



Australian Marxist Review

Theoretical journal
of the Socialist
Party of Australia

- ★ *Migrant workers conference*
- ★ *Approaches to change*
- ★ *Responses to neo-conservatism*
- ★ *The Australian peace movement*
- ★ *The character of the ALP*
- ★ *The searching of Yuri Krasin*
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- ★ *International Women's Day*

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Australian Marxist Review

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Migrant workers conference

On the initiative of the Socialist Party of Australia (SPA), a conference was held in Sydney on April 15, 1989, to discuss the specific problems faced by migrant workers in Australia. As well as SPA delegates, representatives of the Communist Party of Chile, the Communist Party of the Peoples of Spain, the Lebanese Communist Party, the Tudeh Party of Iran, the Iraqi Democrats, Friends of AKEL (Cyprus) and the Communist Party of Uruguay (as observers) attended. The conference was opened by Peter Symon, General Secretary of the Socialist Party of Australia. The following is his contribution to the conference.

The economic statement delivered by the Federal Treasurer, Paul Keating, during April will affect every man, woman and child in Australia. It is a part of the government's economic policy which it has pursued since it was elected in 1983.

Wages, taxes paid, working conditions, prices, interest rates paid on home loan mortgages, jobs, social services and much more will be affected.

These are not special problems and issues for migrants alone-they affect everyone.

Real wages are being pushed down. Working conditions are being cut as an off-set to some meagre wage increases. The rights of workers are under threat. An example is the decision to impose heavy fines on individual air traf-

fic controllers should they continue their industrial dispute.

The hike in interest rates is putting some out of their homes and impoverishing many. The rip-off is going to swell the profits of the banks.

There is growing discontent. We ask for and we need the full participation of all workers in the fightback. In quite a few industries, migrant workers provide the main labour force. They can add much to the total strength of the labour and trade union movements as a whole and to the communist movement — to our Party, the Socialist Party of Australia.

Who governs Australia is also an important question. In 12 months or less, there will be a Federal election. Some migrants will be voters and others will not, but all will be affected by the outcome. At present, the contest is between right-wing Labor and even more right-wing Liberal-National Party alternatives.

The aim of our Party is to build an influential left-democratic alternative which will eventually command the support of the majority of the people.

Australia's political life, which has been dominated by the two party system, needs to be turned in another direction. It will take time, much work and there will be many difficulties.

Migrants are playing an increasing role in Australia's political life and the major parties have not neglected the migrant vote, even though they discriminate against migrants in a number of ways. A number of migrant candidates have been nominated and some have won election.

Our Party is entering the elections as part of the *Socialist Alliance* which is made up of the Socialist Party of Australia and the Socialist Workers Party.

As part of our aim to strengthen the left-democratic alternative, we have held discussions with other left organisations as well. Our proposals are that the parties should avoid contests between their candidates in any electorate, should exchange preferences wherever a contest does arise, should give support to one another's candidates and should work out some policies which all can support and campaign for during the elections.

Some of the issues have already been mentioned and there are many more. Recently in several Sydney electorates, a leaflet was published on behalf of the *Socialist Alliance* candidates against the government's decision to build a third runway at the Sydney airport. One does not have to be an English speaking resident to be deafened by the noise of aircraft.

There is a great deal of disillusionment with both the Liberal and Labor Parties. But the political trend can swing to the right — not the left. At the moment, the direction is to the right. The extreme right is stronger and more active. There is no guarantee that Australia will escape the fate of Chile, El Salvador or some Middle East and African countries which have suffered the sav-

age oppression of military fascist dictatorship.

We can prevent it, but the unity of the left is necessary, a left unity which is capable of mobilising and leading the democratic masses of the working people.

I would like to mention some other issues. There is a world-wide struggle going on against imperialist interference, oppression and exploitation. In a number of countries, there is a hard and bloody struggle going on — in Lebanon, by the Palestinian people, in South Africa and Namibia, in Central America and Afghanistan, in Iran and Iraq.

In all other capitalist countries, the struggle continues using political forms of action. In Australia, we have a movement against the presence of US bases and nuclear warship visits, against militarisation and for an independent, non-aligned foreign policy.

This is a world-wide, common struggle against imperialism. It calls for solidarity and help to one another in whatever way is possible. Our Party does its best to live up to that obligation.

There are some specific problems facing migrants. Some of these are in workplaces and these will be dealt with in the course of this conference.

I would like to say something about multiculturalism. Our Party was one of the first organisations to put this concept forward.

In a pamphlet called *Multiculturalism*, we said:

“We understand multiculturalism to mean the concept of a process for the development of a new Australian culture which will be the outcome of cultural interaction between the various groups without prejudices and discrimination and will contain elements of all the individual ethnic cultures.” (page 22)

Recently the concept of multiculturalism has been under attack by those who want to pressure everyone to become a good little Anglo-Saxon. This is the same as the policy of assimilation which some attempted to force on the Aboriginal people.

We recognise the contribution which has been made and will be made by migrants and we want to preserve that contribution.

Multiculturalism is democratic. It is the best way of combatting racism which is being pushed by the extreme right-wing, neo-fascist National Action and by the Liberal Party.

The attack on multiculturalism was behind the efforts to put SBS out of business a year or so ago. This was defeated. A great unity of migrant organisations and progressive Australians defeated this attack.

I will conclude this contribution by setting out our Party's view about left unity. As you know, the communist movement in Australia has become badly

split. Ours is not the only country where this has happened.

Following the great revolutionary achievements of the Russian and Chinese revolutions and the emergence of socialist states in Europe, Asia, the Caribbean and Africa, the bourgeoisie launched a counter-attack and an ideological offensive.

There were also many shortcomings, weaknesses and outright mistakes committed in the socialist countries and these were made full use of by imperialism. Within a number of countries, different ideas emerged about what to do.

In Australia, Maoism, Trotskyism and Euro-Communism all found an influence. We also had to contend with the influence of social democracy. Splits occurred along these lines and they remain still.

Our Party has maintained its commitment to Marxism-Leninism throughout. We cannot accept that these divisions are permanent and we are working to help overcome them.

We are encouraging the idea that existing organisations should work together on issues where policies are similar or even the same.

We have declared our willingness to work with all left-progressive parties and have had some success. Where this happens, everyone gets stronger.

In this process, we recognise the key role of communists and we hope that eventually all who accept Marxism-Leninism as their ideological guide will find their way into one party. That is very important. If the communists are strong, united and active, the whole movement benefits.

The message on behalf of our Party is one of unity. Unity among the communists. Unity among all the left, democratic and progressive organisations. Unity among migrant organisations and between Australian born and those whose Motherland is overseas. Unity among the working people. Solidarity with the parties and peoples of other countries — all those who are in struggle against imperialism and capitalist exploitation.

We believe that success will strengthen everyone and bring nearer the day when war will be banished, disarmament achieved and all nations and people will win their liberation in conditions of freedom and well-being.

Our aim is nothing less than that, and together we can move mountains.

Migrant workers conference — contributions —

The Conference on the Problems of Migrants at the Workplace, held in Sydney on April 15, 1989 on the invitation of the Socialist Party of Australia (SPA), took the form of an assessment made by each organisation represented concerning the situation of migrant workers in their communities, followed by a round table discussion on forms of co-operation between the organisations in response to the problems raised. The *Australian Marxist Review* reproduces here a selection of contributions made by organisations which were prepared in written form.

Habib Fares

Socialist Party of Australia

Australia is a country of migrants. As a result, particularly, of post-war migration, one in every three people in Australia today were not born in this country.

Some figures illustrate the importance of migrants in the Australian community and particularly in the working class:

★ over 50 per cent of blue collar workers were born outside Australia;

- ★ 29 per cent of all people of working age came from overseas, including English speaking countries;
- ★ over 55 per cent of Australia's female workforce are the result of post-war migration.

Despite their importance in production, migrant workers are one of the most exploited and discriminated against sections of the working class.

They are predominantly forced into the heaviest, dirtiest and most dangerous jobs with few opportunities for better pay.

Exploitation of and discrimination against non-English speaking workers is more intense and is even worse for female migrant workers.

Migrant workers are seen by employers as cheap labour to be used to create bigger profits with no consideration for their safety on the job, their general welfare, their right to organise or to free speech.

Employers in both the public and private sectors use certain realities of the migrant experience to exploit migrant workers. These factors include:

- ★ The special need of migrants to find work in order to start a new life in Australia. This forces many migrants to accept any work, whatever the pay and conditions.
- ★ The extra responsibilities many migrants have to support families in their country of origin, particularly in countries suffering from war, natural disasters or oppressive fascist and military regimes.
- ★ The lack of skill and knowledge of the English language among the majority of migrant workers.
- ★ The lack of knowledge and experience of trade unionism among many migrant workers.

Migrant workers suffer continually from the pressures created by the racist fear and hatred campaigns organised by the ruling class against them, presenting to the Australian people a distorted picture that migrants are responsible for the country's economic and social ills.

They suffer, in almost every workplace, from constant campaigns organised by employers to create an atmosphere of division and hatred between fellow workers on the basis of nationality, race and culture, in order to prevent unity and class struggles for common rights and demands.

Many migrant workers, particularly those who come from third world countries, have non-working class backgrounds and most of them are from rural areas.

This creates all sorts of difficulties for individuals who have to cope with their new occupation in a highly developed capitalist system. Many migrants have to adjust to city living and assembly line production work almost as soon as they step off the plane or boat. They lack traditional family and community support mechanisms and friendships and often become isolated. This is particularly true of migrant women.

Lack of English isolates the migrant from his or her fellow workers and from trade union support and activity. This feature also strengthens the tendency for migrant workers to look for individual solutions.

Because of this background, many spend years on the workshop floor as manual workers. They consider their labouring work as a stage to step up to a higher status. This tendency allows the bosses to intensify their exploitation of the workers who are unwilling to fight back, maintaining the workplace class struggle, if any, on a very low level.

In the face of all the pressures, many migrants respond by changing their jobs frequently. This has negative results. Any possibility of promotion becomes less likely for the migrant worker. Unity in the workplace is far more difficult to achieve with a constantly changing workforce. New surroundings mean new, unfamiliar machines and work methods which is likely to increase the already very high safety risks migrant workers face. The process of gaining work skills is constantly interrupted so migrant workers remain at the lowest level of the workforce. Only the boss benefits and ruling class policies of exploitation are more successful.

Migrant workers also suffer particularly from increasing unemployment on the one hand, and the housing crisis on the other. Many workers have to travel long distances to the workplace, waiting for a better opportunity to find another job closer to where they live or another house closer to where they work. Migrant workers are suffering more in this field because of discrimination against them in employment and housing.

Migrant workers who were highly skilled in their country of origin have extra problems. They are rejected by government offices and employers for their lack of English. Many skilled migrant workers are forced to be either unemployed or to take non-skilled jobs because of this situation. It is ironical that many of them scored immigration points for their skills which allowed them to obtain their residential visa into Australia. When they arrive, however, they are told that their skills are not acceptable.

While employers are interested in migrants as cheap labour, workers they can exploit and keep divided, they are not prepared to spend money on their welfare. Simple training programs, English classes and safety notices in different languages cost money so employers make almost no efforts in this direction.

The cost is thousands of migrants killed and injured, many facing years of pain, long court cases to get small compensation pay outs, anxiety for their families when wages are not coming in, insecurity and poverty.

Racism is a problem for migrants in almost every workplace, whether public or private sector. In some workplaces, such as those associated with defence or high tech industries where secrets must be kept, migrants are refused jobs just because they are migrants or because they are migrants from a certain country. We all know the stereotypes that Lebanese, Palestinians and Yugoslavs are all terrorists and so security risks.

Racist practices against migrant workers in the workplace take many other forms, including the prevention and undermining of migrant traditions and culture and imposing different lifestyles upon them. Religious practices, food prohibitions, traditions of how women should behave and so on are all ignored or held up for ridicule and contempt. All this and other problems facing migrant workers in the workplace or outside create enormous psychological problems and result in a high percentage of migrant psychological injuries and sickness of all kinds.

The official attitude of the capitalist state towards migrants and migrant workers in particular ("White Australia" policy, assimilation, discrimination, etc), which has dominated the political life of the country for many decades, has forged a formidable hurdle which the majority of migrant workers have found almost impossible to cross. Strong isolationist attitudes have been created among migrant workers which tend to keep them apart from the rest of society.

On the other hand, some attitudes towards migrant workers by Australian born workers, even by the leadership of the organised labour movement, not only have not assisted in bridging the gap but have helped to create the equally harmful concept of Australian exclusiveness and nationalism.

Certain prejudices and some suspicions towards migrant workers, together with the fear that the mass participation of migrants in the struggle and the affairs of the labour movement and society in general might change the whole spectrum of Australian politics and social life, have been responsible for the prevailing tendency towards separation.

This tendency has prevented even the most advanced sections of the Australian working class movement from approaching the question of migrants and migrant workers in particular in a way that would have both encouraged them and given them the confidence needed to come out of their isolation and join with the rest of the Australian workers in common struggles and efforts to build a new life for all and shape the destiny of a new Australia where migrants would be treated as equals and not as foreigners.

Despite the good efforts and work done on our part and the positive stand taken by a number of trade unions, there is not yet an integrated and sustained effort to build extensive links and communication with migrant workers, to work in harmony with them in united actions which serve the basic interests of the Australian working class movement while also satisfying the aspirations of migrants.

The long-held view that it is up to the migrant workers to make the first move, to acquire on their own initiative knowledge of English and of Australian conditions and traditions, and to demonstrate a spontaneous willingness to mix with the rest and be part of the Australian working class has proven to be both wrong and harmful.

Our Party recognises the special needs and problems of migrant groups and the need to develop campaigns around particular issues and demands of

migrant workers. These campaigns are part and parcel of the Australian working class movement and responsibility for them should not be left to migrants alone.

Our Party places great confidence in you as communists and socialists and democratic forces playing a leading role in your particular communities. We believe that the aim of overcoming the problems of migrant workers can only be achieved by unity in action by all of us with other progressive and democratic forces around particular issues and demands of migrant workers. These include:

- ★ Teaching English at the workplace.
- ★ Classes on safety at the workplace.
- ★ Signs in different languages on safety at workplaces.
- ★ Signs in different languages at workplaces that indicate that the workplace is a racism-sexism free zone.
- ★ Equal pay for equal work.
- ★ State kindergartens close to workplaces.
- ★ A better compensation system. An end to discrimination by doctors and insurance companies.
- ★ State houses close to workplaces.
- ★ Regular union contacts with migrants at workplaces.
- ★ More attention and actions to unionise migrant workers.
- ★ Union information bulletins in migrant languages.
- ★ Regular trade union schools in migrant languages.
- ★ Equal rights for women doing contract work.
- ★ Recognition of skills with special English classes.

Eusebio Morales

Communist Party of the Peoples of Spain, Sydney

According to the 1986 census data, there are approximately 15,000 Spanish migrants in New South Wales, the majority in Sydney. The bulk of these migrants arrived in the 1960s and early 1970s.

There is also a small but significant number of illegal Spanish migrants in this country. In many cases, these migrants have been in the country for several years and have had children here. The majority work but due to their illegal status — without legal rights — they are more likely to suffer exploitation from unscrupulous employers and landlords as well as emotional stress.

Where they work:- Men: The great majority of Spanish male workers are

employed in the construction industry. Other traditional sources of employment are the mining industry, construction projects in the countryside and fruit picking.

Women: Most Spanish women migrants work as:

- ★ cleaners (government and private companies)
- ★ domestics (cleaning the houses of the rich, part-time and casual)
- ★ workers in secondary industry (manufacture).

Generally, the level of English of Spanish migrants is poor, despite the fact that the great majority arrived before 1975.

The majority of Spanish male workers are unionised. However, one of the most important reasons for this high level is the fact that Spanish migrants work in highly unionised industries such as the construction and metal industries. On the other hand, the level of participation in and understanding of unions is generally low. There are only a few union delegates of Spanish background in the construction industry and, as far as we know, there is not one Spanish worker at any higher level of trade union organisation.

Some problems:-As the rate of immigration from Spain has been very low for the past 15 years (at present there are only approximately 300 new arrivals per year), the Spanish community is growing old. This is creating new difficulties for this community as new needs are emerging.

Because of the nature of the work that most Spanish migrants are engaged in, there is a very large number of injured and invalid workers. There are various ramifications of this problem:

- ★ long and difficult workers' compensation cases
- ★ family stress and conflicts
- ★ alcoholism
- ★ physical and emotional problems.

The qualifications and skills of many of the migrants have never been recognised in this country. Consequently, many have been forced to work as labourers and their skills and qualifications have been wasted.

There is also a small but significant number of single males over 50 years of age who have never married or are separated. This group presents a very serious problem as there are no community services to cater for their needs, they have little community support and they suffer high levels of social isolation.

Costas Georgiou

Friends of AKEL, Sydney

On behalf of *Friends of AKEL*, I would like to present some of the problems that Cypriot workers face in Australia. AKEL, as you would be aware, is the Marxist-Leninist party in Cyprus.

Firstly, I would like to point out that most of the 30,000 Cypriots who have come here are from the smaller towns and villages in Cyprus. They are not so well-educated but generally they are hard working people. The men want to

have a full working life in Australia and the women also want to go out and work.

The Cypriot workers are generally not fluent in English, even though Cyprus was occupied for many decades by British imperialism. They are excluded from jobs that require a good knowledge of English and most are restricted to manual work.

Some go with friends or family into small businesses or sub-contracting, but the majority seek forms of work which will give job security even if wages are low. A lot are engaged in unskilled work in the hospitals and other public services as well as private enterprise factories.

There is a problem for workers being able to continue in the trades they did in Cyprus. In Cyprus, a lot of carpenters, mechanics and so forth do not have college diplomas in their trade. They just get experience on the job. But when they come here, they have not got the qualifications to go straight into their trade.

Most Cypriot migrants have little option but to start off as unskilled wage labour. They seem to become fixed in this role and there are many pressures and circumstances to stop them gaining a higher level of work. They are not only vulnerable to severe exploitation but many work in unsatisfying jobs below their real work potential.

The problem of learning English is very serious. Factory workers, especially those on shift work, do not have the time to attend classes and in any event, being assured of getting a pay packet at the end of the week is the main priority for workers who want to establish themselves and their families in this country. We also need to recognise that there is a big gap between being unable to speak English and learning sufficient English to study at college or university or getting a job in an office, for example.

Cypriot workers are still exposed to racial discrimination on the job. Perhaps this is not as much as with other groups, but the Cypriots are still made to feel "second class", "lucky to be here" and are pushed around or belittled by open or indirect methods. There is still the prejudice that people are stupid if they do not know English.

We are not aware of statistics specifically on Cypriot immigrants. However, there seems to be a lot of unemployment. This is particularly the case with middle and older aged men who lack school education and are not fluent in English. The economy does not provide for them at all.

There has emerged a big problem with factory workers, especially those who have been on assembly lines for 15 or 20 years since they came to Australia in the post-war wave of immigration. After such a period of time on the assembly line and with the year by year increase in the speed of production, many of these workers are now suffering physically and mentally. Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) from the same movements performed constantly and at an ever quickening pace is not a made-up disorder but a dreadful problem that Cypriot workers and other workers now face.

Not only the assembly line workers but other Cypriot workers face problems with work accidents and work-related disease, such as inhalation of toxic chemicals, because they work in conditions of high risk.

The system of workers' compensation, particularly the new laws in New South Wales, is heavily biased against the workers in favour of insurance companies. People who are incapacitated by work injury are doomed to a life of poverty as well as having their physical suffering.

But on top of this, Cypriot and other migrant workers face racial discrimination in their workers' compensation claims. The employers, the insurance companies and their doctors and lawyers stoop to the lowest level of lying and deception to make out that the migrants do not have injuries. The courts are biased against migrants. The *Vox Populi* program on SBS last year gave a clear picture of how strong this prejudice and discrimination is.

We want to refer to another problem, a problem which is faced by many Cypriot women who are clothing machinists in their own homes — the so-called *outworkers*. These women, through traditional culture, were quite good at handicrafts in Cyprus. But this skill is reduced to endless hours sitting at a sewing machine doing routine, uncreative and low-paid work for the entrepreneurs in the clothing industry. Even though the clothing trades union has had some success in getting award rates recognised for these women, it is still a form of slavery.

It remains a serious problem that female outworkers, plus many Cypriot who are employed in small enterprises or with sub-contractors, are not aware of their rights to wages and conditions. Union membership is very low in such enterprises. In a lot of places, union membership is prohibited by the boss. Workers are threatened with immediate dismissal if they make demands or put forward their rights.

The issues we have raised are matters that concern many Greek Cypriot workers. We believe that the Turkish Cypriot workers would also have these problems and would perhaps be even more harshly exploited than Greek Cypriots for reasons of language, culture and religion.

We express our solidarity with Turkish Cypriot workers as well as with other migrants and Australian born workers who all together make up the Australian working class.

We extend greetings to all participants at this important conference which we feel sure will be a major step in drawing together our thoughts about migrant workers' problems and in strengthening co-operation between our organisations.

Approaches to change

by Jack McPhillips

Recent, current and continuing developments in the socialist countries present the international movement of communist and workers' parties with contentions which are, in many respects, novel and new. Those developments, and the experiences which preceded them in the socialist countries, re-emphasise the enormity of the task of bringing about a radical and basic change in a society and establishing new and different social systems. They call into question simplistic notions of the nature and extent of those processes.

Furthermore, despite certain similarities in the systems being developed in the socialist countries, there are extensive differences marking their development. That establishes in practice the validity of the view that there is no single model for the development of a socialist society which is appropriate for each and every country.

These experiences, past and present, and experiences yet to come and their results, good and bad, will be of great assistance to communist organisations everywhere, including the Socialist Party of Australia (SPA).

However, while we will do well to learn from those experiences, we need to fully realise that a model for a socialist society in Australia has yet to be developed. It will be developed on the basis of the concrete situation in this country. That will require the SPA to greatly deepen its knowledge of Marxist-Leninist theory and, by that means, provide a valid theoretical basis for our concepts of the way to socialism in Australia.

That necessitates clear and soundly based rejection of any automatic

adoption of theories and conclusions elaborated in publications of other parties, including those of the socialist countries.

That applies in particular to theories and conclusions concerning the tasks of parties in such countries as Australia. But it also applies to developments in the socialist countries.

Erich Honecker, General Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, referred last December to the importance of the "processes of restructuring of society in the Soviet Union" for international socialism and for safeguarding peace. He said: "As far as this issue is concerned, nobody must be irritated by the chatter of frenzied philistines who would like to rewrite the history of the CPSU and the Soviet Union in a bourgeois spirit. But they will not succeed."

What can be accepted as a correct approach to the extensive changes and the thinking on them is indicated in the Bulgarian Communist Party *Information Bulletin* (No 12, 1988).

One writer puts the following: "Restructuring in the socialist countries is accompanied by an activation of theoretical and political thought which, in range and depth, has had no analogue in recent decades. Fundamental principles of the organisation of social processes are now coming up for re-examination. Some theoretical formulations held to be unshakable truth until recently are now being reconsidered from a critical angle, through the prism of socio-historical experience and the accumulated contradictions."

But behind that thoroughly legitimate approach some are seeking to not merely revise or up-date Marx's thinking and conclusions but to abolish them.

The Australian Financial Review (11/1/89) reported proposals for change advanced by "three influential Chinese economists with close ties to the Government". These proposals were for the abandonment of state ownership of industry and its replacement by a form of shareholding.

Referring to a spokesman for the three, Mr Hua Sheng, the *Financial Review* reported:

"Mr Hua said a new definition of socialism was needed, focussing on issues of social justice instead of on public ownership of the means of production.

"Mr Hua said that while Marx was generally correct in the field of politics, he erred in economics by opposing private property."

Some of this so-called "new thinking" is not the least bit new. It is really old thinking dressed up in new garb to give it a profundity of which it was robbed a long while back.

Some of it is made to appear as a natural flow-on from the valid need to more carefully study developing features of society and especially capitalism.

That is a feature of an article in *Beijing Review* (No 2, 1989) by an Associate Professor of the Communist Party of China Central Committee's Party School and headed "Modern Capitalism Reassessed".

The author, Lu Congming, considers that capitalism has passed through the stage of imperialism and has now entered what he calls the stage of "social capitalism". This "new" stage he considers to have developed since the 1950s. He identifies this stage by features many of which were clearly discernible in the previous stage he considers to have now passed, i.e. imperialism.

In this "new" stage of capitalist development, he says, "rich people are extremely small in number, and so are the very poor" (approximately two million of Australia's 16.5 million people live below the official "poverty line") and because of increased wages and social welfare expenditures, "the livelihoods of all working people have basically been ensured".

Since he makes no reference to the struggles of the organised workers during the period of this "new" stage of social capitalism, it is to be assumed that the results he considers to be so favourable for the people are due to the natural developments of the period and the changed outlook of the capitalist system.

He sums up: "... modern (i.e. "social") capitalism has not fundamentally altered its system of exploitation, nor has it eliminated monopolies in its economies or its inherent contradictions and drawbacks. However, we should concede that it has laid a series of mature foundations and possible ways for transition to socialism."

Elaborating the possibilities for socialism, he says: "Given the development of social capitalism, socialism will not grow from its ruins. Instead developed capitalism will gradually evolve socialist factors and begin the transition to socialism. It is likely to complete this process through peaceful means. This, perhaps, will be the typical and principle way in which socialism will replace capitalism in the onward march of history."

In so far as this Chinese theoretician is pointing to the fact that, in the very course of its own development, the capitalist system creates certain of the objective circumstances leading to its replacement by another socio-economic system, he is correct, but he is merely repeating already established thinking and not contributing anything new.

But in so far as he is propounding the view that capitalism will gradually and of necessity grow into and peacefully give way to socialism, he is incorrect and merely repeats some old thinking which life has proven to be ill-founded and which Marxists have therefore long since rejected.

The validity of the concept of a stage of "social capitalism" and the grounds on which he advances it can be tested by comparing it with the reality in

Australia. For example, let us test his contention of the declining number of rich people and of the "very poor".

The Sydney Morning Herald publication "Australia Unlimited" (May 2, 1989) contained an article headlined "The rich get richer, the poor more numerous". Using figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, it reported that between 1976 and 1986 "the proportion of households earning ... the middle range of income fell from 36 per cent to 19 per cent. Their income share fell from 42 per cent to 20.5 per cent".

During the same period, households earning more than the middle income range grew in number. This grouping, equaling 30 per cent of Australian households, controls 55 per cent of total income.

Professor Lu Congming's contention that "the livelihoods of all working people have basically been ensured" is also not valid applied to Australia. His main grounds of reasoning are faulty in relation to Australia and so also is his concept of capitalism in its so-called "social" stage growing into socialism in this country.

Another writer, from the USSR, advances some similar reasoning in an *Information Bulletin*. The article referred to appeared towards the end of last year under the heading "The Working Class Movement: Searching for the Democratic Alternative". The author is Dr Yuri Krasin.

Dr Krasin's article takes the form of advice to the communist, social democratic and general democratic forces on steps necessary to combat what he calls "neo-conservative" forces in developed capitalist countries.

It is in some respects contradictory and not particularly well-informed on developments among and the current position of the forces to which he prefers his advice. This applies to the position of the Australian Labor Party (a social democratic party) and the Socialist Party of Australia.

Dr Krasin's advice to the communist parties in the capitalist countries amounts to a proposal that they should accept the division of monopoly capitalism into two sectors, i.e. early and late; accept the inevitability of "late" monopoly capitalism possessing the capacity to overcome its most immediate and serious difficulties and to continue for a long time in the technological age; accept the concomitant concept of the transition from capitalism to socialism in this stage being a historically prolonged period; accept the inevitability of this process of transition being evolutionary and not the result of some breakthrough; link up with the social democratic parties for advance to socialism "through a democratic alternative".

This advice is based on an up-dated version of some very old thinking although it is advanced as "new thinking".

Describing the current initiatives of the ruling class in the developed

capitalist countries as “neo-conservatism” and pointing to its success in coping with the challenge of the technological revolution and the consequential radical changes in social production, he ascribes that success to the ability of neo-conservatism to stimulate economic growth and benefit materially a large part of the working class and sections of the middle class who usually vote for conservatives.

An additional factor is what he claims to be the failure of the “working class movement and its parties ... to come up with their own alternatives” to the radical changes in society and the policies of the neo-conservatives.

So far as Australia is concerned, these contentions are not valid because they fail to recognise:

- ★ The tremendous advantage the neo-conservative forces possess by their almost exclusive ownership of industry and commerce plus their domination of the mass media and other means of communication.

- ★ That the Labor Party, in office as the central government since March 1983, has collaborated closely with those forces and has acted in favour of the Australian forces of neo-conservatism.

- ★ That the Socialist Party has advanced alternative policies to meet those of the neo-conservatives and to meet the changes wrought by the technological revolution.

- ★ That in the period of neo-conservatism’s rule, Australia has suffered two periods of substantial economic decline (early 1970s and 80s) and a major share market crash in 1987.

That state of affairs shows that Dr Krasin must look elsewhere than the direction he points to for an explanation of his claim that neo-conservatism has met, on its own behalf, the challenge of change wrought by the technological revolution and that the working class parties, at least as far as the SPA is concerned, have not developed their own alternatives.

Furthermore, while there is a basis for unity between communist forces and sections of social democracy, the social democratic parties do not necessarily have the same immediate objective as the communists as claimed by Krasin.

The SPA has long since advanced the concept of a two stage development of the revolutionary process in Australia with the first stage being the anti-monopoly democratic stage.

Dr Krasin claims that this concept does not work. However, he emphasises the concept of a “democratic alternative”, that is, a democratic form of capitalist development.

Much of what he puts forward on that theme was reflected in a 1978 SPA

publication, *Steps to Meet the Crisis*, and subsequently included in that Party's 1981 Congress documents under the heading of a New Democratic Economic System.

But whereas Dr Krasin sees the development of a democratic form of capitalism without nationalising the transnational corporations, the SPA makes that process an essential for the development of a democratic alternative to the policies of the neo-conservatives.

The question arises of why such views are being advanced by some who are described as experts.

It appears that under the cover of necessary reforms being carried out in certain socialist countries, some authors are using their positions to develop views which can justifiably be considered at the least non-Marxist and non-Leninist. Such views serve no purpose for the socialist forces in Australia.

Responses to neo-conservatism

by Nick Southall

In the 1980s, the working class movement in the industrialised capitalist countries has had to face a resurgence of neo-conservatism which in Australia has come to be called the “new right”. The new right challenges the policy of state regulation of the economy and opposes any income redistribution in favour of low-income earners.

The new right proclaims the freedom of private enterprise without any restrictions and demands that anyone using state services must pay for them — the “user pays principle”. Its adherents adopt an all-out confrontationist approach. Openly declaring their anti-union aims, they set out to smash trade unions and other democratic organisations, destroy awards, cut government spending and deregulate the labour market.

However, there is another more sophisticated neo-conservative approach by major big business organisations, one that in Australia is supported by the Federal Labor Government, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) and a number of individual unions.

This approach is class collaborationist rather than confrontationist. Its supporters propose an end to class struggle and reconciliation between the working and ruling class. They support policies and concepts based on the view that workers and their employers share common interests in the development of the capitalist economy and that capitalism is an acceptable

social system.

These two tactics for attacking the working class are now being used simultaneously throughout the capitalist world in a “carrot and stick” manner.

The aim of these attacks is to maximise profits by harnessing the full potential of new technology and existing capital investments. If the plan succeeds, the working class and its organisations will become weak, divided and subservient to ruling class needs.

This is not simply an attempt to take revenge on the working class and its allies. It is an attempt to pursue the long held aims of capital in its struggle against labour by using new tactics.

It is a result of the instability of the economy of state-monopoly capitalism and the conflict between the vastly increased productive forces and capitalist production relations which are becoming ever more acute.

Together with the more acute complications of the process of reproduction there has been a sharpening of social contradictions in the industrialised capitalist countries due to the growth of mass unemployment, the effects of deregulation and the general attack on living standards.

Coupled with this is the fact that the socialist countries have attained military-strategic parity with the capitalist countries, consolidating the basis for peaceful co-existence of the two systems. Along with the growing role of the national liberation and democratic movements, this has placed imperialism increasingly in fundamental conflict with the vital interests of the human race.

Therefore the main objective of neo-conservative policies and their response to the crisis of capitalism is the strengthening of the world capitalist system to give its economic and political power a potential that would drastically change the world balance of forces in favour of imperialism. These policies are designed to create a more intricate and refined system for exploiting the working class nationally and internationally.

The successes of neo-conservatism in the 1980s are a result of a number of factors including the changes in the technical and economic basis of social production. But an important role in these successes, which is often overlooked or disguised, is played by reformism and opportunism.

While pretending to defend the interests of the working class, the reformists and opportunists have actually adopted many anti-working class policies in their retreat before the conservative offensive.

In Australia, organisations such as the ACTU, the Australian Labor Party, the Communist Party of Australia and the Association for Communist Unity have advocated anti-Marxist ideas on the evolution of capitalism into socialism, rejected the class struggle and called for class partnership in bourgeois

society in order to purge Marxism-Leninism of its revolutionary spirit and deprive the working class of its ideological weapon in the struggle against the ruling class.

Other factors contributing to the success of neo-conservatism have been the relative weakness of the socialist forces in the advanced capitalist countries and the problems and mistakes of the socialist countries.

Some consequences of the policies of neo-conservatism have been the continual erosion of the living standards of the mass of the people, attacks on democracy, increased militarisation and a continuing threat of war.

These conditions have led the Socialist Party of Australia to adopt a program which includes calls for the maintenance of world peace, mutual disarmament, the removal of US bases from Australia, a reduction in the defence budget, an independent and non-aligned foreign policy, support for the peace policies of the socialist states and national liberation movements, democratic rights for trade unionists, voters and the masses, control of the mass media by people's organisations, maximum participation of workers in economic management, the extension of public enterprises, nationalisation of key sectors of industry and commerce, government regulation of overall and sectional economic plans, integration of central planning and local initiative, an end to foreign ownership of Australian enterprises and the amendment of the Federal Constitution to give the government the power to control capital investment, supply of raw materials and trained personnel, economic planning, prices, profits, inflow and outflow of foreign capital and borrowings, interest rates and currency exchange rates. To form a democratic alternative to neo-conservatism, the working class must assume leadership and responsibility in the struggles for peace, national independence, a new democratic economic system and other demands.

This will require the achievement of working class unity in action.

The SPA takes its stand for the ever stronger unification of the working class as a key task in line with the *Communist Manifesto* declaration by Marx and Engels that the real fruit of workers' struggle lies "not in the immediate result but in the ever expanding union of the workers".

Working class unity requires the establishment of unity in action by all sections of the working class in support of the economic and political interests of the workers at each given stage of development and directed against the class enemy.

The SPA puts forward the united front as a political concept, the essence of which is unity of those forces favouring a revolutionary change to socialism with those who, as yet, limit their political concepts to the struggle for reforms.

Meanwhile, the ruling class uses the capitalist state to attack, cramp and

curtail the working class and its organisations. It uses its control of the mass media to push its ideology. It uses its wealth and power to bribe individual members of working class organisations with positions of power and large amounts of money and sections of the working class with schemes for profit sharing, participation in decision making, and other concepts of “social partnership”.

The role of the state is exceptionally important in the struggle for democracy and socialism. It was Marx who taught that the working class cannot simply win state power in the sense that the old state apparatus passes into new hands, but must break it and replace it by a new one.

Avoidance of this question leaves a large loophole for reformists and opportunists who see socialism being achieved by the evolution of capitalism into socialism by the simple acquisition of a majority.

If one examines the developed industrial capitalist states, their administration, rights of freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, or “equality of all citizens before the law”, one sees, at every turn, evidence of the hypocrisy of bourgeois democracy.

“There is not a single capitalist state, however democratic, which has no loopholes or reservations in its constitution guaranteeing the ruling class the possibility of dispatching troops against the workers, of proclaiming marshal law, and so forth.” (1)

In Australia, the state apparatus enabled the removal of the democratically elected government in 1975.

The working class under capitalism constantly encounters the contradiction between the equality proclaimed by the “democracy” of the capitalists and the thousands of real limitations and dirty tricks which turn the workers into wage slaves.

It is this contradiction which communists are constantly exposing to the people, opening their eyes to the corruption, hypocrisy and criminality of capitalism, in order to prepare them for revolution.

“Democracy is closely related to the question of who owns the means of production — the masses of the people or a small handful of capitalists. Private ownership severely limits the possibility of the exercise of democratic rights by the working people over all important areas of the economy — investments, planning, prices, profits, employment and so on.

“The public ownership of the means of production removes this limitation on the exercise of democracy.” (2)

All democracy consists in the proclamation and realisation of rights which under capitalism are realisable only to a small degree and only relatively. But

without the proclamation of these rights, without a struggle to introduce them now, immediately, without training the masses in the spirit of this struggle, socialism is impossible.

Socialism is impossible without democracy because the working class cannot achieve socialist revolution unless it prepares for it by the struggle for democracy. "During the course of the struggle for socialism the many separate struggles for democratic rights become a single stream whose aim is socialist revolution. This is the fullest realisation of democracy." (3)

"The more democratic the system of government, the clearer will the workers see that the root evil is capitalism, not lack of rights." (4)

The working class can become the leading force in society if it also fights for the interests of other exploited classes and groups in society such as small working farmers, progressive intellectuals and small business people.

As the democratic struggle led by the working class develops, the broad alliance of forces will find expression in different forms and ultimately in a government of Peoples' Unity which would take resolute measures against local and overseas monopoly capital.

If the primary role of class struggle is denied, the enemies of peace and social progress are obscured, the fight against them will cease and illusions will be created that the main task is to reform "human nature" rather than to defeat the ruling class.

According to the SPA's Program: "The first stage of the two stage transition to socialism would take substantial democratic measures in industry as well as in parliament and other government institutions. The nationalisation of industries is a major democratic step."

These basic principles of Marxism cannot be discarded, passed over in silence or glossed over because they are unacceptable to the ruling class.

Marxism-Leninism is under constant attack from the ruling class. The attacks take many forms, both overt and covert, from within and without. It is of great importance to combat false ideas, to teach the working class vigilance, skill in sorting out complicated political situations, and ability to distinguish its own interests and to tell friends from foes. The role of a Marxist-Leninist party is to bring a scientific understanding to the working class and its allies and to equip them for the socialist path.

"Without a revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement," wrote Lenin.

Without a revolutionary movement, there can be no revolutionary change.

Without revolutionary change, socialism is impossible.

- (1) *Against Revisionism*, Lenin. p 385.
- (2) *Democracy, human values, new thinking and other issues*, statement by the SPA Central Committee Executive. p 1.
- (3) Program of the SPA. p 60.
- (4) *Against Revisionism*, Lenin. p 315.

The peace movement in Australia

On April 1 and 2, the meeting of the SPA Central Committee Executive was expanded by the inclusion of Party members active in the peace movement from various parts of the country. For two days, comrades discussed where the peace movement nationally and internationally is heading and analysed a range of ideological and political issues and the tasks before SPA members in their work for peace and disarmament.

The current fall in activism and numbers in the peace movement was raised. Reasons include a loss of a sense of urgency following the signing of the INF agreement and other peace initiatives from the socialist countries, together with a more relaxed, less tension-ridden international climate.

It was pointed out, however, that the lower level of activity varies from State to State and has not affected the two single-issue, activist-oriented campaigns against bases and warship visits. Here membership and activism are steady and in some areas growing.

There is no doubt that awareness of environmental problems --those which threaten the continued existence of planet earth as well as more localised issues — has grown enormously and that some peace activists are moving into these campaigns.

The arms drive and environmental destruction have a natural, organic connection through imperialism. Political lessons are learnt when people ask who benefits from these evils, who gets the profits.

The truth is revealed that the emergence and aggravation of the threats to humankind — from nuclear and environmental global destruction above all, but also from poverty, hunger and underdevelopment — are caused by imperialism.

Some peace organisations are seeking to transform themselves into joint peace and environmental groups. However, comrades agreed that the links should be made at the level of issues and campaigning and should not be expressed through organisational amalgamations.

Disbanding peace groups can create the impression that the problems of peace and disarmament have been resolved and that organisations formed to fight on these issues are no longer necessary.

However, this is not a time when we can do without peace organisations. Instead, they should be defended against efforts to divert and undermine them.

Peace groups should be retained and their work related to other issues as well — economic, environmental, the struggle for national independence, campaigns to change Australia's aggressive regional role and so forth.

Comrades expressed the view that the environmental movement has to alternatives. If the ozone layer is to be protected, what can be offered to the millions of Chinese about to get fridges at last. If the carbon monoxide build-up in the atmosphere is to be slowed by preserving rain forests, how are people in the Amazon basin going to provide and cook their food?

National, regional, international

The meeting discussed the inter-relationship of national, regional and international issues in the work for peace and disarmament and the priority which should be given to these levels.

A distinction was made between international organisations and issues. While organisational links are important, limited financial and human resources will restrict the work possible in this field.

International issues, however, do have great significance and regional campaigns such as disarm the seas, French testing and anti-bases also play an important role.

Comrades discussed the question of what motivates people to become involved in activity. It was agreed that the prime mover is immediate issues which are close to the lives of the people but that international and regional issues can also play a major motivating role. Many people have been brought into the peace movement, for example, by their sympathy and solidarity with the people of the Philippines, Kanaky and Latin America.

Making connections between the national, regional and international aspects of an issue can therefore give people more reasons to participate and sustain their peace activities. For example, links can be made between Star Wars and the role of the US bases in Australia, between Australian foreign policy and the disarm the seas campaign.

A strong point was made that linking in regional issues and the development of regional networks and co-ordinated campaigns must be given priority because it reflects the growing economic and strategic significance of our region.

In addition, the experience of people in the region of colonialism, nuclearisation, militarism, hunger and poverty gives the peace movement a more developed and anti-imperialist character

Three tiers

In a statement of May 1982, the Socialist Party of Australia first spoke of the three tiers of the peace movement — the independent activity of the SPA in its own name, the developed peace organisations with anti-imperialist policies, and the other peace organisations which embrace “all who are for any reason prepared to take part in the peace movement for what might be quite limited aims and undeveloped political positions”.

The meeting expressed the view that this analysis remains valid although the relative strengths of various organisations at the different levels have changed in the intervening seven years.

Comrades identified as significant an ideological and political threat to organisations in the second tier. The anti-imperialist policies of such organisations is vital for the future development and success of the Australian peace movement and their policies must be defended and developed whenever possible.

“New thinking”

The meeting stressed that “new thinking” must be tested against objective reality and against its consequences. Its appearance and essence must be tested. If human values are universal and are what are coming to motivate the world, there is no longer an enemy. Is this the real state of affairs?

The gains made in recent decades have been considerable — social changes, steps to settle a number of regional disputes (Afghanistan, Kampuchea, etc) and the INF Treaty.

However, these gains have been achieved as a result of past policies of struggle, by the socialist countries, the national liberation movements and the world-wide peace movement, against the military-industrial complexes, especially in the United States.

Speakers pointed out that these gains were achieved in the nuclear age and rejected the thesis that an entirely new situation has been created requiring the abandonment of tested policies and tactics.

There is also no evidence of “new thinking” in US and NATO military circles. New weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, chemical, biological and conventional) are being developed, tested, manufactured and deployed. Stars Wars has not been abandoned, aggressive US bases still ring the globe. The US is replacing the weapons eliminated by the INF agreement, particularly with naval armaments in the Asia-Pacific region.

While the threat of nuclear holocaust limits the forms which class struggle can take in the nuclear age, this does and should not mean adoption of policies of collaboration, class peace or abandoning the idea of class struggle as the motive force of history altogether.

The meeting expressed the view that the concept of universal human values divorced from class is inaccurate and dangerous since it can lead to idealism and inaction. In a class divided world, class and human values cannot be separated.

Reference was made to the statement by Hermann Axen, Central Committee Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, that:

“The emergence of overall human interests and concerns in no way does away with class interests. Overall human interests, which go beyond class barriers and arise from the fact that the modern world is indivisible, will never occur in their pure form just as they can never be satisfied aside from class interests.

“Objectively, there is no way of looking after overall human interests that is not class-related...”

Economic issues

It was pointed out that when people, especially young people, are asked today what they fear most, the answer is no longer nuclear war but unemployment and poverty.

These problems — and the environmental issues — must be linked with Australia's defence expenditure if the peace movement is to keep in touch with the majority of the population.

More specific research is needed and contacts have to be made with unemployed, welfare, health, poverty action, housing, student and other groups to relate the solution of urgent social needs to cuts in arms spending. Work must be done with trade unions on conversion programs to overcome the idea that disarmament means more unemployment.

Some speakers raised the question of the need for balanced development globally and the significance of the concept of a New International Economic Order. This year is the 15th anniversary of the United Nations vote in support of the establishment of a New International Economic Order (NIEO).

Working class

The meeting recognised that active involvement of the working class and their trade unions in the peace movement remains inadequate. This is not a new or an exclusively Australian problem.

Some of the reasons for this state of affairs were identified as the influence of the ALP and reformism in the trade unions and of economism in the ranks of the working class.

Speakers pointed out that the ACTU and many trade unions have excellent policies on peace and disarmament but that little action is taken.

The task is to get workers interested and involved and the way to do this is through concrete campaigns linking economic issues affecting workers with peace and disarmament questions. Trade unions are important here but the key is workplace peace organisation.

Emphasis was given to the use of *The Guardian* and Party workplace bulletins in this process and it was recognised that progress will to a large extent depend on the success of the Party's work to build workplace branches.

Comrades agreed that September 1, the *International Trade Union Day for Peace*, should be made a day for activity among trade unions and by the Party, with special efforts to get unions affiliated to the WFTU to take action.

Tasks for communists

Comrades stressed that it is not necessary to desert a class position to be broad and flexible. Our task is to work with all groups and individuals to develop maximum breadth and maximum consciousness in the peace movement.

At all levels of our work in the peace movement, solid, specific alternatives are essential if campaigns are to be sustained and effective. How to fund alternative programs by cutting arms spending is a crucial element in this.

Another task is to make the links between issues clearer and to increase understanding of the responsibility of the war machine for so many problems.

We need to make clear that the call is not for total disarmament but for a reduction in Australia, and all other countries, of armaments spending to a level sufficient for defence.

With this goes the task of presenting and arguing for a change in Australia's foreign policy, a break with the US alliance and all other military blocs, an end to the role as Pacific policeman, the removal of US bases, a ban on warship visits, a commitment to disarmament and peaceful co-existence and the adoption of a non-aligned and independent position.

The experience of this year's Palm Sunday marches shows that the tradition of uniting the diverse elements of the peace movement and showing the movement's strength by bringing thousands onto the streets remains strong, despite lower numbers.

In Melbourne, the decision to abandon the march and replace it with a festival brought a sharp fall in numbers and considerable dissatisfaction. The task is to combat the move to demobilisation and to contribute to developing the organisation and enthusiasm necessary to build up the marches.

The development of Party branches in the workplace and the Party's left unity work will have an important influence on the degree to which working class participation in the peace movement and workplace peace groups can be built and sustained.

These tasks place heavy responsibilities on those working in this area. The level of their personal commitment, consistency, organisational skills, attitudes and reliability is important, together with improved communication and co-ordination of their work.

The character of the ALP

by Alan Miller

Determining the character of the Australian Labor Party from a Marxist-Leninist viewpoint is a complicated but necessary exercise, and one which has often been a source of argument in the communist movement.

It is important for the Socialist Party of Australia to understand the essence of the ALP in order to have a guide to practical political work in relation to a party which, despite bitter criticism, many workers still regard as their own.

It is true that, particularly under Hawke, the ALP receives support from sections of the big bourgeoisie. Such support is not a new phenomenon in Australian history. Big capital backed the ALP which carried out an anti-working class offensive in the Great Depression of the 1930s.

It is not uncommon for the ALP to have the support of sections of the urban middle class, intellectuals and professional people. Farmers, as a section of the middle class, have generally looked to a more conservative political force.

A feature of the Labor Party, of course, has been its support from the working class.

However, the social origin of its membership or its supporters does not determine the character of any political party. A political party is judged, above all, by its ideological position.

Many United States workers support the Democratic Party but that party's

ideology is bourgeois and, consequently, it can only be described as a bourgeois party.

What then is the ideology of the ALP? We communists describe the Labor Party as a reformist party. Sometimes we describe it as a social democratic party. I consider both descriptions accurate.

But Lenin wrote of “petty bourgeois reformism” which he described as “servility to the bourgeoisie covered by a cloak of sentimental democratic and ‘social’ democratic phrases and fatuous wishes.” (*Collected Works*, Vol 33, p 21)

Marx wrote in *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*: “The substantial aim of social democracy is to transform society by the democratic method, transformation being always kept within the petty bourgeois orbit.”

I consider the ALP to have a petty bourgeois ideology and, consequently, to be a petty bourgeois party. I can hear the protests from ALP members and supporters who are working class. But Marx pointed out that petty bourgeois politicians are not necessarily members of the petty bourgeoisie.

Marx wrote: “Culturally and by individual status they may be the polar opposites of members of the shopkeeping class... Intellectually they have failed to transcend the limitations which are materially imposed upon the petty bourgeoisie by the conditions of petty bourgeois existence. Consequently, they are in the theoretical field, impelled towards the same aspirations and solutions as those towards which, in practical life, the petty bourgeois are impelled by material interests and by their social position. Speaking generally, such is always the relationship between the political and literary representatives of a class and the class they represent.” (*The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*)

Let us take a closer look at what we mean by ideology. Ideology is a system of ideas embracing such areas as philosophy, political economy, organisational concepts, ethics and aesthetics. Philosophy plays the key role in ideology.

The communist movement has advanced views that ideology is always connected to the class question and that in today’s world there are two ideologies, bourgeois and proletarian. The movement makes clear that proletarian ideology is Marxism-Leninism and that there is no third ideology.

I accept those views and so I consider that when we speak of petty bourgeois ideology, we are not referring to a third ideology. We are certainly not talking about proletarian ideology but, in my view, we are not speaking simply of bourgeois ideology.

The petty bourgeoisie is caught in the middle of the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and borrows ideas from both contending

classes. Petty bourgeois ideology is therefore a mixture of ideas taken from both bourgeois and proletarian ideology.

I share the view of B Liebzon who wrote: "Being incapable of producing an objective scientific theory explaining the processes of social development, the petty bourgeoisie produces a fancy quilt of ideological conceptions, eclectically borrowing various ideas taken at random from various bourgeois doctrines, and also from the Marxist ideology of the proletariat, when it has emerged." (*Anarchism, Trotskyism, Maoism*)

We can get an idea of how this mixing process in petty bourgeois ideology goes back to last century by reading what Marx wrote concerning the origins of social democracy. Keep in mind that Marx was writing about a period after the *Communist Manifesto* had appeared. The Marxist ideology of the proletariat had certainly emerged, as Liebzon stated.

Marx wrote: "To make a united front against the bourgeois forces, the petty bourgeois and the workers had formed a coalition on their side, the so-called Social Democratic Party... In February, 1849 there were banquets to celebrate the reconciliation. A joint program was drafted, joint electoral committees were founded and joint candidatures were arranged for. The revolutionary point of the socialist demands of the proletariat was blunted, and these demands were given a democratic gloss. Conversely, in the case of the democratic demands of the petty bourgeoisie, the purely political form was effaced, and they were made to seem as socialistic as possible. That was the origin of social democracy." (*The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*)

Looking at the process described above by Marx, one is entitled to draw the following conclusions: Although they finally decided to unite with the workers through the Social Democratic Party in order to oppose the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeois forces would have been mainly under the influence of bourgeois ideology in the period leading up to the formation of the party.

The impact of the new Marxist proletarian ideology would have been slight and so the practice of borrowing ideas from the new ideology would have been in its infancy. The formation of the Social Democratic Party would have speeded up the process.

The working class forces, on the other hand, would have been in the early stages of influence by Marxism. They were not yet strong enough to withstand the pressure of bourgeois ideology. When this pressure took the form of ideas coming from their petty bourgeois allies, they were ready for ideological compromise. The workers ideologically had become petty bourgeois. Like the petty bourgeoisie itself, the workers were dabbling in conflicting ideologies.

The processes which affected both the petty bourgeoisie and the pro-

letariat were crystallised with the birth of social democracy. The reformist expression of petty bourgeois ideology had arrived.

When I advance the view that petty bourgeois ideology contains a mixture of ideas taken from bourgeois and proletarian ideology, I am not suggesting that the ideology as such of either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat is borrowed. What is borrowed are ideas from both ideologies.

I consider the mixture I have described above to exist in the social democratic ALP. When a right-wing Labor Party person speaks of the need to serve the capitalist corporations, that person expresses an idea taken from bourgeois ideology. When a left-wing Labor Party person speaks of the need to serve the working class, that person expresses an idea taken from the Marxist-Leninist ideology of the proletariat.

This in no way suggests that the person is a Marxist-Leninist. The person remains a left-wing reformist and, basically, a petty bourgeois democrat. Certainly I am not suggesting that Marxism-Leninism as an ideology exists in the ALP. When one considers the nature of that ideology, to make such a claim would be ridiculous.

It is important to note that, in view of what I have put forward, it is precisely the mixture of ideas in the reformist expression of petty bourgeois ideology which helps bourgeois ideology penetrate the working class movement. Of course, this is only part of the process of such penetration.

Could the concept of a mixture of ideas in petty bourgeois reformism mean that it is possible to change the ALP to a communist organisation by working within and just adding a few more Marxist-Leninist ideas? The answer is a definite no. Life is not so simple.

Marxist-Leninist ideology is a treasure house of scientific ideas, the finest achievement in thinking. A reformist party cannot cope with such an ideology even with assistance from socialist minded people with good intentions. Only a Marxist-Leninist party can handle Marxism-Leninism.

This is not to say that a section of a reformist party cannot break from reformism and either amalgamate with a Marxist-Leninist party or develop an alliance with such a party. The Socialist Unity Party of Germany came about through an amalgamation involving members of the Communist Party and those who were formerly social democrats.

The Socialist Party's left unity approach has in mind the development of a united front of the working class based upon united action of political forces holding different ideological views. The approach also seeks to overcome ideological differences to strengthen Marxist-Leninist political organisation. Both aspects form the heart of the SPA activities in relation to other left parties as well as the left-wing forces of the ALP.

An understanding of the petty bourgeois character of the Labor Party helps the Socialist Party in its left unity work. It helps the SPA to avoid the error of simply regarding the ALP as just another bourgeois party and consequently neglecting the possibilities of left unity work. It also helps the SPA avoid the error of regarding the ALP as a party, simply requiring some ideological cleansing, and consequently exaggerating the possibilities of left unity work.

The searching of Yuri Krasin

by Victor Williams

Yuri Krasin, a Soviet Doctor of Philosophy, has examined the problems of the working class movement in searching for the democratic alternative.

He rejects as part of the program the nationalisation of transnationals as it would be both ineffective and harmful. He claims it would tear to pieces the live fabric of world economic ties.

We need to examine some major examples of nationalisation of transnationals to see their effects.

One of the first was the nationalisation of the oil fields and refineries of Iran in the early 1950s. The oil transnationals, the biggest and most powerful companies in the world, estimated it was effective and harmful to their interests. They called in British and US imperialist forces to overthrow the Iranian Government and install the Shah.

In 1957, the Libyan Government of Gaddafi nationalised the oil fields and refineries of oil transnationals. (At the same time the US lost their biggest air base in Africa from the actions of the same government.)

This nationalisation set the pattern of nationalisation in other oil producing countries. This laid the foundation of the Organisation Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), an organisation that was very effective in strengthening the

economies of those countries. In some cases, it flowed to the working people. The seven oil sisters recognised the financial harm it was doing them and have used all their influence and power to try to undermine and destroy it.

The activities of OPEC did not tear to pieces the fabric of world economic ties, but the major capitalist countries had to buy their oil at the increased prices. OPEC was able to control production and fix prices which helped to stabilise trade in oil rather than allow it to be manipulated as it had been by the oil transnationals.

In 1970, the Allende Government nationalised the holdings of the transnationals in Chile. The transnationals and US imperialism thought it was so effective and harmful to their interests that they organised a bloody coup to overthrow the Allende Government and take back the nationalised industries.

The Chilean Communist Party has said that the major mistake of the Allende Government was not to fully nationalise the dominant parts of the economy. The mistake was not in nationalisation, but its extent.

The nationalisation by the revolutionary Portuguese Government in 1974 was effective. The Portuguese Communist Party said the extent of the nationalisation prevented the return of fascism.

Neither of these examples of nationalisation appear to have had much effect on world economic ties. The economic crisis of 1974-75 had much more disastrous effect.

Dr Krasin examines the path of development of developing countries towards a democratic alternative. He claims they cannot make free choice of development or carry out radical economic reforms. He sees the main barrier as lack of major political changes in the industrial capitalist world, the failure to remove neo-conservative forces from power and positions of command.

His theory that nationalisation of transnationals is ineffective and harmful plays a part in this other assessment. Transnationals have a very important influence on the economic development of developing countries, and are a major political influence coming from the industrial capitalist countries. If nationalisation of transnationals is ineffective, then developing countries are unable to take action against one of the major sources of their exploitation and domination while the transnationals remain in full power in their home countries.

But developing countries have made their choice and carried out radical economic reforms. Algeria and Vietnam have broken free of French imperialism while the home basis of French imperialism has remained intact. Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau had almost achieved liberation by 1974, and their struggles played a big part in the revolution in Portugal that overthrew the fascist forces from power and positions of command.

Cuba and now Nicaragua, which in essence have been neo-colonies of the USA, have broken free and made their decisions for radical economic changes, while the power and command of the US military-industrial complex (MIC) has remained intact. The nationalisation of plants, mines and oil fields of transnationals, cutting the tentacles of the octopus, has been carried out and weakened the transnationals.

Certainly, any big political changes in imperialist countries make it easier for major changes to be brought about in their neo-colonies. International support from sections of the working class is very important. The boycotts and solidarity actions against apartheid play a big part, but the decisive role in the liberation of the South African people is played by the people themselves and their organisations.

Yuri Krasin considers that socialism will result from the gradual development of the system of self-government by the working people. He thinks that the management of share capital controlled by workers and workers' organisations could influence policies of corporations, with a transition from quantity to quality. He looks for expansion of the participation of workers and their organisations in decisive decision-making and management at the level of enterprises and corporations.

He claims that the concept of anti-monopoly democracy, advanced by the Communist Parties does not work, since it is based on gaining decisive positions in conditions when the state regulates society's social and economic life.

Yuri Krasin's estimate of the gradual development of the system of self-government by the working people to socialism ignores the concentrated economic and political power of transnationals and their integration with the capitalist state. They have no intention of allowing any forces to nibble the system to death.

Socialist revolution or evolution?

by Jeremy Rabie

In an article written by Dr Yuri Krasin, entitled “The Working Class Movement: Searching for a Democratic Alternative” and published in the magazine *Kommunist*, the theoretical organ of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, he states that “... socialism will replace capitalism not as a result of some breakthrough, but as a result of the evolution of social conditions within the capitalist system and on the technological and economic basis created by capitalism”.

This statement is preceded by a lengthy analysis of the present situation in the developed capitalist countries and in particular the rise of neo-conservatism and the apparent failure of the working class movement to confront and halt it.

Briefly summarised, Dr Krasin’s document develops a concept of how the working class and communist parties can tackle these new developments such as neo-conservatism. It involves basically renouncing the anti-monopoly democratic struggle as a failure and opting for a “broader” and “more flexible” “democratic alternative” that has as its basis not the revolutionary struggle against capital but the struggle for reforms, for a “democratic form of capitalism”. These reforms will apparently gradually transform capitalism into socialism.

Dr Krasin's logic is based on a number of assertions which are not substantiated but seem to have been employed to build up a rationale to support his alternative. It is important to mention a few of his assertions since he sees the democratic alternative as the vehicle for this evolution from capitalism to socialism.

What can be agreed is that neo-conservatism represents a concerted attack on wages and conditions won by the working class in recent decades. Neo-conservatism's main aim in doing so, however, is to cope with the deepening crisis of capitalism by, among other measures, redistributing the national income in favour of the ruling class.

What should be added (but Dr Krasin omits it) is that neo-conservatism is using the crisis of capitalism to further its own hidden agenda which over the past few years has become quite clear. This agenda includes a massive attack on bourgeois democracy, on trade unions and trade unionism, the restructuring of industrial relations and arbitration, a massive attack on the left and communist parties, and the creation of structures which are intended to preserve the rule of capital and particularly of the transnational corporations.

Neo-conservatism is also as a response to the scientific and technological revolution, to the need for capitalist society to adapt to some of its by-products, such as unemployment. But Dr Krasin becomes sidetracked by concentrating on this aspect of neo-conservatism and adds other features such as the interdependence of national economies (which he puts forward as a new phenomenon) and the need for the bourgeois state to cease interfering in and attempting to juggle the national economy to satisfy various interests.

The internationalisation of production and the interdependence on economies are not new features of capitalism. The seeds of this process were planted during the colonial expansion of capitalism and became fully blown features of capitalist economic life during the age of imperialism. The degree to which this occurs is of course continually intensifying, as is the monopolisation of production which proceeds according to the laws Lenin so clearly described in *Imperialism — the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (written in 1916).

This point is raised here because of the need to highlight Lenin's thesis that imperialism, state monopoly capitalism, means the total political domination of capitalist society by the monopolies or transnational corporations as they are now known. There is no fundamental struggle between the TNCs and the bourgeois state. The state is the pawn of the TNCs!

The apparently simple picture painted by Dr Krasin gets more complex when recent Australian history is studied. In Australia, it was precisely the state under a social democratic Labor government which deregulated the economy on behalf of the TNCs and forced through many other unpopular measures on the neo-conservative agenda. The firm grip of the TNCs on all

aspects of capitalist society, on relations between capitalist countries and the developing countries, on relations between capitalist countries and socialist countries, is tighter and necessarily more self-interested than ever before.

To liquidate the programmatic demand of the communists for anti-monopoly democracy now would be an error, a seriously backward step. Of course, sometimes it is tactically wise to take a backward step in order to move forward. But Dr Krasin's "*democratic alternative*" will not replace the anti-monopoly democratic struggle. The essential reason for this is that capitalism will never be reformed into socialism.

This old reformist argument was raised many decades ago by people like Bernstein and Kautsky. They concluded that imperialism was a positive development of capitalism and that imperialism created conditions for its gentle reform into socialism. Lenin then (even before the outbreak of the first great inter-imperialist clash of 1914-1918) soundly defeated these arguments and no attempt now to give capitalism a more pleasant aspect will make these arguments any more correct today.

Dr Krasin has announced that the concept of anti-monopoly democracy does not work. Is this true in South Africa? In Latin America? In the Middle East?

The revolutionary political and military struggle waged by the African National Congress (ANC) for a new anti-monopoly democracy is vital and current in South Africa today. However, according to Dr Krasin's blueprint, the ANC should vacate hard-won positions and seek to collaborate with the big capitalists to run the capitalist system better with the hope that perhaps it will evolve into socialism in the future.

Perhaps the Palestinians and the SWAPO freedom fighters should lay down their stones and their weapons and instead buy shares in the TNCs and change them from within. Perhaps the citizens of Rooty Hill in Sydney struggling to prevent the construction of a mill which would have a severe impact on this residential neighbourhood should cease and instead buy shares in BHP.

Dr Krasin's sweeping generalisation that the anti-monopoly democratic struggle does not work is wrong. Perhaps it was a statement made in haste because if one believes that capitalism can evolve into socialism, then the anti-monopoly democratic struggle becomes unnecessary. Or perhaps there is another expedient reason behind this line — that this "newly" interdependent world with its international system of production has overtaken the class struggle and become too interconnected a place to shake up. So ... collaborate and don't resist.

The Australian working class has had a bitter experience of collaboration. The Prices and Incomes Accord signed between the Labor Government and trade union movement and a subsequent economic "communique" endorsed

by the Labor Party, the trade unions and big business impelled the workers on to the path of participating in helping the boss run the system, of participating in all the grand decisions that will make life better for all Australians.

What has the result been? The working class has been effectively disarmed while the “new” right has marched forward and greatly strengthened its positions. Big business has recorded record profits while wages and conditions have been pushed back two decades.

Has the prospect for the evolution of capitalism into socialism become a possibility? Such a concept has in no way been demonstrated and Yuri Krasin answered the question in 1985 in his book (English edition) called *The Contemporary Revolutionary Process*:

“The experience of the October Revolution is under ceaseless attack from bourgeois ideologists, whose main drive is directed against Leninism because it mirrors the internationalist substance and general uniformities of socialist revolution and socialist construction. These critics not only deny the universal validity of Leninism, but also seek an alternative Leninism. In the light of the lessons of history, some of them offer an alternative: the reformist theory of renovation and modernisation of contemporary capitalism. That is why in the ideological struggle raging over the legacy of the October Revolution, it is important not only to beat back these attacks but also to carry on an offensive and to expose the flimsiness of bourgeois-reformist conceptions and social-democratic reformism.”

Also ... “The entire experience of the revolutionary movement of our day has shown that Lenin’s theory of revolution is correct and that it meets the requirements of a radical renewal of the world.”

In the four years since these words were published, capitalism and capitalists have not changed to the point of permitting their system to be reformed into socialism. The capitalists have hung on like grim death in the face of fierce revolutionary struggle and the ruling class today in their transnational bastions ruthlessly pursue the intense, relentless and ceaseless struggle against labour and against socialism.

As implied by Dr Krasin in his document, there is a crisis of the left in some developed capitalist countries and this does have a bearing on the question of the transition from capitalism to socialism. In the SPA’s experience, adherence to Marxist-Leninist principles is proving the only way to renovate the left.

This does not preclude in any way the broadest possible coalition of forces to accomplish the various tasks on the “long march to socialism”. But desertion of the revolutionary class struggle dooms the working class to the marsh so topically and clearly described by Lenin in his timeless work *What Is To Be Done?*

As then, so now the communist party and its revolutionary role must not be

relegated to a reformist role. The need to build the party and build the revolutionary struggle remain relevant. The path to socialist revolution is varied and complex but that this revolution must occur has been proven theoretically and practically correct many times over.

Dr Krasin's document does not substantiate his premise that a new stage of imperialism has "evolved" — namely "late monopoly capitalism". On this basis, however, he asserts the need for new concepts of transition to socialism to be created.

Dr Krasin writes about the need to develop "democratic forms of functioning of capitalism" as the basis for the democratic alternative and evolution to socialism.

Capitalism can function democratically only in the bourgeois democratic sense. If one considers the areas of capitalist investment today, such as the military industrial complex, its severe attacks on the working class in the developed capitalist countries, its ruthless exploitation of the developing countries, its law-governed, amoral drive for maximum profits, then it must be recognised that the possibility of fundamentally reforming capitalism is an illusion. Capitalism is profoundly and immutably anti-democratic, anti-working class and anti-communist.

If a doctor diagnoses cancer in a patient, he has no choice but to attempt to halt its destructive process. If the doctor advises the patient to somehow find a way to accommodate the cancer, the patient would be correct in assuming the doctor's prescription a sure way to death. Capitalism is a cancer in humanity's organism and a barrier to peace and social progress. Only a revolutionary exorcism will assure humanity's survival.

New experiences in the International Women's Day collective

by Sue Achurch

A proposal from the Queensland State Committee of the Socialist Party of Australia (SPA) outlined the need for talks between women comrades from the Socialist Workers Party and the Women's Committee of our own Party on joint work in the preparations for International Women's Day in 1989.

The outcome of those talks and the joint activity between the two Parties played a significant part in setting the agenda for International Women's Day and bringing to it a class content.

The State Committee proposal came originally from an initiative at a 1987 International Women's Day function held by the Rocklea Branch of the SPA. Discussion then had centred around the need to bring this celebrated day back into the working class from which it came.

The history of the day demonstrates its working class origins and to talk of history, we must talk of Clara Zetkin.

Clara Zetkin was a working activist deeply involved in a number of trade unions. She wrote for and was editor of *Gleichheit* (Equality), a social-democratic women's journal. She was also an activist in the German Social Democ-

ratic Party and involved in the left wing of that party.

She continued an endless battle pushing working class socialist politics to the fore in all areas of her work. As is the case today, many of her struggles were against right-wing feminists, particularly during the suffragette period, and battles within her own party over the women's question.

Her international work involved convening the First International Conference of Socialist Women held in 1907 at which Clara was elected Secretary. *Gleichheit* became their journal.

In Copenhagen in 1910, the Second International Conference of Socialist Women was held, meeting just before the International Socialist Congress began its deliberations. Clara was re-elected to lead the International Women's Secretariat.

It was at this second conference that she proposed an annual international socialist women's day. March 8 each year would be celebrated in all countries as International Women's Day, initially around the issue of women's suffrage.

The date was chosen because of an event in the United States. Under the leadership of women workers in the New York City needle trades, a number of whom were socialist, a women's demonstration was called on March 8, 1908. Hundreds took part to demand the vote and to urge the building of a stronger needle trade union.

So successful was this demonstration that it came to the attention of socialist women abroad. The conference in Copenhagen recognised its importance and from that time on, March 8 became known as International Women's Day, dedicated to the fight for equal rights for all women in all countries. It was in 1911 that the first International Women's Day was celebrated.

The day is particularly significant for working class women. In socialist countries, International Women's Day is widely celebrated, emphasising the gains women have won under socialism and other issues that need to be highlighted.

Problems of women: a class question

In capitalist countries, International Women's Day enables women to achieve many things. It can, for example, bring together many organisations, political and single issue groups to organise for International Women's Day. It builds confidence and gives experience.

More significantly, it provides an opportunity for the question of women's liberation to be addressed from a class perspective. Active participation in the organising allows the SPA to bring to the limelight the fact that capitalism dominates every aspect of our lives and that capitalism is and must be our main opponent.

This is an important point. While such an approach may seem self-evident to us, there are many people from other organisations who do not share this view.

For instance, some groups believe that due to the domination and control of the capitalist system by men, men are the main enemy — any man, worker or otherwise.

Some of these groups do not have a clear political analysis — and “no politics” means bourgeois politics. They do not see a class enemy and all their demands are directed against men.

This approach, which takes a number of forms, has several serious implications. Groups which hold these views frequently isolate themselves from progressive organisations. However good their intentions, they can end up doing the capitalists’ job by dividing the women’s movement from potential allies and bringing it into disrepute.

Confusion is created when issues are separated into what is good for women or for men only, instead of for a class or for a society as a whole.

This position can lead to disruption of any united attack against the capitalist rulers. Such ideas break down the strength of directing a united force against the main enemy. The working class is divided, with men pitched against women in battles that should be directed against the capitalist system and its agents.

Other groups involved in International Women’s Day include some single issue organisations which tend to see the main struggle contained within the issue they are involved in.

Such groups can contribute to the women’s movement but they tend to be reformist and petty bourgeois in character, assuming that by achieving their specific demands, other things will be alright for women.

These groups are necessary and valuable because each of them champions the cause of specific issues that must be addressed — for example, women’s health, women in law and so on. However, they need to be linked to a far greater degree into mainstream politics.

Much of the confusion about who is the main enemy, man or class, comes from looking no deeper than the historical fact that women of all classes in each society were forced into an inferior position in one way or another.

Ultimately, to tackle the question of women’s liberation demands that we understand the class nature of society with the exploitation of one class by another which is the real source of women’s oppression.

Lacking or rejecting this class analysis, reformists in the women’s movement see solutions in reforms — which can and have brought about achieve-

ments but which cannot solve the problem.

The SPA's contribution

The various forms of non-class approach have allowed International Women's Day to almost fade away. It is the Party's responsibility to bring into the women's movement working class politics, socialist politics, which can clarify the political debate, enliven the organisational work and draw in new supporters.

How the Party addresses this problem is the beginning of our tasks in the International Women's Day collective and the women's movement in general.

Not surprisingly, other forces in the collective are preparing the ground to make their politics dominant. Working together in the collective creates the best conditions for us to argue out our ideological and political differences.

We are and must be concerned as communists to save this day which is celebrated world-wide. Would we allow May Day to disappear altogether? The answer is clear.

In preparing for this, we will again hold discussions with the Socialist Workers Party women. Our experience this year has already demonstrated the extra political strength that left unity brings. The forces that have a similar political line and outlook can work together and unite over political questions of importance.

One issue that was debated in the IWD collective this year was the participation of men in the Trade Union Choir.

While this may appear to be of little consequence, there was an important political point to make. It was necessary to show that the question of women's liberation is inseparably bound up with the struggle of the working class and its allies as a whole and it cannot be separate from or alien to this.

The question of women's liberation is still not given enough attention within the SPA. Any comrade who thinks the question is one just for women members is making an ideological mistake.

Problems of women

At the time the accumulation of wealth and private property came into being, so did the oppression of women. Control over women's reproduction was essential for the transmission (inheritance) of private property. At the same time, different values began to be placed on the different contributions men and women made to society.

Women's productive roles were limited and at times became almost non-existent and they were mainly confined to housework and child rearing. Later the role of child bearer was an important barrier preventing them from returning to the workforce.

Discriminatory laws were developed and discriminatory social attitudes have become ingrained in society, reinforcing the inferior position of women. Examples of these laws are the unequal payment for work done by women.

The mass media portrays women as sex objects and women's lifestyles, attitudes and choices are profoundly influenced by the capitalist media and education processes. There are many more issues but that is not the aim of this paper.

The question has been asked: is there a need for a special or separate women's movement? International Women's Day is a part of this. Should women form separate organisations that exclude men and should these organisations fight for issues that specifically concern women, over and above questions of general concern?

The answer must be clear: a specific women's movement is necessary because of capitalist laws and attitudes, because women's second class citizenship so often prevents her from participating fully in trade unions and other mass organisations, because a women's organisation has a specific contribution to make on issues of concern to women and on issues of general concern.

It is the role of Marxist-Leninists to help draw women into the general struggles, into the trade unions so women can become an active and vital force in the general fight against capitalism. It is our task to initiate, develop and support movements that expose capitalist methods of working.

Capitalism is the main opponent of the people and it is essential that actions are developed against it on all fronts. Campaigns like International Women's Day can have a real effect in this way and bring women into the powerful arena of the organised working class movement.

And our day can also demonstrate to women that their basic interests and demands will only be achieved in a united struggle, side by side with men, with their emancipation indissolubly linked with the liberation of the entire working class in the struggle for socialism.