemingly strongly held position in the trade unions, could do little to prevent it or even to explain it, because it too was heavily influenced by trade union politics. It had failed to carry out either in its own ranks or in the ranks of the workers a resolute struggle for the ideas of Marxism-Leninism, revolutionary socialism. It had failed to define the correct role of the trade unions and trade unionists in the revolutionary struggle in Australia. It had succumbed to spontaneity, to trade union politics the nature of which we have already explained, to the spontaneous generation by the workers of trade union politics, to the line of least resistance. The leaders of the Party took the easy road, the one that Lenin pointed out.

Another factor in the recent history of the Australian trade unions has been the development of A.L.P. industrial groups which constituted the basis of the Democratic labor party. Underlying both of these was and is the so-called Movement, a secret organisation promoted by the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. The original basis of operation of this organisation was to oppose Communist leadership and Communist work in the trade unions. Like all bodies which take up the banner of anti-Communism, it identified as Communists almost all who did not subscribe to its extremely reactionary, fascist policy. It saw the potential danger to the capitalist system of the very name Communism. Really it was and is a fascist organisation inspired and financed by U.S. imperialism and having the object of turning the trade unions into a Hitler Labor Front.

This organisation made considerable progress and in fact gained the leadership of important organisations of the A.L.P. including whole State

organisations. By 1954 it was threatening to take over the whole of the Australian labor party organisation on a Commonwealth-wide basis at the expense of the orthodox A.L.P. leaders. It was a considerable influence in the trade unions. It is worth asking the question how this arose. There are several reasons for it. In the period after the collapse of the A.L.P. government in December, 1949, brought about largely by its anti-working-class activities, the orthodox A.L.P. leaders became demoralised, inept, inactive. They had destroyed some of the illusions entertained in them by the workers. That provided a basis for the operation of a well-organised minority. The ruling class, particularly in line with Churchill's Fulton speech, set up an unprecedented anti-Communist campaign. The cold war was being intensified. The A.L.P. industrial groups with their underlying "Movement" exploited anti-Communism. This was assisted by the crude tactics and sectarianism of the former Communist Party leaders, who failed to raise the political and ideological struggle, failed to build revolutionary organisation, concentrated on the economic trade union struggle and were themselves demoralised. Moreover, the "Movement" appealed to the more backward of the Roman Catholic workers.

Hence 1949 marked the beginning of a many-sided attack upon the whole of the Australian workingclass and its organisations. Just to look at it once more. In 1949 the Chifley labor government launched a big attack upon the coalminers' strike using every repressive aspect of the State machine. In the same year it gaoled L. J. McPhillips, then assistant general secretary of the Ironworkers' Federation, for making an attack upon the Arbitration Court. In the same year it gaoled L. L. Sharkey, general secretary of the former Communist

Party, for sedition constituted by a political statement. In the same year, the distinguished Marxist-Leninist, the late K. C. Miller, was arrested on a framed-up charge of rape (subsequently even the ruling class did not dare to attempt to sustain this charge).

In the same year a renegade from the Communist Party, Sharpley, deserted to the capitalist class and made a number of so-called "revelations." The anti-working class activities of the "Movement" and the industrial groups intensified. It was significant indeed and characteristic that the decisive orthodox A.L.P. leaders, with very few exceptions, collaborated with the reactionary "Movement" in this period. The real difference which subsequently emerged between them was over the question of tactics. Thus the whole picture came to this: the monopoly capitalists on a world scale came to a conscious decision to attack the working-class.

In Australia, U.S. imperialism was rapidly extending its investments and regarded Australia as a very important military base for South East Asia. Thus U.S. imperialism, with the active collaboration of firstly A.L.P. leaders, and then Menzies and his so-called Liberal Party, launched a concerted attack against the Australian workingclass. To understand the results of this it will be necessary to trace in brief the subsequent history of the Australian trade unions, the Australian labor party, the Communist Party of Australia and the emergence of the Democratic labor party.

But first let us look again at the then position of the former Communist Party of Australia. We have said that it was founded in 1920. Its history was one of seeking, however inefficiently, to achieve and apply a Marxist-Leninist understanding. We have

commented on the rise of its influence in the trade unions and to round that off, by 1949 leading proclaimed members of it occupied many important positions in the trade unions. If those positions had been a true measure of the political, ideological and organisational strength of a genuine Marxist-Leninist position then it could have withstood the challenge and become strengthened by it. It is our contention that the emergence of the Communist influence in the trade unions, important though it was, was really the emergence of people who were far more efficient at trade union politics than their predecessors. They were far more effective trade union secretaries and trade union officials, far more effective in winning the workers' demands. That was their great strength and it was also the source of great weakness, because the only way they could ever become consolidated in their position was if the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary party became politically, ideologically and organisationally consolidated. The former Communist Party of Australia did not do that.

We have said that after its foundation the former Communist Party strove after a Marxist-Leninist political position. But in connection with what happened in 1949, and the even more important subsequent developments, it is very important to refer to some major political mistakes in its life.

In 1939, the imperialist war between Nazi Germany and the Allied Powers broke out. The former Communist Party called for full support of the war in the mistaken estimate that it was an anti-fascist war. The Communist trade union leaders naturally adopted a corresponding attitude. In fact, it was an imperialist war concerned with the trade interests of the imperialist powers. It is true that relatively quickly this mistake was corrected. At no

time, however, did the former Communist Party leaders examine the political and ideological causes for the mistake. Rather the occurrence of the mistake was dismissed by making the correct statement that the error was quickly corrected. However, when a serious Communist Party or a serious Communist makes a mistake it or he or she must make a far-reaching analysis of why and how the mistake was made. One can immediately see that the influence of trade union politics was one of the factors because trade union politics led not to Communist revolutionary politics, but to bourgeois politics.

The policy of the bourgeoisie had led them into a trade imperialist war and those who follow bourgeois politics naturally enough supported the bourgeoisie. One can see this was one of the influences weakening the possibilities of a correct Marxist-Leninist appreciation of the situation. It is with the problem of trade union politics that we are for the moment concerned. Suffice it to say that the subjective factors such as good praiseworthy hatred of fascism also led the Communist Party into the error of overlooking the facts or interpreting the facts in a one-sided way. There had been a failure to cultivate systematically a Marxist-Leninist ideology. But the central fact was that no far-reaching analysis of the reasons for this error was embarked upon.

A period of illegal existence was imposed upon the former Communist Party in 1940 and was formally removed in 1943. It is extremely important to note that in this period the public spokesmen for the Communist Party were trade union leaders who day in and day out conscientiously and energetically worked in their trade union job. It was scarcely avoidable that however strong may have been their desire to be Marxist-Leninists, they must have borne the marks of trade union politics, bourgeois politics.

Since, in fact, they were weak in Marxism-Leninism, the imprint of trade union politics was the stronger upon them. Their prestige grew; their influence grew so that the image in the minds of many workers and Communists of Communism was the image of the trade union official.

The ideal, as Lenin said, must not be the trade union leader, but the tribune of the people who can deal with the trade unions as part of a whole general dealing with society. Instead of that the ideal put forward by the former Communist Party was that of trade union leader. Communism was thus seen largely as trade unionism; the means of achieving it as through the trade unions. The trade unions became the dominant factor in the lives of many Communists. Thus trade union politics in the name of Communism, in the name of Marxism-Leninism, received a big impetus.

This very thing led to the next great error of the former Communist Party of Australia. As general secretary of the Ironworkers' Federation E. Thornton had acquired great prestige in the workingclass and in the general Australian community precisely in the circumstances we have just outlined. That prestige (along with that of other trade union leaders) was enhanced by the great victories of the Soviet Army in the war. In the period of the Communist Party's illegality, Thornton was the most important public spokesman for the former Communist Party.

Thornton was regarded as a Marxist-Leninist. He proved conclusively that he was not a Marxist-Leninist. He really did not understand the first principles of Marxism-Leninism.

Thornton paid a visit to the U.S.A. and soon swallowed the “theories” of Earl Browder, then general secretary of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. Browder’s “theories” were really the crudest form of revisionism. Browder sought to show that the agreement reached in the period of World War II between the Soviet Union, U.S.A. and Great Britain marked a new era of complete harmony for the post-war period, that the nature of imperialism and monopoly capitalism had changed and was no longer aggressive, that the workingclass could safely cooperate with the monopoly capitalists in the post-war period and could look forward to unparalleled prosperity. It was the crudest form of class collaboration dressed up in all sorts of fancy words and disguised as far as possible, i.e. given “theoretical” justification.

Thornton, who occupied a leading and influential position on the Political Committee of the former Communist Party, put forward Browder’s views in that committee. They were accepted in their entirety by all the members of that Political Committee without a single exception. Why were they accepted? Because of the weakness of the Communist Party leaders in Marxism-Leninism, because they believed that this “theory” was Marxist-Leninist, because they worshipped as the ideal Communist the trade union leader who put them forward, namely in this case, Thornton. The leaders of the former Communist Party set out to, and indeed did, systematically propagate the ideas of Browder. In this country, it meant actual encouragement of U.S. investment and the former Communist Party leaders said that U.S. investment in Australia would be beneficial. Part of Browder’s “theories” demanded the liquidation of Communist Party organisation in the factories, in the armed

forces, and so on and the cessation of Communist activity in such places. After all, why have Communist organisation and activity in the enterprises of the monopoly capitalists if those monopoly capitalists were generously co-operating with the workers to bring about a better life? Instead of all this, said Browder, there should be Communist "clubs," social outfits in the localities where the Communists and the workers interested in Communism could go and debate ; the questions of Communism as an incident to the main social activities of these clubs.

In other words, Browder's idea was to take the Communists from amongst the masses and organise them into an exclusive bloc divorced from the masses, just what the ruling class wanted. It was really a scheme for the liquidation of the Communist Party. Thornton proposed this scheme in its entirety and it was accepted in its entirety including the liquidation of factory organisation and activity. Indeed it is a fact that at a congress of the former Communist Party at the end of World War II, a document was put forward which actually incorporated all these views. The document was withdrawn without explanation. But J. Duclos, then assistant general secretary of the French Communist Party and then still a Marxist-Leninist, wrote an article which completely demolished Browder's "theories." In the article, Duclos pointed out how far reaching had been the influence of Browder's views in the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries, but said that they had not influenced the Communist Party in Australia. Duclos made a mistake about Australia simply because he did not have the necessary in-formation. The Communist Party leaders in Australia seized upon this factual mistake of Duclos to deny that they had been influenced by

Browder. Again instead of subjecting their profound mistake to far-reaching critical analysis and discussion, they denied it had been made, and in so far as they admitted any influence of Browder, they attributed the whole responsibility to Thornton. In fact, it was not Thornton's responsibility although he was the initiator.

This course of action meant that no analysis was made of the objective factors, i.e. the victory in the war, the nature of the alliance of the Soviet Union, U.S.A. and Britain, the nature of imperialism and monopoly capitalism and the apparent co-operation and prosperity, nor the factors of subjectivism, weakness in Marxist-Leninist politics, ideology and organisation, domination of trade union politics, the disproportionate influence of a trade union leader who bore heavily the marks of trade union politics and who held his trade union position even as a threat against the Communist Party, worship of the trade union leader as the ideal of Communism.

The ideas of Browder had extremely important practical results in Australia. They without any doubt eased the way of the extensive post-World War II U.S. investment throughout Australia. They paralysed workingclass resistance to the U.S. imperialist inroads. In confusing the issue, they eased the way of General Motors, Fords, Chryslers, International Harvester and the whole range of U.S. investment whether it was new investment, extended investment or amalgamation with Australian capital. U.S. investment meant U.S. political and ideological domination. Thus there was in the historical conditions of Australia a confluence of factors which facilitated the U.S. imperialist aim to take over Australia. In the war period the labor government had frankly allied itself with U.S. imperialism in all respects. The A.L.P. Industrial groups arose as

vehicles of U.S. ideas. The former Communist Party, under the influence of the then trade union leader Thornton, at a critically important period accepted Browder's theory evolved by the U.S. imperialists themselves as part of their plan for world domination. In that situation, it was all the more necessary to subject this error to even more than usual analysis, for it disarmed the former Communist Party and Australian workers in the struggle against U.S. imperialism at the very moment when that was critical and when it was clear to any objective analysis that the aim of U.S. imperialism was the domination of Australia. That being so, it is scarcely surprising to find today that the very people who made this error and then refused to analyse it, praised and supported the U.S. imperialist Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy and now praise and support Johnson, for that is the natural outcome of their whole position.

In the period after World War II, U.S. investment in Australia has increased enormously. The U.S. monopolies General Motors, Fords and Chryslers dominate the motor car industry, with all its ramifications. Many sections of industry are largely dependent upon the motor car industry, e.g. iron and steel, oil, rubber, electrical, to name but a few. The oil industry is dominated by U.S. concerns. Increasingly U.S. capital invades every section of industry.

Perhaps it is best to let the representatives of Australian capitalism speak about this. We have therefore chosen a statement of the Australian ambassador to the U.S., Keith Waller. On November 17, 1964, speaking at a luncheon session of the national foreign trade convention in New York, he said:

In our trade with you, we Australians are constantly faced with frustrations, such as the high duty on wool, an almost complete embargo on dairy products and quotas on lead and zinc, and a strong competitive effect on our trade by your surplus disposal policy on grains.

He continued that the recent meat legislation of U.S. congress was another “discouraging” action by the United States to restrict imports from Australia.

The Australians spent 55 dollars per head per annum on U.S. goods, whereas the Americans bought only 1.50 dollars’ worth of Australian goods per head.

Referring to U.S. investment in Australia, he said that more than 1,400 U.S. companies are now established in Australia, and in 1963 alone, new U.S. investment in Australia amounted to 160 million dollars, nearly all in the industrial sector.

The U.S. imperialists send a never-ceasing procession of generals, admirals, diplomats, industrialists, “artists,” books, films, to Australia. The U.S. imperialists demand ever increasing contributions by Australia to their aggression in South East Asia. At all times they treat Australia as subservient to them, e.g. severe U.S. import restrictions operate against meat, wool, copper, zinc, arousing the hostility of the Australian capitalists. In short, U.S. pressure on Australia is immense and it extends through the whole range of society. Labor attaches of the U.S. Embassy in Australia have paid particular attention to the Australian trade unions and the Australian labor party. Without serious attention to the workingclass, without securing some basis in the workingclass, the job of U.S. imperialism in attempting to dominate Australia would be very difficult. The U.S. imperialists have however secured victories in this regard — note the

statement of Mr. Calwell in his policy speech in 1963 that the A.L.P. completely supports the U.S. alliance. The Australian revisionists strongly advocate unity with the A.L.P. They thereby clearly reveal their pro-U.S. imperialist policy.

We have commented on the role played by the influence of the ideas of Browder on the former Communist Party in facilitating the extension of U.S. investment in Australia.

Today the former Communist Party, by its subservience to the A.L.P., supports the U.S. domination of Australia and returns to the influence of Browder which it never finally shed. Measure of this can be gathered from Mr. Aarons' pamphlet "Labor Movement at the Crossroads," where in essence he supports Calwell's policy. This pamphlet should be very widely studied. It is a classic of revisionism. It is an exceedingly good teacher by negative example of where the former Communist Party has ended up.

Thus the former Communist Party actually serves the needs of U.S. imperialism.

One might have expected that the U.S. imperialists and their Australian agents would have looked with gratitude on the former Communist Party. They did not do that because the former Communist Party was always a source of potential menace to them. Until 1961-62, it was still basically Marxist-Leninist. After the rejection of Browder's views (even though that rejection was very imperfect) the danger to the capitalist class increased. So long as the former Communist Party was clearly under Browder's influence no danger could arise because, so long as it followed Browder's ideas, it would cease really to be a Communist Party at all. Once Browder's ideas

were rejected then it was once more in the position of reaching out after Marx-ism-Leninism and thereby becoming a menace. (The very fact that it did reject Browder's views, however imperfectly, indicated the striving to Marxism-Leninism.) Hence from the standpoint of the ruling class, the former Communist Party still came within the ideas advanced by Churchill in 1946 at Fulton (i.e. it was dangerous to the capitalists), and particularly as it had, after rejection of Browder's views, led a number of important struggles even though they had only a trade union content. The significance of this we have already commented upon.

The year 1949 therefore marked a period of turn, a period of intensified attack upon the former Communist Party and the Australian workingclass. The aim of the attack was to subject the workers to monopoly capitalism and in particular to open the way for U.S. imperialist domination and exploitation. 1949 was followed by a whole series of measures and events important in the history of political trends in the Australian working class.

CHAPTER 6

In 1950, the Menzies government passed through the parliament an Act entitled the Communist Party Dissolution Act. This Act was the brainchild of U.S. imperialism meant to deal a blow primarily at the Australian trade unions in respect of their economic struggle. It was aimed particularly at the economic struggle because if U.S. imperialist investment in Australia was to continue then it must be ensured control over the trade unions. In that way it would ensure the best possible conditions for its investment – low wages, speed up, and so on.

Whatever political shortcomings they may have had, and however the question of revolutionary politics had been neglected, the Australian trade unions and workers had a long and splendid tradition of militant struggle. That was a struggle which particularly in the years up to 1949 the Communist union leaders had shown great ability in leading. They had shown themselves as very good exponents of trade union politics as a political trend (and not in its vulgar sense of intrigue).

The Communist Party Dissolution Act therefore provided that the Communist union leaders be removed from their positions and the Communist Party be dissolved and be declared unlawful. This Act was passed in a world situation where the reaction was desperately trying to halt the advance of Communism. Outstanding events in the whole period were the provocations of the so-called Berlin airlift and the U.S. aggression against North Korea. In Australia, it was correspondingly a period when the reaction came out with a great anti-Communist outcry. We have mentioned the events of 1949.

Ultimately the High Court declared the Communist Party Dissolution Act unconstitutional. It did so primarily because big sections of the ruling class believed it to be mistaken tactics to declare the Communist Party unlawful and to remove the Communist trade union leaders in this way. As history has proved, and we will show, their view from their standpoint was absolutely correct.

That view was carried into the referendum in 1951 as to whether or not the people would vote in favour of conferring power on the Australian parliament to pass the Communist Party Dissolution Act. The ruling class was divided on the question and, coupled with a big and good workingclass campaign, the proposition was defeated and a No vote returned at the referendum on September 22, 1951.

The No vote reflected the vastly developed consciousness of the Australian workingclass and working people. In that consciousness the Communists had played a big part. They were thus able to generate a mass movement against the Government's proposals.

There were other measures. The Commonwealth Arbitration Act, under which trade unions are registered and under which the decisive wage levels are fixed, was amended in various important respects. The measures of Chifley, which introduced government ballots in the trade unions and penalised the trade unions, were greatly extended. For those who espouse trade union politics and who give organised political expression to them in the Australian labor party, these measures were no more than the natural extension of measures they themselves had introduced. In fact, they had paved the way for them. What then of the former Communist Party? We have already commented on

the limitations from which it suffered in the influences of trade union politics, weakness in Marxism-Leninism, the revisionism of Browder. It was not sufficiently equipped politically, ideologically or organisationally to deal with the situation. Moreover the ruling class had set out deliberately to intimidate the leading Communists. It gaoled Sharkey, who wielded great influence in the Communist Party and who had played a role in introducing the ideas of Marxism-Leninism into Australia. Sharkey was a product of his time and history. He expressed many of the shortcomings of trade union politics and even his booklet on the trade unions, although it contains good material, shows how greatly he was influenced by trade union politics and how far removed he was from a living grip of Marxism-Leninism.

His booklet shows that his conception of the revolutionary struggle was that it be conducted mainly through the trade unions. It takes no full account of the sweep of the revolutionary movement. Above all, it fails to recognise that the decisively important position is that of the revolutionary party, the Marxist-Leninist Party, the Communist Party. The revolutionary movement is far wider than the trade unions and trade union questions. It embraces all strata of the people (except the monopolists). It raises many, many questions beyond trade union demands. For example, the Russian revolution proceeded under the slogan "Peace, Bread and Land." The revolutionary movement raises the vitally important questions of allies of the working-class. Thus the question is a far wider question than merely having a correct revolutionary approach to the trade unions, of "revolutionising" the trade unions. As Lenin showed in "What is to be Done," and even more clearly in

“Left Wing Communism,” it is a question of the workingclass and its Party taking up every aspect of the oppression of the people amongst every section of the people. A revolutionary party must do that and not confine itself to the trade unions. Lenin’s whole theme was the broad revolutionary sweep that the revolutionary party must have. The essential question is correct mass work.

In a certain sense, when the trade unions are considered, there are two questions: (1) The trade unions must exist and must be strengthened against the capitalists. Hence the Communists recognise this. The trade unions exist to prosecute the economic struggle and every Communist trade unionist must take part in that; (2) On the other hand, Marxism-Leninism is far wider than the trade unions. It is indeed a world outlook which embraces the trade unions along with everything else. It recognises that the spontaneous politics which emanate from the trade unions are non-revolutionary politics and that while the trade unions as such must be preserved and strengthened, the politics that spontaneously emanate from them must be combated and lifted into revolutionary politics. The decisive question is the purity of the Marxist-Leninist Party, the Communist Party. Sharkey’s booklet is quite one-sided in that it tends to present the trade union as the be-all and end-all of his conception of revolutionary struggle, as the vehicle of revolution. In his ideas expressed in this book, the trade union leaders are the leaders of revolution. Furthermore, the book clearly conceives, puts forward the left bloc of Communists idea which we previously dealt with. His ideas must inevitably cut the Communists off from the critically important day to day painstaking mass work (amongst the workers) that Lenin enjoined the Communists to perform.

Sharkey's book is in direct conflict with the principles of *Left Wing Communism*.

In his personal characteristics, mentioned only because they throw a light on subsequent history, Sharkey was a vain and naive man. His experiences in gaol, experiences with which we can fully sympathise, left a profound mark on him and a determination never to let it happen again. There is no doubt that he was frightened. His fear infected others in even the purely limited trade union struggle, the more so because it coincided with experiences of some of his fellow Communists from the trade unions. It merged with, was part of, the general demoralisation that flowed from the so-called disaster of the mineworkers' strike. Thus the natural development of trade union politics, coupled with the tactics of the ruling class, which of course assessed the limitations of the former Communist Party, led to a certain avoidance even of the purely economic struggle. The years following 1949-1950 reveal that whereas up till then the Communist trade union officials had initiated and led big economic strike struggles, after that, this all declined. (It would be wrong to say it disappeared altogether). Hence even the historically "good" trade union politics were changing and in fact the positions of the Communists in the trade unions were declining (a decline which continues to this day).

It is not necessary to trace in detail all the measures of the ruling class in this period. Suffice it to say that in 1956 it created a special court designated by Dr. H. V. Evatt as the Court of Pains and Penalties – the Industrial Court – with the specific job of penalising trade unions for industrial activity. The whole net of the reaction was developed and extended to contain the trade unions and, because of its particular trade union history and

politics, to contain the Communist Party. (In fact, within the capitalist world, Australia has more legal restrictions on the trade unions than almost any other capitalist country).

It must be said immediately, and from what we have already said it is apparent that the politics, ideology and even organisation of the A.L.P. always had a big influence in the Communist Party. Always there was a struggle between this on the one hand and Marxism-Leninism on the other. Naturally, the influence of Browder drove the Communist Party further away from Marxism-Leninism and closer to the A.L.P. The line of demarcation between them was further blurred. Failure to make a Marxist-Leninist analysis of the error meant a failure to break completely free from the error. The correct co-operation of the former Communist Party with the A.L.P. in the war period never proceeded from a thoroughgoing Marxist-Leninist analysis. The lines were blurred. The trade union leaders who were Communists and who came from an environment of trade union politics were dominant figures in the Communist Party and we have recounted the experiences of 1949-1950. Having never kept the line of demarcation clear the actions of the Chifley Government in 1949 came as a complete surprise, appeared almost as a temporary aberration instead of the logic of the position of the A.L.P. In 1951, co-operation in the referendum campaign between the A.L.P. and the former Communist Party was very close. Again it proceeded from the dictates of the practical situation and without the former Communist Party's seriously setting out to analyse from a Marxist-Leninist standpoint the implications of the undoubtedly correct co-operation. In the co-operation, A.L.P. politics and ideology were supreme, were dominant. Largely the effective

organisation came from the former Communist Party. In the competing ideologies the field was dominated by the A.L.P., and it may be said that from these experiences and because of its general background, the trend manifested itself in the leadership of the former Communist Party of organised reconciliation with the politics and ideology of the A.L.P. You may think that is a big claim, but let us examine it a little.

First of all, it is important to see just what motivated the leaders of the A.L.P. in opposing the banning of the Communist Party. The A.L.P. was a parliamentary political party which had engaged in frankly anti-workingclass actions, strike breaking, gaoling of workers, union breaking, but yet it opposed the Communist Party Dissolution Act. Nor did it do so without a struggle in its own ranks, for the industrial groups and their parliamentary representatives supported the measure. In the first place, the A.L.P. leaders at all times serve the ruling class, and they did so in their opposition to the Communist Party Dissolution Act no less than on any other question. We have already commented on the division in the ruling class as to the tactics of handling the situation. The A.L.P. decisive leaders belonged to the school which tactically believed it was wrong. They could see that an illegal Communist Party was more likely to be compelled to find the correct Marxist-Leninist ideology, politics and organisation than a legal one. They could see that an ineffective Communist Party provided a ready-made method for the ruling class for tabulating and keeping under observation all workers and people potentially dangerous to them. They could see that for them to support such a measure may well have contributed to isolating the

A.L.P. from the masses, for such a measure, by its very nature, was unpopular.

Indeed, the whole situation was a rich lesson in dialectics and the need for dialectics to be a mass question. Armed with dialectical materialism the Communists can reveal the contradictions within the A.L.P., amongst the various sections of the capitalists, within the trade unions, within the Communist Party itself. By revealing and understanding those contradictions the Communists can correctly assess their line and tactics. Weakness in dialectical materialism and failure to make it the possession of the workers were particularly manifest in this period.

It is absolutely correct for a Communist Party to take advantage of divisions in the ruling class and to form temporary alliances provided no question of principle is sacrificed. But the former Communist Party did not analyse the situation from this standpoint, did not analyse the dialectics of it. The result was not its strengthening but its weakening and on the other hand the strengthening of the ideological influence of reformism within the former Communist Party. Dr. H. V. Evatt, who largely carried the A.L.P. campaign, emerged as the dominant figure from the campaign. What he did was not without courage, but his political position was a bourgeois political position.

Really the decisive factor in the Referendum No vote was the mass movement. Under the influence of the antifascist war there was developed among the workingclass, working people, middle class, intellectuals and other sections of the people a deeper than hitherto political consciousness. The Communists played a big part in the leadership and inspiration of this. Due to their limited Marxist-

Leninist understanding they did not draw the proper conclusions in strengthening themselves and the people ideologically, politically and organisationally.

Thus the A.L.P. had, as the former Communist leaders consciously or unconsciously saw it, saved them in their trade union positions, in their legality as a party, and in their freedom from gaol and other penalties. Moreover, the former Communist Party of Australia had begun to advance the idea of peaceful transition to socialism as the only way of advance, very similar to the A.L.P.'s socialist objective. Its own strong trade union environment continually fed the anti-Marxist-Leninist trends.

The holding of important, influential and economically rewarding jobs as trade union leaders is itself a source of corruption unless the holders are subject to rigid self-discipline, strong Marxist-Leninist ideology and the discipline of a good Marxist-Leninist Party, and a thorough-going understanding of the dialectics, contradictions within their various positions. That was not the case. Commonly enough the trade union leaders, from the standpoint of their own personal interests or those of their own unions or the unions as a whole, determined their own discipline and that of the Communist Party.

The slogan of the united front of the workingclass was I and is absolutely correct. But by incorrect interpretation and application of it the trend was reinforced in the former Communist Party of reconciliation with the ideology, politics and organisation of the A.L.P., a bourgeois party.

Criticism of the A.L.P. was abandoned, was branded as sectarian. The history of the A.L.P. was

obscured or suppressed. The rich lessons of the character of the A.L.P. so spectacularly demonstrated, for example, in 1949 were never drawn upon. Instead, the position of the A.L.P. on the Communist Party Dissolution Act, and at that a distorted picture of it, was put forward as the true picture of the A.L.P. Its parliamentary opposition to various anti-workingclass measures of the Menzies government was put forward as the whole picture of the A.L.P. instead of its positive and negative sides being estimated, together with a whole picture of the A.L.P. as a party of capitalism. Nor once again were the contradictions, the very basis of Marxism-Leninism, subject to close analysis. Some of those contradictions we are now revealing.

Again the different tactical position of the industrial groups under the dictates of different interests of the monopoly capitalists led to an acute struggle in the trade unions and in the A.L.P. itself. The A.L.P. industrial group backers made the mistake of trying to go too far too quickly, of being far too open in their pro-American, pro-fascist policy and thereby endangered the mass following of the A.L.P., i.e. endangered its capacity to deceive the masses into following what is an essentially similar policy to the A.L.P. industrial groups (demonstrated historically as we have already indicated by the fact of collaboration between their chief representatives and the chief leaders of the A.L.P.).

Furthermore, the Industrial Groups made the mistake of trying to seize for their own nominees all the leading positions in the A.L.P. and the trade unions, and to assail the positions even of the main A.L.P. leaders such as Dr. H. V. Evatt, Senator Kennelly and others. In consequence the decisive A.L.P. leaders opened up a struggle against these people and turned for support to the former

Communist Party, which had more or less correctly estimated the Industrial Groups from the outset. Again the former Communist Party's position merged with that of the A.L.P. The line of demarcation disappeared or was blurred. The former Communist Party failed to maintain sufficiently an independent Marxist-Leninist ideological, political and organisational position. In that situation inevitably the ideas of the A.L.P., backed by immensely greater resources, became the dominant ideas.

The former Communist Party's conception of the united front, for these things were all presented as great victories for the united front, was really reconciliation with the position of the A.L.P. with the leading force, in fact, the A.L.P. Instead of being the leader, the initiator and the inspirer of the united front, the former Communist Party became the very junior partner and Marxism-Leninism suffered in the process.

Of the utmost significance is the fact that these battles were fought out largely, indeed almost exclusively, in the trade unions. The main figures were trade unionists and the trade unions were the main battlegrounds. It was once more the assertion of trade union politics.

Once again the decisive factor in the defeat of the Industrial Groups was the development of the consciousness of the workers, working people and others in the anti-fascist war and post-war period. The Communists had played a big part in that. Rightly they inspired and led the mass struggle and took advantage of the divisions in the labor party and in the capitalist class. Their shortcoming was in their Marxist-Leninist understanding. They failed to draw

the lessons fully of developing Marxism-Leninism
strategically, politically and organisationally.

CHAPTER 7

Similar factors operated right up to the actual break with the industrial groups touched off by the Petrov Commission and the statement made by Dr. H. V. Evatt in 1954 against the industrial groups during the currency of that Commission. The subsequent formation of the so-called Democratic Labor Party then provided a further tangible focus for A.L.P.-Communist “unity,” i.e. reconciliation by the former Communist Party with A.L.P. ideology. Unless a thorough analysis of capitalism, the contradictions within it and within its political parties is made, in every given situation there is grave danger of serious error. Now it could be said by both the Communist Party and the A.L.P. that the main enemy in the labour movement is the D.L.P. United we defeated them. Let us stand together in the future to defeat them. The result of that is to lose sight entirely of the real character of the A.L.P. and to justify that loss of sight on the pretext of unity against the extreme right in the A.L.P. It leads to the extraordinary conclusion that the A.L.P. is the “lesser of two evils,” that the decisive reformist leaders including Calwell are not the right-wing but the centre of the A.L.P. (a conclusion set out clearly in Mr. Aarons’ pamphlet “Labor Movement at the Crossroads”). As we have said, it is permissible, necessary, for Marxist-Leninists to form temporary alliances against this or that person or group, but it is never permissible to lose sight of Marxism-Leninism. It is never permissible to lose sight of the independence of the workingclass and the Communist Party, their independence from the bourgeoisie and all bourgeois influences. It is quite impermissible, wholly wrong, to submerge the ideology, politics and organisation of the

Communist Party in a party of capitalism such as the A.L.P. It is impermissible to lose sight of the dialectics, contradictions in the various situations that arise. It is quite impermissible, quite wrong, to fail to draw and maintain at all times a clear line of demarcation between the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist politics of the Communist Party and the bourgeois politics of the A.L.P. The very basis of the principle of the united front of the workingclass for which the Communists, Marxist-Leninists, must strive all the time is to destroy the influence of reformism, of the A.L.P., in the workingclass, to defeat its ideology, its influence, its political hold on the workingclass. The rank and file of the A.L.P. must always be distinguished from the A.L.P. leadership. This is always the most profound contradiction within the A.L.P. The rank and file must be won away from the A.L.P. The Communist Party is always the leader, the initiator, the inspirer of the united front. The former Communist Party in Australia lost sight of the contradictions and politics of the united front and presented unprincipled unity as the united front.

Then, of course, the Australian labor party is not a homogeneous entity. We correctly designate it a party of capitalism because its politics serve the ruling class, the capitalist class. It has many workers in its ranks who seek socialism. We aim to show them patiently that the A.L.P. will not lead them to socialism. We aim to win them to Marxism-Leninism. The A.L.P. even in its leadership is not united. It is a party with a left, a centre and a right. It reflects the contradictions of capitalism. It reflects its own contradictory position as a party of capitalism which pretends to serve the workers. It is a party which historically has had many splits and expulsions: expulsion of the left, of the right, of

individuals. It would be quite wrong to ignore all this. The united front properly led and directed takes full account of the differentiation going on at an ever accelerated speed in the A.L.P. Failing to proceed from this standpoint, the former Communist Party subordinated itself to the A.L.P. This was entirely satisfactory to the capitalist class because it meant that if the former Communist Party was subordinated to the A.L.P., it was subordinated to the capitalist class itself. It had lost its political independence and was in fact an unacknowledged appendage of one of the capitalist class's own parties, the Australian labor party. That is the reality of the situation in the trade unions and in the whole political arena.

Criticism by the former Communist Party of the A.L.P. did not proceed from fundamentals. It proceeded from disagreement with this or that A.L.P. tactic or aspect of policy. It proceeded from the assumption of fundamental unity, and lack of unity, lack of agreement only on non-fundamental questions, whereas, of course, the exact reverse is the real position. We disagree fundamentally with the A.L.P. We disagree with its fundamental positions precisely because it is a party of capitalism and there can never be fundamental agreement with capitalism. If you fundamentally agree with capitalism then of course you accept capitalism; you do not wish to destroy it; you do not struggle for socialism. Therefore to accept the fundamental basis of the A.L.P. and to confine yourself to sporadic piecemeal criticism of this or that aspect of its policy is acceptance of the ideology, politics and even organisation of the A.L.P.

On the other hand, by firmly rejecting and exposing the fundamental basis of the A.L.P. as capitalist, it is possible to come to temporary

agreements, unity, to achieve certain common objectives. They may well be agreements on very important questions. However, they will always be secondary matters because on the primary question, capitalism or socialism, there is absolutely no basis for agreement. There could be no such agreement and any such agreement is without principle and is desertion of Marxism-Leninism.

Still further, there is amongst the advanced Australian workers a striving, desire, for socialism. The idea of socialism has gained more adherents. As we have pointed out, some believe that the A.L.P. is a socialist party and support it on that basis. Naturally we are at one with the workers in their desire for socialism and that makes it all the more incumbent on the Communists to explain that the A.L.P. is not and never has been and never will be a socialist party. On the contrary, its socialist plank is deception. It conceals the fact that the A.L.P. is a capitalist party. To slur this over, to present the socialist objective of the A.L.P. as truth, as our modern-day Australian revisionists who call themselves Communists do, is really and honestly pure and simple treachery to the workers, deception of the workers.

The fact is that the majority of the trade unions in Australia are affiliated to the A.L.P. To repeat, the spontaneous trade union consciousness which they generate is carried into the A.L.P. which reflects it, uses it to rivet the trade unions and workers to the capitalist system and develops policies and tactics strictly within the capitalist system. In the years of its existence the A.L.P. has constituted the government in the Commonwealth and in all the States and not one single solitary step towards socialism has been attempted for the very good reason that the A.L.P. is a capitalist party. For

example, an examination of legislation passed by labor party governments cannot distinguish these laws from those passed by Liberal or U.A.P. governments.

There is nonsense spoken about the A.L.P. having a two-class character, i.e. presumably a workingclass and a bourgeois or petty bourgeois character. What is wrong with this characterisation? In the first place, it overlooks the real test of the character of a political party, a test obviously of common sense, and a test which Lenin himself accepted and described. That test is which class in society does a political party serve? Does it serve the capitalist class or the workingclass? From the standpoint of history and theory, the A.L.P. serves the capitalist class. That theoretical and historical analysis is more than amply borne out by practice and to any scientist, any Marxist-Leninist, the test of theory is practice. Theory is evolved from an examination, an analysis, of practice. The proposition that the A.L.P. is a two-class party is a travesty of Marxism-Leninism.

Of course, this proposition serves a purpose because the A.L.P. is a two-class party, i.e. presumably a party which serves both the workingclass and capitalist class, then it has reconciled the irreconcilable. It has reconciled the antagonism between the workers and the capitalists, a thing which we would have thought even the inventors of this theory would have hesitated to state. But it does express their real ideological and political position, namely that in the end the classes of capitalist society are reconcilable or, in other words, their acceptance of the permanence of capitalism. The adherence to this theory of the two-class character of the A.L.P. by the modern-day Australian revisionists who call themselves

Communists after the error has been pointed out, indicates once more their movement towards a capitalist position. It indicates that they have abandoned altogether the striving for Marxism-Leninism.

Once more, if the A.L.P. is in truth a two-class party, then one only has to work for the dominance of the working-class in it and all will be well. If this proposition is correct, then it is entirely a practicable proposition for the working-class to win victory in the A.L.P. Its realisation would mean the elimination of any need for a Communist Party and now at this stage, if this idea is correct, the former Communist Party should throw its whole membership into this well established political party to transform the workingclass side of it into the dominant side. That is the natural outcome of it, and that is where our modern-day Australian revisionists who call themselves Communists are heading.

Commonly, when the A.L.P. leaders are asked to affiliate the Communist Party to the A.L.P. and also when questions of formal unity are raised, they reply that the Communist Party should disband itself and that all its members should join the A.L.P. Numbers of A.L.P. influenced workers put that point of view too. If the views expressed by our modern-day Australian revisionists are correct, then this view of the A.L.P. leaders and some A.L.P. workers is logically correct. There is no need for two such organisations and it is correct to say that the existence of two such organisations divides the forces. On the other hand, if the line of demarcation is drawn and maintained between the politics, ideology and organisation of the A.L.P. on the one hand and the Marxist-Leninists on the other hand, then the need to strengthen in every way the Marxist-Leninist party is obvious. The choice is clear:

capitalist class, bourgeois politics, or workingclass, Marxist-Leninist politics. The maintenance of the A.L.P. and the former Communist Party as two separate parties suits the capitalists because that way they have two lines of deception of the workers, that is, in the name of the A.L.P. and in the name of Communism.

Hence there have come into being in Australia “theories” which reflect the great influence of trade union politics, the great influence of those politics in the history of the former Communist Party of Australia.

Another factor which illustrates all this in Australian conditions is the position of the Commonwealth arbitration system. Particularly in recent years does it reveal the outcome of trade union politics. Because of its system of registration of trade unions and legally enforceable awards it has greatly influenced the structure of the trade unions and greatly affected their tactics and day to day life. We have previously said that the ruling class has sought to make the trade unions instruments of the capitalist state, and so on as the trade unions do not reach beyond trade union consciousness, trade union politics, there is always the basis there for the bourgeoisie to do just that. In the years since 1949, the Australian ruling class has perfected the machinery for subjecting the trade unions to State supervision. We have commented on the compulsory government ballot legislation (legislation initiated by the Chifley Government) which opens the way for the ruling class directly taking the affairs of the trade unions out of the hands of the trade union members. Under that legislation and because of the failure of the then Communist leaders of the Ironworkers’ Federation to adopt a correct Marxist-Leninist position, the Iron workers’

Federation became a mere appendage of the gigantic Australian monopoly B.H.P., sole iron and steel producer in Australia. Under it, and again because of the failure of the then Communist leaders to adopt a correct Marxist-Leninist attitude, the Clerks' Union suffered a similar fate. And so it goes on.

Also we have commented on the creation of the Industrial Court as a Court charged with the specific job of penalising the trade unions. In addition, there is a host of special tribunals and penal provisions for wharf labourers, seamen, coalminers. All these things reflect the weakness, the fear and the panic of the ruling class. The way to them was in fact paved by the A.L.P. when its leaders constituted the government. Because it urges reconciliation with the A.L.P. (according to it, a two-class party), because it did not have a thoroughgoing Marxist-Leninist workingclass position, because flowing from this it necessarily pursued wrong tactics, the former Communist Party of Australia actually assisted this whole process and today is contained by it. Its criticism is always of the superficial, of the effects and not the causes. It does not even seek to enlighten the workers about the whole nature of capitalism and the whole nature of the capitalist state. No, its spokesmen today say that this is too advanced for the workers. The truth is, however, that acting thus the former Communist Party serves the capitalist class.

It is necessary to take a few examples. One of the important trade unions with leadership in which members of the former Communist Party held decisive positions is the Seamen's Union. Until the mid-fifties the Seamen's Union was virtually free from the control of the arbitration machinery. It correctly relied upon collective bargaining, direct negotiation with the ship owners. In line with the general policy of the capitalist class, the shipowners

took steps to bring the Seamen's Union within the control of the arbitration machinery. In fact, after a long hearing, an award was made in 1955 which gave comparatively high wages and comparatively favourable conditions to the seamen. This award was hailed as a great victory by the former Communist Party and by some of the former Communist leaders of the union. In part it was. But like everything else it had its inner contradictions. In the victory there was also defeat. No attempt was made to analyse the role of arbitration nor the nature of the State machine of which arbitration was part. In short, what concessions the capitalist class made through this award were money well spent because it meant that with an acceptance by the Communist leaders of arbitration in this wholehearted fashion, the seamen, noted for their militancy, were to that degree adapted to capitalism, i.e. adapted to the machinery of capitalism.

To get them within the net of arbitration was a great victory for the capitalist class and one for which a few wage increases were a very small price. The subsequent history of the Seamen's Union demonstrated the real significance of the failure to understand the dialectics, contradictions of the award. Into the award was inserted the usual bans clause, i.e. prohibition against striking. Over the ensuing years the Seamen's Union has been prosecuted many times for contempt of orders that its members should not strike. The effect on the Communist leaders of the union is that they have virtually abrogated even trade union struggle. The whole process culminated in an agreement with the shipowners under the conditions of which the seamen have handed over their previous hard-won right to control the supply of labour in their industry, for a few paltry economic crumbs. Confining the

workers to trade union politics and failing to develop scientific consciousness and organisation the “Communist” leaders of the Seamen’s Union have done a great service to the Australian bourgeoisie. This case is taken merely as one of the most spectacular examples, because it is indeed a splendid union with a splendid membership and a proud record of struggle. Its officials merely carried out, reflected, the policy of the former Communist Party, and that policy was not a thoroughgoing Marxist-Leninist policy. As the seamen get a greater understanding of what has happened, of the process of contradiction, they will undoubtedly rectify the position.

Precisely because Communism is a splendid word and stands for honesty and integrity and correct politics in the minds of advanced workers, it is possible to use it for wrong purposes. Nor is this to single out the Communist officials of the Seamen’s Union (in any case there being one at least who resisted all this), for they merely carried out a general policy of the former Communist Party. That policy has been expressed by the officials of every other union in which the old Communists held or hold leading positions. With non-revolutionary politics the Communists are adapting the workingclass to capitalism and adapting them to capitalism in the very name of revolutionary politics. Nor do we mean to say that strike struggle is the only form of struggle: in fact worship of the strike weapon is another side of trade unionism. Strikes are important forms of struggle but preoccupation with them, making them into a fetish, into things in themselves, is not correct. The real question is a question of all forms of struggle and all strata of oppressed people guided by Marxist-Leninist politics. Because they have failed to develop the

correct Marxist-Leninist outlook in themselves and in the workingclass and yet hold important positions in the very strong trade union movement in Australia, the former Communists have done great damage to the cause of revolutionary ideology, politics and organisation in Australia.

Nor does the matter rest here. The capitalist class is not composed of fools. It is very skilfully and cunningly led. It has allowed the former Communists to become members of the leading trade union body in Australia: the Interstate Executive of the Australian Council of Trade Unions. There have been as many as three former Communists on the interstate executive of the A.C.T.U. That should have given them positions of great influence and prestige and, working correctly, should have enabled them to assist greatly in winning the workers, certainly the advanced workers, to a correct scientific socialist position, ideologically, politically and organisationally. This was not done through no necessary fault of the individuals concerned but because they personally were imbued with trade union politics and they were members of a political party which had always been plagued by trade union politics and has now finally succumbed to revisionism.

Without any difficulty these members of the former Communist Party reached agreement with the A.L.P. reformist leaders who sat on the A.C.T.U. interstate executive. Any disagreement was upon questions which were not fundamental, i.e. they might well disagree on whether or not to take strike action on a given question, they might even disagree on the trade union attitude to be taken on a given political question. But on the fundamental question of trade union politics or revolutionary politics, they were at one. They both supported trade union

politics, bourgeois politics, and that was even put forward as a splendid example of united front work. It was really a travesty of united front work. Naturally these members of the former Communist Party should have reached agreement on given campaigns and worked in support of them. That is elementary but it is only a small part of revolutionary activity. The fundamental job at all times was to work amongst the masses, to use their mass positions for mass work, to extend Communist contacts among the masses, to win the workers politically, organisationally and ideologically for Communism; above all, to build a strong revolutionary Marxist-Leninist Party. Further, while working in agreement on these matters of trade union concern where the reformists had little alternative but to struggle, since these men were avowed Communists they should have always drawn the clearest line of demarcation between Communist ideology, politics and organisation on the one hand, and reformist A.L.P. politics, ideology and organisation on the other.

As it stood, the ruling class accepted the "Communists" in the executive of the A.C.T.U. and used their positions to continue its deception of the workers. It is of very great significance that here in the leading body of the trade unions so very closely related to the A.L.P., with an interchangeable personnel between the reformist union leaders and the A.L.P., Communists were accepted. They were accepted because it paid the ruling class to use them and they were just as little threat to the ruling class as were the other A.C.T.U. leaders. They were completely adapted to the ruling class.

CHAPTER 8

Within the framework of trade union politics, these members of the former Communist Party pursue an altogether peaceful course. They fall in with the proposals of the reformists without any trouble at all. They reach full agreement, or if they do not reach formal agreement they reach actual agreement. There are many examples of this.

Two matters of great importance to the trade unions have already been commented on – the introduction of government ballots in the trade unions and the virtual prohibition of the right to strike through the system of bans clauses in awards and then punishment for contempt when the unions go on strike. Even within the framework of capitalism, of trade union politics, it would have been possible to defeat these measures. The reformists refused to campaign against them because they had really sponsored them and the Communists failed even from a trade union standpoint to make clear that they stood for a powerful united campaign against them.

Therefore, though not in formal agreement with the reformists, the former Communists reached actual agreement with them. The consequence was that the Seamen's Union, the Waterside Workers' Union and various others were allowed to be picked off one by one without real protection. The futility of leading proclaimed Communists as trade union officials was demonstrated in innumerable ways. Mass struggle was paralysed. By the very fact that such people were suggesting their "leadership" as the ideal form of trade union activity they denied the masses any real role. Instead of the Communists

being of and with the masses a quite false picture of Communists was given. Even in the extremely limited field open to such Communist officials the opportunities of doing some good were never fully used. Such people, for example, had ready access to the capitalist press, to say nothing of the trade union and Communist press. Yet they did not use even these limited opportunities to explain the role of the workers, the need for united campaigning and action. The whole thing was a complete misconception. It demonstrated that the attempt to do things from on top while really ignoring the masses is doomed to failure. Of course these people gave lip service to the role of the masses. But in fact and in action they denied the masses any role. Nor did they use the situation to lift the consciousness of the workers to scientific, socialist consciousness nor to strengthen the position of the former Communist Party politically, ideologically and organisationally. They facilitated, by their silence if you like, the process of making the trade unions instruments of the State.

The former Communist Party as such failed to develop any real criticism of the reformists who at all times serve capitalism, of why the reformists would not lead campaigns even within capitalism because they have the same outlook as the capitalist class. The reformists will make such concessions as are necessary to maintain their hold over the workers and will prevent their complete isolation from the workers. They will only wage campaigns which are very strictly within the bounds of capitalism and only when there is no other alternative. Though the former Communist Party may protest that this is not so, an examination of and reflection upon its position shows clearly that it is party to this, part and parcel of it.

The arbitration system is fully supported by the A.L.P. and the reformist trade union leaders and it is nominally opposed by the former Communist Party. The role of the arbitration system is to achieve “industrial peace.” It is constituted under the Commonwealth Constitution under the power which enables the parliament to pass laws “for the peace, order and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to conciliation and arbitration for the prevention and settlement of industrial disputes extending beyond the limits of any one State.” The actual existence of a dispute has been largely replaced by the fiction of a paper dispute, i.e. the union makes a claim well in excess of what it knows the employer will grant or the employer makes demands on the union well beyond what he knows the union will concede. Then the matter goes to the court and is adjudicated. The court hands down an award which fixes the wages and conditions of an industry. (It is backed by all sorts of compulsory powers and penalties as we have already indicated.) Almost all the unions in Australia are registered in the court, i.e. they become corporate bodies and are subject to the court’s jurisdiction. The Act does register and give legal effect to certain concessions (including the recognition of their existence) that the unions historically have won. One of the main jobs of the union secretary is to get a “good” award from the court.

Arbitration legislation, both Federal and State, sets up tribunals (varying a little from case to case) which do “justice” between the worker and the employer. It is not necessary to reflect upon the administrators of this justice personally to see that the very idea is absolutely impossible. Under the conditions of capitalism the level of wages is determined primarily by the social laws which Marx discovered and

expounded, namely in this case that the value of labour power is determined in the same way as the value of all other commodities, i.e. by the amount of socially necessary labour time used in its production. That is to say the value of the worker's labour power is determined in the first place by what it costs to feed, clothe, house him, etc., and to produce children who will take his place as a worker. That determines the primary level of his wage and nothing else, and no tribunal can alter that social law even if it wanted to. The very function of the tribunal is to keep wages as near to that very subsistence level as possible. The trade union struggle has been to raise it above the bare subsistence level, but even when it is raised considerably above that level, still the basic determinant is the amount of socially necessary labour time used in its production.

Again, the level of wages may be influenced by supply and demand. In the ups and downs of capitalism sometimes there is a shortage of workers. Then wages tend to go above the bare subsistence level. In times of unemployment they go even below a bare subsistence level and the unemployed person has no wages at all. Whatever the position of supply and demand and whatever social increment is squeezed from the capitalists by the strength of the trade unions, the fact is that the level of wages is determined by this law and not by any tribunal or any employer. It is fixed by the laws of capitalism. These are social laws that exist independently of the will of man.

The capitalist makes his profits because labour power has one distinction from all other commodities. It has the capacity to produce value in excess of its own value. "The value of labour power and the value which that labour power produces in the labour process are two entirely different

magnitudes,” said Marx (*Capital: Vol. 1*, pp 215-216, Kerr edition). The difference between those magnitudes is profit. Those are social laws which operate throughout capitalism. In the very beginning the arbitration tribunals in Australia, without knowing the scientific basis on which they did it, set out to ascertain the minimum amount of money it would take to keep a family unit “in frugal comfort.” They investigated the amount of rent, amount spent on food, clothes, education, medicine, etc., needed to maintain a worker and fixed a “fair” wage accordingly. For long there was what was called the needs basic wage, i.e. a frank recognition that wages were no more than what was needed to maintain the worker fit as a workman. Nowadays various formulas are used, such as the capacity of industry to pay or the capacity of the community to pay. Notwithstanding this new terminology the laws of capitalism continue to exist. We mention this at some length because the arbitration tribunals really operate within limits determined by this social law and they cannot do anything else. Any conception of justice is just nonsense. In any event, justice under capitalism is always capitalist justice. Justice is a social term and its content is fixed by the given society. Justice in the case of decisions under arbitration legislation cannot help but give effect to capitalism, operate according to capitalism.

The arbitration tribunals intervene between the direct confrontation of workers and employers. Instead of the worker meeting face to face with the exploiter, the exploiter is able to refer the worker to the arbitration tribunal’s decision – the award. There, the exploiter maintains, the evidence has been heard, all that the worker has to say has been heard, the employer has been heard, the tribunal has investigated all sides of the matter and then justice

has been done. If there is an existing dispute the employer will tell the worker to go to the arbitration tribunal because it will give him justice. If the worker disobeys an award by going on strike or taking some other action, it is said, and a great hue and cry is raised about it, that he refuses to obey the decision of the umpire. But all this is absolute deception and people within the workingclass who support it or fail to explain it systematically and fully are party to that deception. It is shackling the workingclass to the capitalist system. To speak of an umpire or justice in such circumstances is ridiculous. An umpire at a cricket match or a football match can give an impartial decision because the contending parties are on an equal footing. In litigation between two commercial concerns a judge can give an impartial decision because the parties are on an equal footing. To import the concepts “umpire,” “justice” into the determination of disputes between workers and employers, i.e. into the class struggle itself, is absolute rubbish and the sheerest deception which must be eternally explained.

The reformist trade union leaders accept all this deception and the old Communists in leading trade union positions have become adapted to it. Indeed they even speak of “wage justice.” The organ of the former Communist Party of Australia, “Tribune,” carries headlines which demand “wage justice.” An accidental or passing use of such a term may be excusable. But as a concept, as an approach, it is actually accepting all this bourgeois rubbish and underwriting the arbitration system. It is giving expression to trade union politics because trade union politics see only the alleviation or improvement of conditions under capitalism, i.e. seek “justice” for the worker. The reality is that the

worker requires justice with a different content, his own justice, the justice of the workingclass state.

It is absolutely correct that a trade union official, Communist or otherwise, be well versed in the procedure of arbitration tribunals.

It is often said, and correctly said, that the arbitration tribunals, insofar as they grant higher wages or better conditions, only register that which the workers have already won in struggle or are about to win anyway. That is perfectly true and an examination of awards will show that those unions which have gained most from arbitration have been those which have waged militant struggle. Conversely those which have been submissive have fared worst. It is plain to all that if there is militant struggle, arbitration will act quickly. If there is a passive attitude on the part of a union there is endless delay. All, however, that that is saying is that the trade union struggle is the more successful the more vigorously it is waged. In itself it has nothing to do with the lifting of the scientific socialist consciousness of the workers. To put it forward as some panacea for all social ills, as the complete answer, or as the justification of Communism, as is done by the former Communist leaders, is only again to give expression to trade union politics, bourgeois politics, non-revolutionary politics.

Nowhere does such an idea in itself rise above bourgeois politics. It is quite correct to wage militant struggle, although even in that the former Communist Party is falling down, but it is not correct for a Communist to fail to show (and not merely by making speeches and writing articles) to the workers ideologically, politically and organisationally that such a struggle is subordinate to or part of the struggle for revolutionary consciousness. This task

the modern-day Australian revisionists who call themselves Communists are failing to carry out.

CHAPTER 9

There are still further features in this question of trade union politics on aspects of which we need to comment a little more. Every trade union official has a very good job, with high pay, a motor car, generous allowances, a position of prestige and authority. Hence they live as individuals as the bourgeoisie lives. They live in an environment which is spontaneously generating trade union politics, non-revolutionary politics. There is inevitably a merging of the two – trade union officials with the bourgeoisie. Thus it will be found today that a number of men who became trade union officials from the workshops as good honest workers, genuinely striving after Marxism-Leninism, have become bourgeois and have bourgeois politics. In a few cases they are even actually personally corrupted by the employers. This latter is but an incident of political degeneration. The trade union position, because of an incorrect political approach, was an end in itself. Its maintenance is an end in itself and so the person concerned will go to any lengths to maintain that position. Principles, Marxism-Leninism, the emancipation of the workingclass, take a very secondary place. In fact they become nonexistent in his mind. It requires people of the highest calibre to withstand the corrupting influence of all this. Only the strongest people, strong in Marxism-Leninism, can do so.

The fact today is that the position of the former Communist Party of Australia in the trade unions is actually declining and has now for some years been declining. One may mention losses in the Amalgamated Engineering Union or the position in the Waterside Workers' Federation after the death of

J. Healy, member of the Political Committee of the former Communist Party and for many years, general secretary of that union and the defeat of his proposed Communist successor. Many positions have been lost. And why? Is it because the workers have become more backward? Can the workers be blamed? Is it because the objective conditions are against it? Undoubtedly objective conditions do influence the workers. That is obvious and the decline of the position of the old Communists is in a sense a product of objective conditions in that they have fallen victim themselves to the environment of capitalism. They have become adapted to it, identified with it.

As we have said, “Communists” on the A.C.T.U. Interstate Executive are indistinguishable from the reformists, from the A.L.P. If you had not known as a fact that there were three people on that executive who bore the label of Communist, there would be nothing whatever in life, in experience to show it. Trade unionists increasingly can see little difference between some who bear the label “Communist” and the A.L.P. official. In fact, there is little difference, and indeed no fundamental difference. In that situation, inevitably the position of the old Communists must decline because the workers cannot be deceived for ever. An even more important side of this (and part of it) is that the former Communist Party had the totally incorrect idea of placing Communists in leading positions and then relying on them as leaders of the revolutionary movement with the trade unions as revolutionary organisations. As we have tried to show the trade unions are not revolutionary organisations. Painstaking work amongst the masses, winning them to Communism, seeking eternally new ways to win the masses to Communism, all that is required.

Lenin's Left Wing Communism demonstrates the only correct approach. Official positions are only important for facilitating deep going work among the masses. The exclusive left bloc practised by the former Communist Party actually hinders mass work. Such ideas are in conflict with Lenin's wise advice in *Left Wing Communism*.

A still further feature of the work of the former Communist Party in the trade unions was the almost complete preoccupation with winning official trade union positions. Winning of official positions is important, but the real question is winning the workers to Communism. The workers are in the factories. It is there that they must be won to Communism. It is true that the Communist trade union official has access to the workers in the factories and can influence them. But he cannot do amongst the workers the painstaking, detailed, devoted day-to-day revolutionary work that is necessary. That can only be done by Communists in the factories. Those Communists must work amongst different strata of the workers. Some workers are advanced, some are backward, some are in between, some have one interest, others, other interests. There must be Communists amongst each section. The Communists will work as Lenin indicated in *Left Wing Communism*. The preoccupation with official positions means that the former Communist Party cut off or seriously limited this extremely important day to day Communist work, detailed and apparently unrewarding work. As we have said, the former Communist Party's ideas really resulted in the formation in a trade union or factory of an exclusive "left bloc." It failed to ensure contact of the Communists with "every sphere and stratum," to borrow Lenin's phrase. The "left bloc" idea cannot give contact with every sphere and

stratum. By its very nature it can influence only the most advanced workers. It creates difficulties in assisting other sections of the workers to become advanced.

Preoccupation with official positions is but another side of worship of the trade union official as the ideal of the revolutionary. This, as Lenin said, is quite wrong. The trade union official's position may assist in the job of winning the masses for Communism. But the preoccupation with official trade union positions is characteristic of trade union politics. It is characteristic of the A.L.P.

What is required really is an all-round approach to this matter so that the official position is seen not as the be-all and end-all of Communist work in the unions, but as part of a very extensive job of winning the workers and working people in every sphere and stratum for revolution.

In the former Communist Party organisation itself a person elected as general secretary or even some other leading trade union position almost automatically became by virtue of that alone a member of the Central Committee and, within the States, a member of the leading Committee in the given State. That is to say they did not become members of those leading Committees by virtue of their grip of revolutionary theory and politics or by virtue of their revolutionary work, but solely by virtue of the fact that they held leading trade union positions. This is not at all to reflect on the individuals concerned, but merely to state the fact. It is a fact also of course that with a few exceptions these people were never Marxist-Leninists and some never aspired to be Marxist-Leninists. There are several conclusions to be drawn from this fact.

It demonstrates the influence of trade union politics in the former Communist Party, i.e. the Communist Party tacitly accepted the trade unions and trade union leaders as decisive of its policy. In that respect it does not essentially differ from the A.L.P., where it is well known that a leading trade union position is a big step forward for a person who wishes to make a career in the A.L.P. The leadership of the A.L.P. is inextricably intertwined with the leadership of the trade unions. Nor of course is it necessarily wrong for a leading trade union official to be a leading member of the Communist Party, nor of its Central Committee, but the criterion of his membership of the Central Committee should be his ability as a Marxist-Leninist and not the mere fact that he holds a leading trade union position.

As we have said, generally speaking the former Communists who are trade union officials have succumbed to trade union politics, bourgeois politics. Of course they bring those politics into the leading bodies of the Communist Party. Thus in the Central Committee of the former Communist Party there is a group of trade union leaders who, without any disrespect to them at all, are not Communists. They do not understand Marxism-Leninism and, more importantly, do not attempt to become Marxist-Leninists. They are steeped in trade union politics. They exude trade union politics. In other words, in the very highest authoritative body of the former Communist Party, apart from all other considerations, there is this extremely strong direct stream of bourgeois politics.

In each case the trade union leader carries with him, as it were, the weight of his organisation, even an intimidatory weight, because if the given trade union leader does not like a particular decision which affects him, he can either directly or by

implication suggest that he will leave the Communist Party, with consequent adverse publicity and influence. There is the case of one member of the Central Committee of the former Communist Party who in fact did precisely that. In 1956, when the Communist Party decided that he should not stand as candidate for a particular trade union position, he made overtures to join the Australian labor party, and the Central Committee of the Communist Party could do little about it. In fact, this member of the Central Committee defied the decisions of the Committee of which he was a member. Whether or not the decision on the particular trade union position was correct at the time is not the point. The point is that an individual trade union leader relied upon his trade union position to circumvent a decision of the Communist Party.

In 1961, the same person actually left the Communist Party, resigned from it, in order to force compliance with his own views in an internal dispute in the former Communist Party. Having gained his point, he resumed membership of the former Communist Party and is still a member of that Party and its Central Committee. Nor is this the only such dramatic case. The central fact is that the trade union leader has a certain kingdom, sphere of his own, which because of the weakness of the former Communist Party in Marxism-Leninism, he really wields at all times and, if need be, against the former Communist Party. This is a position precisely similar to that of the A.L.P., where the trade union leader uses the weight of his union to pursue his own career. Again the matters of predominant importance, even the only matters put forward as of decisive importance by former Communists of this character, are trade union matters. Their politics do not extend

outside the trade unions and when this is put forward by people in a powerful position then it assumes a vast importance in the former Communist Party. Trade unions are vastly important as Lenin said, but only as part of politics as a whole. What the former Communists have done in this respect is to put trade union politics ahead of any question of revolutionary politics.

Though we have said that the trade union officials either directly or by implication carry with them the weight of their trade union position, in turn they have a dependence on the former Communist Party. This renders the need for reconciliation of any conflicts, as they see it, all the more obligatory. Just as the withdrawal of a leading Communist trade union official from the former Communist Party is a serious matter to the former Communist Party, so the withdrawal of the support of the former Communist Party from a leading trade union official is a serious matter. Thus it is a question of inter-relationships. Though in theory the former Communist Party is supreme in the circumstances contemplated, in actual life the picture is one of a Communist Party by its very environment heavily influenced by trade union politics with the added weight (expressive of the environment) of leading trade union officials automatically becoming members of leading committees and feeding the already strong trade union political influences.

Hence, in 1962, when the Central Committee of the former Communist Party of Australia departed from its political line of one of general community of views with the Communist Party of China to unequivocal support of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, two aspects of the position of these trade union leaders are worthy of comment.

In the first place, because the line typified by Khrushchov is a bourgeois line it tended to merge with the spontaneous trade union politics, bourgeois politics, of these trade union leaders. In the second place, for them to defy the line officially declared by Sharkey could lead to a conflict that was irreconcilable and thus could jeopardise Communist Party support for their trade union position. Thus Sharkey's own position on this matter arose partly from his own position as one who reflected trade union politics and hence coincided with the trade union politics that were spontaneously generating from the trade union leaders. Naturally we do not exclude sentiments of loyalty for the former Communist Party from these trade union leaders, nor do we say that consciously they reasoned all this out. We do say that an examination of the situation demonstrates that these were the decisive factors at work. Since that time the spontaneity of trade union politics has been given official sanction by the former Communist Party of Australia. It has abandoned attempts to resist the influence in the working-class of the spontaneous trade union politics that emanate from the trade unions and is abandoning itself to what Lenin called, in this connection, the line of least resistance.

What is demanded is not less attention to trade unions but more and more. It must be based upon a correct appreciation of Marxism-Leninism. Lenin said: "The demand 'to give the economic struggle itself a political character' most strikingly expresses subservience to spontaneity in the sphere of political activity. Very often the economic struggle spontaneously assumes a political character, that is to say without the injection of the 'revolutionary bacilli of the intelligentsia,' without the intervention of the class conscious Social Democrats. For

example, the economic struggle of the British workers assumed a political character without the intervention of the Socialists. The tasks of the Social Democrats, however, are not exhausted by political agitation on the economic field, their task is to convert trade union politics into the Social Democratic political struggle, to utilise the flashes of political consciousness which gleam in the minds of the workers during their economic struggle for the purpose of raising them to the level of Social Democratic political consciousness.” (Lenin: *What is to be Done*, 3 Vol. edition, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, footnote pp. 184-5). It is absolutely correct to pay enormous attention to the trade unions, but it must be attention aimed to raise trade union consciousness into scientific socialist consciousness, and that in any event sees the trade union struggle as only one of myriad struggles.

Moreover the very term trade union struggle can give rise to misunderstandings. In Australia the trade unions are very carefully tailored by the bourgeoisie. As we have said their apparatus is a legally created and protected institution of capitalism. If the Australian workers are going to break from capitalism they must break from this form of trade unionism. In itself this system has given rise to a whole series of sacred cows or stereotypes. Things must be done in a certain way. Meetings must be conducted in a certain way. Strikes must be conducted in a certain way. Elections must be held in a certain way. All this is part of capitalism's stranglehold on the workers. If a stereotype is always followed then the ruling class knows exactly what to expect. Yet we are engaged in class warfare. Does a wise general let the enemy know in advance what he is going to do? Of course not. All these old form, old ideas, old sacred cows must be thoroughly

examined. Work amongst the trade unionists, which all this really denies, is the key question.

CHAPTER 10

To turn to another aspect of the development of the former Communist Party of Australia. We have said that after the 1890 Maritime Strike the idea of the trade unions being represented in parliament received great impetus and the Australian labor party emerged as a parliamentary party. The conception arose of an industrial wing of the workingclass movement constituted by the trade unions and a political wing constituted by the parliamentary party and the apparatus to support it, i.e. A.L.P. branches organised on an electoral basis. In the development as it actually occurred, the former Communist Party of Australia in fact closely paralleled this process.

In its early formative years, it had no strong positions in the trade unions and no appreciable apparatus for parliamentary elections. Nonetheless it was a great force in Australia because primarily it acted as a crystallising focus for the powerful upsurge of revolutionary ideas released by the Russian Revolution, because of its courageous and persistent popularisation of the victories achieved in the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R., and because it initiated and participated in important mass campaigns of the workingclass. In the years of the great economic crisis following 1929, it made great progress because of its focus for revolutionary ideas, its continued popularisation of the achievements of socialism in the U.S.S.R. (where it was clear there were no conditions of economic crisis) and, of extreme importance, the patent failure of the Australian labor party in the conditions of economic crisis to discharge any of the tasks of a workingclass party and, on the contrary, its clear demonstration that it was a party of capitalism. With

that went a corresponding exposure of the reformist (A.L.P.) orthodox trade union leaders. In those circumstances, the workers turned to the former Communist Party. Its mass support grew immensely and, as we have pointed out, its members over a period of years were elected to many leading trade union positions. We have traced something of the rise and fall of that process.

Let us make a few comments on the parliamentary position. As the mass support of the former Communist Party grew, so the idea of actual Communist representation in parliament grew. Lenin had advanced the theoretical and tactical basis of this particularly in his classic work "Left-Wing Communism." In the years of economic crisis, and even more so in the years of the victories of the Soviet Army, Communist parliamentary candidates secured quite appreciable electoral votes and in the State of Queensland, a Communist was elected to parliament.

Because of the weakness of Marxism-Leninism, because of the pressure in Australian conditions of trade union politics, and because of other bourgeois influences, the former Communist Party of Australia ended up taking an almost similar course to that of the labor party. It had two main preoccupations, namely (1) the trade unions, and (2) the parliamentary elections. In fact, its organisation and policy developed to fit into that, to give expression to it. Thus it developed with what is virtually an industrial wing and a political wing; the trade unionists on the one hand, and on the other, those devoted to the political struggle as it was conceived – running of parliamentary campaigns and participation in various mass campaigns which have also a parliamentary emphasis. As we have seen with the rise to leading positions in the trade unions,

Communist organisation in the factories largely collapsed as effective bodies because they were conditioned and bounded by trade union considerations, trade union politics.

Locality Communist Party branches established to coincide roughly with parliamentary boundaries became an important form of organisation just as with the A.L.P. Though these local branches did conduct activity from time to time on municipal questions, education or kindergarten facilities and on international questions of war and peace, the maximum activity was generated at the time of a parliamentary election. The parliamentary illusion interfered with the adoption of correct tactics. Hence this activity is conditioned by money raising and selling of the Party press. These things in themselves are necessary and laudable enough and the activity is devotedly carried on by sincere and honest people. But it is a soul destroying process to subordinate activity to parliamentarism because it is directed to a completely blind alley – it has no possible conceivable hope of success and it is a denial of Marxism-Leninism. It suits the ruling class. It fits in with bourgeois policy and it accommodates the Communist Party to capitalism as an aspiring parliamentary party.

Just as we started with first principles in discussing the question of trade union politics and their relation to Marx-ism-Leninism, so we must start with first principles in relation to parliament. Marxism-Leninism takes the view, derived from an examination of history, of practice, that parliament is a specific historical device, institution, of the capitalist class to maintain the rule of capital. It is that and nothing else, and every single parliament in Australia serves that purpose. Australia is no exception.

All Australian experience shows that parliament has served at all times and in all conditions the capitalist class. Before we turn to quote from the classics of Marxism-Leninism, let us say that experience in Australia amply confirms Marx, Engels and Lenin in their analysis of parliament. In the case of the one Communist ever elected to parliament in the Queensland parliament, the electoral laws were amended to ensure that he would be excluded. That is not to contradict at all our previous statement that it suits the ruling class to accept the Communist Party's portrayal of itself as an aspiring parliamentary party, but it does not necessarily suit them to have the Communists actually in parliament (although that too may come.) It does not suit them because the very name Communism and the very existence of a Communist Party striving for Marxism-Lenin-ism carries with it potential threat. In fact, the amendment of electoral boundaries to exclude Communists occurred in France to reduce radically the French Communist Party's parliamentary representation. In the Indian state of Kerala, a Communist government which enacted only mild reform and was elected within the parliament was displaced by the ruling class. In San Marino, a tiny republic in Europe, the ruling class refused to tolerate a Communist-led government, even though that government did not in any way interfere with capitalism.

Thus, when Marx spoke of parliament as a specific institution of the capitalist class, he spoke of something which his examination then showed to be true and which has been amply confirmed and substantiated by all subsequent history, including Australian history.

When Marx said that a parliamentary election gave the people the opportunity to decide once every

few years which member of the ruling class would misrepresent them in parliament, he did not make a colorful emotional statement, but he made a scientifically accurate statement which is borne out absolutely by all Australian experience.

Lenin summed this all up in *State and Revolution* when, in speaking of the Paris Commune, he said:

The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary body, executive and legislative at the same time. . . . “Instead of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to misrepresent the people in parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people, constituted in Communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the search for the workmen and managers in his business.

Thanks to the prevalence of social-chauvinism and opportunism, this remarkable criticism of parliamentarism made in 1871 also belongs now to the 'forgotten words' of Marxism. The Cabinet Ministers and professional parliamentarians, the traitors to the proletariat and the 'practical' Socialists of our day have left all criticism of parliamentarism to the anarchists, and, on this wonderfully intelligent ground, they denounce all criticism of parliamentarism as 'anarchism'!! It is not surprising that the proletariat of the 'advanced' parliamentary countries, disgusted with such 'Socialists' as Messrs. Scheidemann, David, Legien, Sembat, Renaudel, Henderson, Vandervelde, Stauning, Branting, Bissolati and Co. (all reformist leaders akin to the A.L.P. leaders), has been more and more often giving its sympathies to anarcho-syndicalism, in spite of the fact that the latter is but the twin brother of opportunism.

But for Marx, revolutionary dialectics was never the empty fashionable phrase, the toy rattle, which Plekhanov, Kautsky and the others made of it. Marx knew how to break with anarchism ruthlessly for its inability to make use even of the 'pig-sty' of bourgeois parliamentarism, especially at a time

when the situation was obviously not revolutionary; but at the same time he knew how to subject parliamentarism to genuine revolutionary proletarian criticism.

To decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to misrepresent the people in parliament is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism, not only in parliamentary constitutional monarchies, but also in the most democratic republics.

But since we are discussing the question of the state, and if parliamentarism is to be regarded as one of the institutions of the state from the point of view of the tasks of the proletariat in this field, what is the way out of parliamentarism? How can it be dispensed with?

Again and again we must repeat: the lessons of Marx, based on the study of the Commune, have been so completely forgotten that any criticism of parliamentarism, other than anarchist or reactionary criticism, is quite unintelligible to the present-day 'Social Democrat' (read present-day traitor to socialism).

The way out of parliamentarism is not, of course, the abolition of the representative institutions and the electoral principle, but the conversion of the representative institutions from mere 'talking shops' into working bodies.

'The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary body, executive and legislative at the same time.'

'A working, not a parliamentary body' – this hits the nail on the head in regard to the present-day parliamentarians and the parliamentary 'lap dogs' of Social Democracy! Take any parliamentary country, from America to Switzerland, from France to England, Norway and so forth – in these countries the actual work of the 'state' is done behind the scenes and is carried on by the departments, the government offices and the General Staffs. Parliament itself is given up to talk for the special purpose of fooling the 'common

people.' This is so true that even in the Russian republic, a bourgeois-democratic republic, all these sins of parliamentarism were immediately revealed, even before a real parliament was created. The heroes of rotten philistinism, such as the Skobelevs and the Tseretellis, the Chernovs and Avksentyevs, have managed to pollute even the Soviets with the pollution of disgusting bourgeois parliamentarism and to convert them into mere talking shops. In the Soviets, the Right Honourable 'Socialist' Ministers are fooling the confiding peasants with phrasemongering and resolutions. In the government itself a sort of permanent quadrille is going on in order that, on the one hand, as many Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks as possible may get near the 'pie,' the lucrative and honourable posts, and that, on the other hand, the 'attention of the people' may be engaged. Meanwhile, the real 'state' business is being done in the government offices, in the General Staff. (Lenin: *Selected Works*, 12 Vol. Edn., Vol. 7, pp. 43-45).

Thus the primary job of Communists is to tear the mask from this parliamentary deception, to explain to the workers, to the working people by concrete examination of their own experience of parliament right here in Australia, that it is nothing but deception. Lenin wrote for the workers and working people. He wrote for the Communists to arm them with revolutionary theory, and an essential part of that theory is this examination of the role of parliament and its exposure by experience and by propaganda and agitation as an institution of the ruling class. It is absolutely essential that all Communists carry out that exposure.

Part of it lies in working within parliament itself or where it is possible getting Communists elected so that from within the parliament they can expose the more effectively its very nature as an institution of the ruling class. Participation in an election by a Communist is primarily to expose parliament as an

institution of the ruling class to deceive the people and thereby maintain the rule of capital. Lenin spoke of all this in *Left Wing Communism*:

. . . the Communist Parties must issue their slogans; real proletarians with the help of the unorganised and very poorest people, should scatter and distribute leaflets, canvass the workers' houses and the cottages of the rural proletarians and peasants in the remote villages (fortunately there are not nearly so many remote villages in Europe as there are in Russia, and in England there are very few), they should go into the public houses, penetrate into the unions, societies and casual meetings where the common people gather and talk to the people, not in scientific (and not very parliamentary) language, not in the least to strive to 'get seats' in parliament, but everywhere to rouse the thoughts of the masses and draw them into the struggle, to take the bourgeoisie at their word, to utilise the apparatus they have set up, the elections they have called for, the appeal to the country that they have made, and to tell the people what Bolshevism is in a way that has not been possible (under bourgeois rule) outside of election times (not counting, of course, times of big strikes, when in Russia a similar apparatus for widespread popular agitation worked even more intensively). It is very difficult to do this in Western Europe and America – very, very difficult – but it can and must be done, because generally speaking the tasks of Communism cannot be fulfilled without effort, and every effort must be made to fulfil the practical tasks, ever more varied, ever more connected with all branches of social life, winning branch after branch from the bourgeoisie. (Lenin: *Selected Works*, 12 Vol. Edn., Vol. 10, pp. 141-142).

Hence to have a Communist Party with its main preoccupation in parliamentary elections and putting forward candidates in the sense of their being elected to carry out a given policy, including the change to socialism, is in fact a contradiction of Marxism-Leninism. In the practice of the former Communist Party of Australia this error, the natural expression

of the politics and ideology of which we have spoken before, has had a profound influence with many implications.

It is of course an essential part of the concept of the peaceful transition to socialism to which also the former Communist Party of Australia has become subordinated. This is the natural result of ideological and political factors examined before, together with other factors which it is not the present purpose to examine. The founders of Communism said many times that the Communists always desire peaceful change to socialism, but an examination of the facts of history shows that the capitalists always resist with force and violence any real threat to their system. The capitalist system itself is based on force and violence. To limit the perspective of the workingclass and working people in advance to peaceful change is to deny the facts of history. It is to say in effect that the facts of history are not facts at all. To go on and choose parliament as the institution through which the change to socialism will be achieved is to say we will use an institution of capitalism to destroy capitalism itself. If it were not tragic, it would be laughable. In any event, why choose parliament in preference to some other institution of capitalism? Why not choose the law courts or the governor-generalship, or the army, or the civil service? The choice is made because the former Communist Party of Australia has fallen victim to the very illusion cultivated by the capitalist class, namely that parliament is a people's institution where the people really decide and really can make their own measures and that everything else, including capitalism itself and the social laws of capitalism, is subject to the supreme legislative power of parliament. The exact reverse of this is true. Parliament is the product of capitalism. The supreme

legislative power of parliament is itself a bourgeois concept, part of bourgeois ideology, part of bourgeois legal doctrine.

Those who give this guarantee to the ruling class guarantee in advance that they will do all in their power to maintain the rule of capital, the permanence of capitalism and its institutions. History has shown throughout, including recent history, that the capitalist class has no intention whatever of ever allowing parliament to be used to abolish capitalism. The ruling class cannot even take the risk of allowing too many Communists even of the type of the former Communist Party of Australia to be in parliament or to get too many votes, because capitalism is in a precarious condition. The very word Communism (even though the capitalists be sure of the safety of some who use the name Communism) is full of menace in a world where capitalism is collapsing and where the workers at all times are in danger of throwing off illusions about the former Communists.

But the position of the former Communist Party of Australia requires still more concrete analysis. Up until 1962, an uneasy situation prevailed about this concept of the peaceful parliamentary path to socialism. Sometimes it was brought forward. Sometimes it receded into the background. For example, in 1959, and on the eve of the 81 Parties Conference in 1960 (the world conference of Communist Parties), the Political Committee of the former Communist Party resolved that to put the main emphasis on it was wrong. On the other hand, immediately following the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U. in 1956, it was emphasised. One can say that there was confusion about the matter. In other words, what had characterised the former Communist Party throughout its history revealed

itself on this the most critical of questions for all Marxist-Leninists, namely, weakness in Marxism-Leninism and the continuous clash between the genuine striving to Marxism-Leninism (manifested by the receding of such an idea into the background) and the pressure towards trade union politics, reformist politics (manifested by that idea being brought into the foreground).

CHAPTER 11

For completeness a word of explanation is required as to the history of the former Communist Party in the period 1956-1964. We have said that the former Communist Party strove for Marxism-Leninism and its history was a history of that striving as against the forces within the Party opposing Marxism-Leninism. In 1956 there took place the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U., which expounded the peaceful transition to socialism, a one-sided view of peaceful co-existence (really peaceful collaboration with U.S. imperialism), reconciliation with Social Democracy, in short a thoroughly revisionist stand. That gave great impetus to the revisionist anti-Marxist-Leninist trend in all Communist Parties, including the former Communist Party in Australia. A noisy element which demanded virtual liquidation of the former Communist Party arose. They were defeated and some expelled.

But whereas the former Communist Party hailed that as a victory against revisionism it by no means marked the defeat of revisionism as a system of ideas. It did mark a maintenance of the striving to Marxism-Leninism and that was very good. But it failed to take account of the latent forces of revisionism that the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union called to life. The 20th Congress and the activity of Tito were in fact the rallying call to revisionism throughout the world, and the call was answered in Australia by a group headed by Mr. L. Aarons. At that time their position was a minority one, but because of the influences to which we have referred (trade union politics, Browderism, etc.) it was always capable of victory.

It is not difficult to understand in those circumstances that the former Communist Party even up to and including the international 81 Parties conference in 1960 adopted a position on political and theoretical questions largely in accord with that of the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of China. That was good. After the 81 Parties conference the pressure of revisionism intensified and the striving for Marxism-Leninism in the former Communist Party suffered defeat. The actual details of this are irrelevant to the present essay which has not primarily been concerned with the details of the process by which the victory of revisionism in the former Communist Party became possible.

But in 1961 and 1962 the leaders of the former Communist Party for the first time in its history made a deliberate, conscious decision on the question whether to follow a Marxist-Leninist path or to follow a revisionist path. They chose the latter, the path of revisionism. Trade union politics and other bourgeois influences had a victory. The failure to develop the struggle for Marxism-Leninism by the former Communist Party, its yielding to the line of least resistance, which we have discussed, had been facilitated by the conditions of capitalism in the period after World War II.

Although there have been economic crises in Australia capitalism has appeared to be relatively stable. There has not been mass unemployment on the huge scale of the 'thirties. This has created the basis for illusions to grow that capitalism is permanent, will not suffer crises and so on. All sorts of capitalist "theoreticians" have arisen who have talked of people's capitalism, Marx being outmoded and so on. The former Communist Party has done little to show that these ideas are just as erroneous as they were in previous circumstances when they

flourished, e.g. 1929. Capitalism is doomed: anyone who knows anything of Marxism-Leninism knows that. Even at the moment when the former Communist leaders were speaking of capitalism lasting 100 years and not being able to see the end of it, bourgeois economists themselves were demonstrating that two-thirds of the people in the non-socialist world were starving.

There is any amount of logical and factual material to demonstrate that capitalism is in the most acute general crisis. Lenin himself spoke of the general crisis of capitalism in his own time. Forty years later that general crisis has intensified enormously. But in recent times the former Communist Party has said scarcely a word about this and has been seriously influenced by the superficial transient “prosperity” in Australia.

The decisive critical step which it then took in 1961 and 1962 to the right has been inevitably followed by a rapid descent to the right. Indeed the meeting of the Central Committee of the former Communist Party of Australia in February, 1962, where it decided by a big majority to follow the line of Khrushchov, marked a big step towards its collapse as a Marxist-Leninist Party or as a Party striving to Marxism-Leninism. It meant that Marxist-Leninists in Australia had to struggle to carry through to the end the work of those who founded the Communist Party of Australia in 1920.

In that short general background it is necessary to examine the question of parliament, for after 1962 the concept of the peaceful transition to socialism dominated the politics of the former Communist Party of Australia.

CHAPTER 12

We propose to examine some sides of the history of the last 20-odd years of the slogans “Elect a Labor Government” and “Elect Communists” put forward by the former Communist Party, and the light they reveal on its politics, ideology and its organisation.

First let us look at the concept “Elect Communists.” We commence by saying that that slogan, put forward as it has been put in the context of the peaceful transition to socialism, means saying elect Communists to parliament so that the Communists can legislate for Communism through the institution of capitalism, parliament, supported by a big mass movement outside parliament. We say that is an impossibility and in complete conflict with all that Marxism-Leninism teaches. Yes, we will be told by the former Communist leaders that in his time Marx conceived that this could occur in Britain, but they conceal what Lenin had to say on this matter when he challenged the interpretation that Marx emphasised the idea of gradual development in contradistinction to the seizure of power and so on:

As a matter of fact, exactly the opposite is the case. Marx’s idea is that the workingclass must break up, smash the ‘ready-made state machinery’ and not confine itself merely to laying hold of it.

On April 12, 1871, i.e. just at the time of the Commune, Marx wrote to Kugelmann:

If you look at the last chapter of my Eighteenth Brumaire, you will find that I say that the next attempt of the French Revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to smash it (Marx’s italics), and this is essential for every real people’s revolution on the Continent.

And this is what our heroic Party comrades in Paris are attempting.

The words, 'to smash the bureaucratic-military state machine,' briefly express the principal lesson of Marxism on the tasks of the proletariat in relation to the state during a revolution. And it is precisely this lesson that has been not only completely forgotten, but positively distorted, in the prevailing Kautskyan 'interpretation' of Marxism.

As for Marx's reference to *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, we quoted the corresponding passage in full above.

It is interesting to note two particular points in the above quoted passage in Marx's argument. First, he confines his conclusions to the Continent. This was natural in 1871, when England was still the model of a purely capitalist country, but without militarism and, to a considerable degree, without a bureaucracy. Hence, Marx excluded England, where a revolution, even a people's revolution, could be conceived of, and was then possible, without the condition of first destroying the 'ready-made state machinery.'

Today, in 1917, in the epoch of the first great imperialist war, Marx's exception is no longer valid. Both England and America, the greatest and last representatives of Anglo-Saxon 'liberty' in the sense that militarism and bureaucracy are absent, have today plunged headlong into the all-European, filthy, bloody morass of bureaucratic-military institutions to which everything is subordinated and which tramples everything under foot. Today, both in England and America, the 'essential' thing for 'every real people's revolution' is the smashing, the destruction of the 'ready-made state machinery' (brought, in those countries, between 1914 and 1917, to general 'European' imperialist perfection.) (Lenin: *Selected Works*, 12 Vol. Edn., Vol. 7, pp. 36-37).

Since Lenin published that in 1917 has the position reverted to what it was in Marx's day? On the contrary, the standing army, the whole repressive

State apparatus, has been greatly strengthened, thus indeed further substantiating all that Lenin said. In Australia the secret police have been developed and extended, the standing army strengthened, repressive legislation greatly extended, the whole State apparatus strengthened, etc.

The slogan “Elect Communists” moreover has been put forward in conditions where it is known in advance to any even casual observer of the facts that no Communist would be elected or stood the remotest chance of being elected to parliament. What then does it mean? It means first of all misrepresenting to the masses that a Communist can be elected. It means in the circumstances in which it is put forward that parliament is the correct place to achieve the whole programme of the Communist Party. This involves perpetuating, strengthening, the illusions in parliament, for if the Communists put forward such a slogan then the workers influenced by the Communist Party must conclude, can only conclude, that parliament is a desirable institution and not an institution for the express purpose of assisting in perpetuating their exploitation.

If the objective conditions in a given election opened real possibilities of electing Communists it would be quite correct and indeed obligatory for Communists to stand and be elected to parliament in order to assist in the exposure of parliament itself. This is so because it is necessary to convince the workers that parliament has “become historically obsolete.” Although it is clear to Marxist-Leninists that it is historically obsolete, it is not yet clear to the masses and Marxist-Leninists in parliament can assist in making it clear. It follows, to paraphrase and then quote Lenin, that parliament is not yet politically obsolete “and that participation in parliamentary elections and in the struggle in

parliament is obligatory for the Party of the revolutionary proletariat, precisely for the purpose of educating the backward strata of Us own class, precisely for the purpose of awakening and enlightening the undeveloped, down trodden, ignorant peasant masses. As long as you are unable to disperse the bourgeois parliament and every other type of reactionary institution, you must work inside them, precisely because in them there are still workers who are stupefied by the priests and by the desolateness of village life; otherwise you run the risk of becoming mere babblers.” (Lenin: “Left Wing Communism,” Little Lenin ed., pp. 41-42).

That participation is directed to lifting up the movement ultimately to remove parliament altogether. Speaking of Russian experience Lenin said: “The conclusion which follows from this is absolutely incontrovertible; it has been proved that participation in a bourgeois democratic parliament even a few weeks before the victory of a Soviet Republic, and even after that victory, not only does not harm the revolutionary proletariat but actually makes it easier for it to prove to the backward masses why such parliaments deserve to be dissolved, facilitates their dissolution, and facilitates the process whereby bourgeois parliamentarism becomes ‘politically obsolete.’” (Lenin: “Left Wing Communism,” Little Lenin ed., p. 43).

In giving this advice it is well to remember Lenin’s further advice to the Communists: “You must not sink to the level of the masses, to the level of the backward strata of the class. That is incontestable. You must tell them the bitter truth. You must call their bourgeois democratic and parliamentary prejudices – prejudices. But, at the same time, you must soberly observe the actual state of class consciousness and preparedness of the whole class

(not only of the Communist vanguard) of all the toiling masses (not only of its advanced elements).”

What then is the now fully developed error of the former Communist Party? Its error is that it starts from precisely the opposite standpoint to that of Lenin. It starts from the standpoint of approval and maintenance of parliament whereas Lenin starts from the standpoint of rejection and ending of parliament. It starts from the standpoint of electing Communists to carry out a given programme of reforms within the system of capitalism and then going on to socialism, whereas Lenin starts from the standpoint of exposing parliament itself as an institution designed for the very purpose of maintaining capitalism. There is the world of difference between these views.

But the position of the former Communist Party could not be clearer. For the concept of electing Communists is part of its reconciliation with the ideology, politics and organisation of the Australian labor party. As we pointed out in connection with the trade unions, the former Communist Party sees the socialist objective of the A.L.P. and its own socialist objective as constituting the underlying basis of socialist unity. In this regard, its idea is unity of the former Communist Party with the Australian labor party. In essence the former Communist Party is coming to be at one with the Australian labor party even as to the stated form of method, i.e. through parliament. Though stated in more radical terms the programme of the former Communist Party of Australia does not really depart from the traditional standpoint of reformist parties.

In reality when the former Communist Party raises the dual slogans of “Elect Communists” and “Return a Labor Government” it is saying – we know that the

labor party already has a strong electoral following and is certain to continue to have substantial electoral following and representation; it has a programme of reform and a programme of socialism to be achieved through parliament. We know that we the Communists have little electoral support, but we will nonetheless seek to elect Communists who will support the reforms of the A.L.P. and the introduction of socialism, because we too have a programme of legislating for socialism through parliament.

Hence the peaceful transition to socialism turns out to be adoption of the labor party with its affiliated unions as the vehicle for socialism supported and, if you like, pushed by the former Communist Party. There can be no middle road. Such an approach is pure and simple reformism, revisionism, a complete travesty of all that Lenin taught on the nature of reformism, of the A.L.P. itself, of the state and of the very question of parliament. Proof beyond any question of the truth of our statement is to be found in Mr. Aarons' booklet "Labor Movement at the Crossroads" (1964). In that booklet, Mr. Aarons conceals the reality of the labor party in all its anti-workingclass actions, in all the exceedingly rich history of social democracy subjected to such searching analysis and brilliant elucidation by Lenin, in favor of putting forward all the relatively few statements of the 1964 leader of the A.L.P., Calwell, which in words approach a progressive standpoint.

He left out every single reactionary statement made by Mr. Calwell, of which there are thousands: left out the fact that Mr. Calwell was a participant in the Chifley government, whose record we have commented on.

But everyone knows that words and reality are two entirely different things. An ounce of reality, the concrete study of concrete things, is worth a million words. A concrete study of Mr. Calwell's concrete reality would quickly show just where he has stood and stands. At this very moment he stands for the subordination of Australia to U.S. imperialism. Everyone with an ounce of Marxism-Leninism knows that it is precisely in the capacity to deceive the workers and toiling people with words that the danger of the social democrats including the A.L.P. lies. Under a mass of promises and words they conceal their real role as the servants of capital. Mr. Aarons' booklet is a brilliant substantiation and illustration of what we have said, for it not only does what we have said it does, but in no single place does it ever go beyond the confines of parliament in putting forward the solution of the problems of capitalism or the transition to socialism. It proceeds on the assumption that parliament is the institution. Mr. Aarons reveals clearly where his revisionist clique has ended up. It has ended up seeking reconciliation with the A.L.P. to legislate for socialism through parliament.

As Lenin said, and history has proved, that is betrayal of the workingclass. In present-day conditions it is reconciliation of the former Communist Party with the pro-U.S. imperialist policy of the A.L.P. (Mr. Aarons' pamphlet should be studied far and wide because it is the best possible teacher by negative example.)

If the former Communist Party has that standpoint, it follows that its organisation will be designed to achieve either parliamentary representation or more gingering up of the Australian labor party. That is what has happened. Its apparatus is subordinated to this, is conditioned by it, its newspapers likewise, its

trade union position and in practice its subordination of all other forms of mass work to the parliamentary struggle, through electing Communists and supporting the A.L.P.

The bourgeoisie continually seeks to foster the idea that the only politics are parliamentary politics. This is in reality the sheerest nonsense. Parliamentary politics are deception: they are the form and not the substance of politics. Accepting this form as the substance is a very serious mistake indeed.

Of course, too, the workers who are misled by the A.L.P. are of vital importance to the Communists. The Communists are above all concerned to win the workers for Communism. They must take full account of the influence of the A.L.P. on many workers. Patient, hard work is required. The workers are turning away from the A.L.P.; they will increasingly turn away. Divisions appear in the A.L.P. The lower officials revolt against the leaders. Unity with the workers, assistance to the lower officials are vitally important tasks of the Communists. The A.L.P. is not a homogeneous body. Its hold on the workers must diminish. Correct Communist mass work will ensure the workers get correct leadership. As we have said, the study of contradictions is vital.

It is not true to say that the former Communist Party has become concerned only with trade union politics and parliamentary elections because of course it maintains an interest in pacificism and various other activities. It is completely true to say however that its predominant concern is with trade union politics and parliamentary elections subordinate to the A.L.P.

Moreover, the correct or partially correct Marxist-Leninist approach in the history of the Communist movement in Australia meant that the Communists in fact over the years since 1920 inspired and led many, many mass movements of great importance. It is these splendid traditions of genuine Communist devotion to the workingclass that the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) inherits and carries on.

The wrong work of the revisionists results in fact in real sectarianism, that is, the reduction of the former Communist Party into a sect in the true sense of the term, isolated from the masses and revolving in an ever-narrower circle. Let us just make this comment: if you are raising the slogan of “Elect Communists” and conditioning your work on this slogan in objective conditions where it has no earthly hope of realisation, you are frustrating your members and deceiving the workers. Most workers realise rapidly that it is a fantasy and therefore regard its exponents as fantastic people. Moreover, as capitalism has succeeded in using this very error of the former Communist Party to identify the Communists and its supporters for future victimisation if need be, and as capitalism has a highly developed system of victimisation of Communists, it uses this mistake to improve its lists of workers for future victimisation. Thus the worker who may indeed readily turn to Communism if a less crude approach is adopted, is going to turn away from those who wantonly expose him to victimisation, particularly when he knows full well that his victimisation is not going to serve the cause for which he stands. There are many far more effective ways of winning adherents to Communism. The test of these things however is practice. Practice has proved that the former Communist Party

leadership has created the conditions where its members revolve in an ever-narrowing sect knowing few beyond that sect, thus denying mass work in its true sense and in the sense Lenin explained in “Left Wing Communism.” It is a sect unfortunately harnessed to an impossible and utterly wrong idea of electing Communists and returning a labor government and legislating for socialism.

This is extremely dangerous nonsense which can gain nothing for the workers. It can only deceive them and in the process readily expose them to reprisals from the capitalist class. Moreover it is utter deception of the workingclass and toiling people. It has really nothing at all in common with Communism, Marxism-Leninism. Marxism-Leninism is scientific. It must face the problems of Australia’s path to socialism, ideologically, politically and organizationally.

CHAPTER 13

It comes to this: in late years the former Communist Party of Australia embarked upon a path which in the end in Lenin's terms "took the line of least resistance." It bowed to the bourgeois ideology spontaneously generated by the trade unions, laying the basis for the penetration of other bourgeois ideas, all of which acted and reacted upon each other so that it ended up as no more than a party seeking to legislate through parliament for socialism and uniting with the Australian labor party for that purpose.

In the period of the 'thirties the organisation of the Communist Party was greatly extended, but it was never closely knit because the ideology and politics were never correctly developed. It flowed from that that correct organisational forms were not fully worked out. The expansion of organisation and members finally came to be seen only in terms of the trade unions and parliamentary elections.

What Lenin said in "What is to be Done" will bear repetition again:

For the secretary of any, say English, trade union always helps the workers to carry on the economic struggle, he helps them to expose factory abuses, explains the injustice of the laws and of measures that hamper the freedom to strike and to picket (i.e. to warn all and sundry that a strike is proceeding at a certain factory), explains the partiality of arbitration court judges who belong to the bourgeois classes, etc., etc. In a word, every trade union secretary conducts and helps to conduct 'the economic struggle against the employers and the government.' It cannot be too strongly maintained that this is still not Social Democracy (read Communism), that the Social Democrat's ideal should not be the trade union secretary, but the

tribune of the people, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalise all of these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth before all his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for all and every one the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat.

We cannot deal fully with these questions now. We have been concerned with two trends – trade unionism and parliamentarism. Suffice it to say that both of these questions, trade unions and parliamentary elections, are a vital part of the politics of Marxism-Leninism, but they are only a part. They are subordinate to Marxism-Leninism and not its masters. Life is far more extensive and complicated than the trade unions or parliamentary elections.

In 1913, Lenin wrote on the Australian labor party. His article was a brilliant characterisation of the situation in Australia and although it will make a lengthy quotation we set it out in full:

The parliamentary elections took place in Australia recently. The Labor Party, which had the majority in the Lower House, having 44 seats out of 75, suffered defeat. Now it only has 36 seats out of 75. The majority has passed to the liberals, but this majority is very unstable, because in the upper house, 30 out of 36 seats are occupied by Labor.

What a peculiar capitalist country is this in which Labor predominates in the Upper House and recently predominated in the Lower House and yet the capitalist system does not suffer any danger! An English correspondent of a German Labor newspaper recently explained this circumstance, which is very often misrepresented by bourgeois writers.

The Australian Labor Party does not even claim to be a socialist party. As a matter of fact it is a liberal-bourgeois party, and the so-called liberals in Australia are really Conservatives.

This strange and incorrect use of terms in naming parties is not unique. In America, for example, the slave owners of yesterday are called Democrats, and in France, the petty bourgeois anti-socialists are called 'Radical Socialists.' In order to understand the real significance of parties one must examine, not their labels, but their class character and the historical conditions of each separate country.

Australia is a young British colony.

Capitalism in Australia is still quite young. The country is only just beginning to take shape as an independent state. The workers, for the most part, are emigrants from England. They left England at the time when liberal-labor politics held almost unchallenged sway there and when the masses of the English workers were Liberals. Even up till now the majority of the skilled factory workers in England are Liberals and semi-Liberals. This is the result of the exceptionally favourable, monopolist position England occupied in the second half of the last century. Only now are the masses of the workers in England beginning (slowly) to turn towards Socialism.

And while in England the so-called 'Labor Party' represents an alliance between the socialist trade unions and the extreme opportunist Independent Labor Party, in Australia, the Labor Party represents purely the non-socialist trade unionist workers.

The leaders of the Australian Labor Party are trade union officials, an element which everywhere represents a most moderate and 'capital serving' element, and in Australia it is altogether peaceful, and purely liberal.

The ties between the separate States of Australia in united Australia are still very weak. The Labor Party has to concern itself with developing and

strengthening the country and with creating a central government.

In Australia the labor party has done what in other countries was done by the Liberals, namely, introduced a uniform customs tariff for the whole country, a uniform Education Act, a uniform Land Tax and uniform Factory Acts. (This is not quite accurate; there are not even yet uniform Education or Land Tax Acts.)

Naturally, when Australia is finally developed and consolidated as an independent capitalist state the conditions of the workers will change, as also will the Liberal Labor Party which will make way for a Socialist Labor Party. Australia serves to illustrate the conditions under which exceptions to the rule are possible. The rule is: a socialist Labor Party in a capitalist country. The exception: a liberal Labor Party which arises only for a short time as a result of conditions that are abnormal for capitalism.

Those Liberals in Europe and in Russia who try to 'preach' to the people that class war is unnecessary by pointing to the example of Australia, only deceive themselves and others. It is ridiculous to think of applying Australian conditions (an undeveloped, young country, populated by Liberal English workers) to countries in which a state and capitalism have long been established.

Lenin said that the non-socialist labor party would give birth to a socialist labor party. The former Communist Party of Australia was born as a socialist labor party in 1920 but in its relative infancy in 1962 its leadership was usurped by the revisionist Aarons clique. The task now is to continue the work for a genuine Marxist-Leninist Party.

If the workers are to advance and develop a genuine Marxist-Leninist Party, it is of the utmost importance to dispose of the legacy of the past, to settle accounts with the past, to understand what

went wrong. As we have spent so much time on the trade unions and on parliamentary elections, it is necessary to add a little more in the effort to put them in their correct perspective.

Both of these questions are indeed fundamentally important in considering any question of socialism in Australia. What the Marxist-Leninists must do is to understand them correctly, win the advanced workers for an understanding of them, and put forward correct concepts for all the toiling people.

One very clear revelation of what this has meant to the revolutionary movement in Australia has been the great weakness in developing an agrarian struggle, the alliance of the workers and toiling farmers. This is but a reflection of the shortcomings of trade union politics, non Marxist-Leninist politics.

In fact, the Australian workers historically in big numbers as we have demonstrated have turned to Communism. They have done this in the economic crisis of the 1930's and in the war period. We have demonstrated how the former Communist Party has finally failed them and dissipated the workers' support. Indeed one can say it has actually strengthened the position of the A.L.P. for, as we have pointed out, it withdrew all criticism of the A.L.P. and offered it support even where it repudiated that support. Yet it will be answered, "Well, what was the correct thing to do?"

Given the 42 years of its existence before it collapsed as a Communist Party in 1962, had the Communist Party devoted itself to cultivating deep going Marxist-Leninist ideology, i.e. ideology selflessly devoted to the interests of the working class, imbued with the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Tse-tung, cultivating it in its

members, indulged in criticism and self criticism in a fully sympathetic and understanding way to correct errors and eliminate bourgeois ideology, then Communism would have greatly developed. That was not done sufficiently energetically or correctly. But it did result in the development of Marxism-Leninism, which is being carried on by the Communist Party of Australia (M.L.). That party is carrying forward the task of building an organisation capable of operating in all conditions and not being led astray to expose itself and all its members to the secret police because of the conditions of legality. That party is consolidating Marxism-Leninism ideologically, politically and organisationally. The masses of Australian workers and working people have developed enormously in political maturity. Before it finally turned revisionist the former Communist Party played a big part in that development.

CHAPTER 14

Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. Lenin said this more than half a century ago. In this booklet we have been concerned with errors in the past. Basically they can all be traced to errors in revolutionary theory, ideology. The critical question before the Australian workers and working people is to build a strong, Marxist-Leninist Party – strong ideologically politically and organisationally. In discussing the question of such a party, Lenin posed several questions: “. . . how is the discipline of the proletariat’s revolutionary party maintained? How is it tested? How is it reinforced? First, by the class-consciousness of the proletarian vanguard and by its devotion to the revolution, by its tenacity, self-sacrifice and heroism. Second, by its ability to link up, maintain the closest contact, and – if you wish – merge, in certain measure with the broadest masses of the working people – primarily with the proletariat, but also with the non-proletarian masses of working people. Third, by the correctness of the political leadership exercised by the vanguard, by the correctness of its political strategy and tactics, provided the broad masses have seen, from their own experience, that they are correct.” (*Left-Wing Communism – An Infantile Disorder*).

This lays the foundation of the spirit of the revolutionary party. Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. There must be a revolutionary party to carry into effect revolutionary theory and to lead the masses to the overthrow of capitalism. That revolutionary party and movement are not the trade unions nor trade union officials. Although no-one puts it in the blunt

terms of our last sentence, reality has been that this was one of the root ideas of Communists in Australia.

To fail to see the trade unionism and parliamentarism of which we have spoken in past pages as bourgeois politics is political subjectivism, lack of investigation, lack of study in its real sense (and that real sense is not academic study). Subjectivism means substituting wishes for facts. People can hotly deny they are subjective but still remain subjective. By subjectivism we do not mean personal reaction, personal resentment nor any similar vulgarisations but political subjectivism. Political subjectivism is a failure to recognise political, social, facts because of preconceived political ideas. These ideas in Australia commonly took the form of repetition of quotations from Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin and the attempt arbitrarily to impose them on facts. But the facts must come first and ideas second. Then ideas can correctly influence facts. Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Tse-tung, in short, Marxism-Leninism, teaches the pre-eminence of facts, of nature, of society. All ideas have their primary source outside man's mind. They come from the outside. Of course men's minds accurately reflecting facts and their movement, can profoundly influence them. But still facts are first.

The central fact of politics in Australia (as anywhere else) is the fact of state power. State power is owned, held, wielded, (whatever you like) by the Australian monopoly capitalists and they in turn have subordinated themselves to the U.S. imperialists. This state power is the crux of the question of politics in Australia. Around this question every other question centres.

The essence of revolutionary struggle in Australia is to win state power for the Australian working class and working people. In Marxist-Leninist terms, this is the struggle to overthrow, smash the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and replace it with the dictatorship of the proletariat. The content of the revolution in Australia is socialist.

That is to say, there are no pre-capitalist forms of social system in Australia to be overcome. There is only the capitalist form.

The struggle for working class state power in Australia is therefore the central task of Australian revolutionaries. Every other task is directed to the achievement of state power. Though particular struggles may at the moment seem remote from the revolutionary seizure of state power nonetheless the task of the revolutionaries is to assist the people to draw the correct revolutionary lessons from their experience.

It is not within the province of this booklet to discuss all aspects of revolutionary struggle. But it is very important to advert to it precisely to get rid of the domination of ideas of trade unionism and parliamentarism. In the end the revolutionary struggle will be determined in armed conflict between the reactionaries (whose whole system rests upon force and violence) and the workers and working people resisting that force and violence and overwhelming it with their own force and violence. An examination of reality shows that that is the only real perspective. Trade unionism and parliamentarism deny that reality. They are at best pious hopes of earnest people and at worst and much more importantly a powerful weapon of deception in the hands of the reactionaries. If this reality is denied the working class is disarmed in advance.

Accordingly the revolutionary party must be crystal clear on the nature of society in Australia. It is a dictatorship of the capitalist class but it operates under a facade of democracy. Its real arm of power is the army supported by the police both open and secret. Orthodox trade unionism and parliamentarism are part of the capitalist weapons, All this is carefully concealed under the cloak of democratic rights of which trade unionism and parliamentarism are manifestations. Still reality remains reality.

In saying all this we do not mean that the ideas of trade unionism and parliamentarism can be destroyed over night, in one blow as it were. It requires protracted struggle. But destroyed they must be.

The problem is to maintain the closest contact with the masses of working people and provide correct political leadership which recognises that the masses learn basically from their own experience. Then the authority and leadership of the revolutionary party will be established. It will not be established by proclamation (basically by good speeches and articles, though they have a place) but by actual experience and example in struggle. This is a very very many sided task. It requires attention to absolutely every facet of struggle. "The people, and the people alone, are the motive force in the making of world history" (Mao Tse-tung: *On Coalition Government*). This is a profoundly important idea. Sometimes people think it is trite. But the errors dealt with in previous pages included a non-recognition of this profoundly important idea and substituted for it the idea that a handful of Communists acting in a closed left circle or left bloc could make history and make it by a bit of crude self proclamation and propaganda. It failed to recognise

that “the masses are the real heroes, while we ourselves are often childish and ignorant, and without this understanding it is impossible to acquire even the most rudimentary knowledge” (Mao Tse-tung). Boundless confidence in the masses of people is one of the distinguishing hallmarks of a revolutionary party. To shut oneself away from them and preach a few lofty words of so-called principle is sectarianism – to act as a pure sect.

The organisational product then of the subjectivism of which we have spoken is sectarianism. In Australia it expressed itself in the Communists failing to maintain the closest contact with the masses, failing “to merge in a certain measure” with the masses. It expressed itself in the trade unions by believing that a few Communists holding trade union official positions could win revolutionary power. Almost the very reverse is true. The primary task of the Communists in this sphere in Australia is to work as ordinary workers, ordinary trade unionists. There they must participate in, promote struggles in accordance with the understanding and experience of the workers, step by step assisting the development of revolutionary consciousness. Mao Tse-tung put all this brilliantly when he said that the revolutionary party “should teach every comrade to love the people and listen attentively to the voice of the masses; to identify himself with the masses wherever he goes and, instead of standing above them, to immerse himself among them; and according to their present level, to awaken them or raise their political consciousness and help them gradually to organise themselves voluntarily and to set going all essential struggles permitted by the internal and external circumstances of the given time and place.” (“On Coalition Government” *Selected Works* Vol. III, 315-316.)

And again “If we tried to go on the offensive when the masses are not yet awakened, that would be adventurism. If we insisted on leading the masses to do anything against their will we would continually fail. If we did not advance when the masses demanded advance, that would be Right opportunism” (*A talk to the Editorial Staff of the Shansi-Suiyuan Daily, Selected Works, Vol. IV, 243*).

The denial of the proposition that avowed Communists should become trade union leaders in the way promoted by the former Communist Party sounds to some heretical. But there is indeed ample experience to demonstrate its utter incorrectness and the immense harm it does. Many Communists have become such leaders. In that position they must of necessity assist in administering the capitalist state. Only an exceptionally strong person can withstand the process of adaptation to capitalism involved in that. In Australia there are some prime and choice examples of what happens. Revisionist trade union officials are the most abject time-servers. There is no need to mention names – they are well known. But even this is the subsidiary side of the question. The main side is that such a person is of equal necessity cut off from the mass of trade unionists. His “authority” is based upon false foundations. The really devoted capable Communist will work with the masses, will not eternally aspire to be one of these old line trade union officials. But only adherence to the revolutionary party will ensure such correct behaviour.

What has happened in Australia has been political subjectivism, organisational sectarianism and the following of a stereotyped form of “working class leadership”.

The subjectivism lies in the quite wrong and arbitrary failure to understand the bourgeois nature of trade unionism and parliamentarism. These ideas did not come from investigation of reality. They expressed themselves in organisational forms of a sect – self sufficient Communist bands. They worshipped quotations and forms without bothering to ask about, inquire into, investigate reality. Everything went, including the conduct of strikes, according to a set form rather than investigation of real people and real conditions and a release of the immense ideas and initiative of real people.

In outstanding classics of Marxism-Leninism “Reform Our Study,” “Rectify the Party’s Style of Work,” “Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing,” Mao Tse-tung dealt with these 3 critical enemies of correct revolutionary thought. Those enemies are subjectivism, sectarianism, stereotypes. The importance of these writings cannot be over-exaggerated. They are in our opinion without question the very highest development of Marxism-Leninism on these matters. They carry into the actual practice of the revolutionary movement basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and develop them. To us in Australia, the recurrence of the word “study” in their titles might suggest that they are concerned with academic study. This is not so. They are not. They are concerned with study, investigation of reality and what to do about it. Only strict adherence to their principles (and they are very shortly and clearly stated) can overcome the errors of the past and show the way ahead.

In previous pages we have referred to the question of the united front. This was conceived of as some sort of formal agreement between the labour party and the Communist Party. It became a complete stereotype. This misunderstanding was again an

error of subjectivism. The real question involved is mass work – how to win the masses to struggle to overthrow capitalism, how to be with the masses. The united front basically means the accumulation of large numbers of friends around the Communist Party, it means relying on the masses. It is completely opposed to the left blocism (closed doorism as the Chinese call it) of the past. In explaining that united front tactics and closed-door tactics are diametrically opposed Mao Tse-tung said: “The former requires the recruiting of large forces for the purpose of surrounding and annihilating the enemy.

The latter means fighting single handed in desperate combat against a formidable enemy. (On tactics against Japanese Imperialism, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 162.)

Accordingly in Australia we must vigorously combat the errors of trade unionism and parliamentarism. Failure to see them as bourgeois weapons is the product of subjectivism, sectarianism and worship of sacred cows (stereotypes). We must build up the revolutionary thought of Mao Tse-tung, the highest development of Marxism-Leninism. Mao Tse-tung summed up the experience of the Chinese revolution in inspiring terms. He said: “A well disciplined Party armed with the theory of Marxism-Leninism, using the method of self-criticism and linked with the masses of the people; an army under the leadership of such a Party; a united front of all revolutionary classes and all revolutionary groups under the leadership of such a Party – these are the three main weapons with which we have defeated the enemy” (“On the People’s Democratic Dictatorship” *Selected Works*, Vol. IV, 422).

CHAPTER 15

In March, 1964, the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) inherited the striving to Marxism-Leninism commenced by the former Communist Party; it honorably carried on the tradition of the battle for Marxism-Leninism.

It took up the struggle against revisionism. Obviously it follows a different policy from revisionism and the Aarons clique. In immediate political tactics the break is not so difficult and many aspects of that we have just reviewed. But merely to break in this limited way does not solve the problem. The pressure of the bourgeoisie towards revisionism is very strong. It is easy to succumb even on minor matters. Moreover, the very environment and traditions that we have commented on as having such powerful influence in leading the former Communist Party astray operate on the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) and they can be victorious again. Historically there are powerful traditions the other way, towards Marx-ism-Leninism. They will be victorious. It is up to the advanced workers, up to the Marxist-Leninists to ensure that now in a historically short time they are victorious.

That demands the accomplishment of a thoroughgoing and all round ideological political and organisational break from revisionism. Such a break cannot be achieved in one blow. It requires never ceasing struggle. As we have said the pressure to revisionism is always present. Therefore the struggle against that pressure must be always present.

Ideology is a far wider concept than politics. It embraces the whole of mankind's ideas. A workingclass ideology is an ideology devoted to ending capitalism – all the best ideas embracing the whole of knowledge, devoted to the emancipation of the working people. It demands people of a special mould able to resist all selfish, self-seeking influences which are the inheritance from the self-seeking ideology of capitalism. Marx and Engels said in the *Communist Manifesto* that the Communists have no interests over and above those of the workingclass. The workingclass has no selfish ideology; its ideology is one to secure freedom from exploitation.

Marxism-Leninism deliberately cultivates all that is best in the workingclass. It is a world outlook that gives expression to all that is best in all history and all social development. It permits of no interests save those of scientifically understanding and acting according to the laws of history which determine that the workingclass will overthrow capitalism. But it recognises that that ideology is a precious thing which does not emerge in itself. It must be carefully sought and carefully cultivated. It competes against a far older and longer established ideology, that of the bourgeoisie which is continually trying to destroy workingclass ideology.

Every worker, every Marxist-Leninist in Australia is a product of capitalism. He commences life with his mind full of bourgeois ideology, full of bourgeois habits. All his life he is surrounded by bourgeois ideology which continually presses in on him and tries to claim him for itself. Hence intense struggle to resist all this is required. That struggle can only go on in actual participation in workingclass and people's struggle. It is only in struggle that people will be remoulded. To acquire a workingclass

Marxist-Leninist ideology is the most difficult of the tasks before Marxist-Leninists. But just because it is the most difficult and splendid task, Marxist-Leninists must set out to achieve it and not be daunted by difficulties. Nor can the past be thrown off at one thrust; it is a continual, never-ceasing process.

It must be said that the former Communist Party did very little to develop in its members a Marxist-Leninist ideology, the most serious aspect of its failure from which the others flow. Such an ideology can only be achieved by the frank and honest facing by the individual of his whole background and work, examining closely the defects in his ideology, the alien influences at work, and by the deepest individual study of the ideology of Marxism-Leninism in actual participation in struggle. Such an ideology requires relations of real comradeship where the frank and free exchange of opinions directed to achieving a Marxist-Leninist ideology is as natural as drawing breath and not as expressive of the struggle for position, influence and authority characteristic of the revisionist clique.

Such a situation involves, as we say in our introduction, a far-reaching self-critical analysis of our weakness in ideology, in contributing to the errors of the past – the deep influences of bourgeois ideology upon us. There are those who scoff at concepts of development of Marxist-Leninist ideology and development of it in struggle, but that cannot daunt the person who is honestly seeking Marxist-Leninist ideology. We must start from our own shortcomings, see the fault in ourselves, always a far more difficult process than to see the faults in others. The workingclass has nothing to lose but its chains, said Marx and Engels; it alone is capable of facing the future honestly and fearlessly. No other

class can do this. Marxism-Leninism is the concentrated ideology of the workingclass. It permits of no dishonesty and no fear. In this field the legacy of the past is very bad; it is the most important field of all. Revisionism teaches by negative example. It has driven home to us the perils of failing to develop a Marxist-Leninist ideology.

Organisationally we have demonstrated errors of the former Communist Party. It is true to say it did not work out thoroughly a correct organisational line. But those who have emerged from the former Communist Party have known no other line and the hold of the past is very strong.

We have demonstrated how the politics of the former Communist Party became preoccupied with two main questions, the trade unions and parliamentary elections, and how its organisation developed to correspond with these political concepts. But the tasks of the workingclass and Marxism-Leninism are far more extensive than this, and they demand the development of an organisation capable of performing all the tasks. The Communists must work in every sphere of the people's lives, must work in parliamentary elections, where the opportunity is open in parliament itself, in every important mass organisation, in the trade unions, amongst the rural population. They must study every section of society. They must see every form of activity. Lenin could have been speaking of the former Communist Party and the situation which has arisen in Australia when he wrote in "Left Wing Communism": "The very purpose of the existence of Communists in the world, adherents of the Third International in all countries, is to change all along the line, in all spheres of life, the old Socialist, trade unionist, syndicalist parliamentary work into new Communist work." A neglect of all spheres of life

and wrong concepts of trade unionism and parliamentarism evolved amongst the revisionist Communists. Lenin's proposition is a precise characterisation of the tasks that face the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist).

The Communists must have an organisation to operate in all spheres of life. For example, Communists in any sphere of life must aim to win that sphere or the members of it to Communism and the leadership of it, doing it appropriately, carefully, patiently; where they are trade unionists working appropriately to win the workers for revolution; in the factories; among the farmers; amongst the white collar workers; reaching to every sphere of life; extending and extending to destroy capitalism. Lenin said:

Everyone will agree that an army which does not train itself to wield all arms, all means and methods of warfare that the enemy possesses or may possess, is behaving in an unwise or even in a criminal manner. This applies to politics to a greater degree than war. In politics it is harder to forecast what methods of warfare will be applied and be useful for us under certain future conditions. Unless we are able to master all methods of warfare we stand the risk of suffering great and sometimes decisive defeat if the changes in the position of the other classes, which we cannot determine, will bring to the front forms of activity in which we are particularly weak. If, however, we are able to master all means of warfare, we shall certainly be victorious, because we represent the interests of the really advanced, of the really revolutionary class, even if circumstances do not permit us to use weapons that are most dangerous for the enemy, weapons that are most quickly death dealing. Inexperienced revolutionaries often think that legal methods of struggle are opportunist because in this field the bourgeoisie most frequently (especially in 'peaceful,' non-revolutionary times) deceived and fooled the workers, and they think that illegal methods of struggle are revolutionary. But this is

not true. What is true is that the opportunists and the traitors to the workingclass are those parties and leaders who are not able or who do not want (don't say: you cannot; say: you won't) to apply illegal methods of struggle in conditions such as those which prevailed, for example, during the imperialist war of 1914-1918, when the bourgeoisie of the freest democratic countries deceived the workers in the most impudent and brutal manner, and prohibited everyone from speaking the truth about the predatory character of the war. But revolutionaries who are unable to combine illegal forms of struggle with every form of legal struggle are very poor revolutionaries. It is not difficult to be a revolutionary when the revolution has already flared up and is raging, when everybody joins the revolution simply because they are carried away by it, because it is the fashion and sometimes even because it might open the way for a career. After the victory, the proletariat has to exert extreme effort, to suffer pain and one (might say martyrdom to 'liberate' itself from such sorry revolutionaries. *It is much more difficult – and much more useful – to be a revolutionary when the conditions for direct, open, really mass and really revolutionary struggle have NOT YET matured, to be able to defend the interests of the revolution (by propaganda, agitation and organisation) in non-revolutionary bodies and even in downright reactionary bodies, in non-revolutionary circumstances, among the masses who are incapable of immediately appreciating the necessity for revolutionary methods of action.* The main task of contemporary communism in Western Europe and America is to acquire the ability to seek, to find, to determine correctly the concrete path, or the particular turn of events that will bring the masses right up to the real, decisive, last and great revolutionary struggle. (Lenin: *Left Wing Communism, Selected Works*, 12 Vol. Edn., Vol. 10, pp. 139-140. Emphasis mine. – E.F.H.)

The whole matter was put exceedingly well by the Communist Party of China in "A Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement." (June 14, 1963.) Point 10 of this document reads:

In the imperialist and the capitalist countries, the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat are essential for the thorough resolution of the contradictions of capitalist society.

In striving to accomplish this task the proletarian party must under the present circumstances actively lead the working class and the working people in struggles to oppose monopoly capital, to defend democratic rights, to oppose the menace of fascism, to improve living conditions, to oppose imperialist arms expansion and war preparations, to defend world peace and actively to support the revolutionary struggles of the oppressed nations.

In the capitalist countries which U.S. imperialism controls or is trying to control, the working class and the people should direct their attacks mainly against U.S. imperialism, but also against their own monopoly capitalists and other reactionary forces who are betraying the national interests.

Large scale mass struggles in the capitalist countries in recent years have shown that the working class and working people are experiencing a new awakening. Their struggles, which are dealing blows at monopoly capital and reaction, have opened bright prospects for the revolutionary cause in their own countries and are also a powerful support for the revolutionary struggles of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples and for the countries of the socialist camp.

The proletarian parties in imperialist or capitalist countries must maintain their own ideological, political and organisational independence in leading revolutionary struggles. At the same time, they must unite all of the forces that can be united and build a broad, united front against monopoly capital and against the imperialist policies of aggression and war.

While actively leading immediate struggles, Communists in the capitalist countries should link them with the struggle for long-range and general interests, educate the masses in a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary spirit, ceaselessly raise their political

consciousness and undertake the historical task of the proletarian revolution. If they fail to do so, if they regard the immediate movement as everything, determine their conduct from case to case, adapt themselves to the events of the day and sacrifice the basic interests of the proletariat, that is out and out social democracy.

Social democracy is a bourgeois ideological trend. Lenin pointed out long ago that the social democratic parties are political detachments of the bourgeoisie, its agents in the working class movement and its principal social prop. Communists must at all times draw a clear line of demarcation between themselves and social democratic parties on the basic question of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat and liquidate the ideological influence of social democracy in the international working class movement and among the working people. Beyond any shadow of doubt Communists must win over the masses under the influence of the social democratic parties and must win over those left and middle elements in the social democratic parties who are willing to oppose domestic monopoly capital and domination by foreign imperialism, and must unite with them in extensive joint action in the day to day struggle of the working class movement and in the struggle to defend world peace.

In order to lead the proletariat and working people in revolution, Marxist-Leninist parties must master all forms of struggle and be able to substitute one form for another quickly as the conditions of struggle change. The vanguard of the proletariat will remain unconquerable in all circumstances only if it masters all forms of struggle – peaceful and armed, open and secret, legal and illegal, parliamentary struggle and mass struggle, etc. It is wrong to refuse to use parliamentary and other legal forms of struggle when they can and should be used. However, if a Marxist-Leninist party falls into legalism or parliamentary cretinism, confining the struggle within the limits permitted by the bourgeoisie, this will inevitably lead to renouncing the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The former Communist Party, as we have remarked, was deluded by legality and parliamentarism into failing to estimate and explain that we live in conditions of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie is a ruthless, implacable enemy which resorts to the foulest deceit, to which the end of its own preservation always justifies the foulest of means: murder, deceit, bribery, corruption, diversion. Only a skilful Communist Party, carefully husbanding its resources and members versed in all the tricks of the enemy and never exposing its forces unnecessarily, and then only to the extent demanded, can achieve the greatest task of all – the liberation of the working people. The Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) must become such a Party.

The splendid struggles of the Australian workingclass and working people, highlighted in the early days by Eureka and over the six-odd decades of federation by many, many outstanding events, have developed a great fighting tradition. That tradition must be cherished, preserved and developed.

Based on that tradition, the ranks of the Communists have been cleansed. Now the most important achievement of the splendid workingclass is that it has cleansed the ranks of the Communists and called into being the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist). Supreme optimism and supreme confidence in the victory of the struggle for genuine Australian independence from Anglo-U.S. imperialism through the victory of Australian socialist revolution are fully warranted.